



NECE 2019 Glasgow

Confronting Inequalities! The Role of Citizenship Education

Welcome by **Christoph Müller-Hofstede**, Federal Agency for Civic Education

Glasgow, 24 October 2019

Thank you, Nelly for your welcome and kick off, and thank you Jane Bentley and your wonderful Art Music Team for warming us up and getting ready for this session.

I am Christoph Müller-Hofstede from the bpb /Federal Agency for Civic Education in Germany and with me is Alicja Pacewicz from the Center of Citizenship Education in Poland.

We both are part of a small working group called NECE coordination (together with Tatjana Mejvogel Volk from ProDemos).

We all are trying to keep NECE together by organizing such a conference among other things.

Now: Alicja and I have an impossible task: we have to answer in just a few minutes the simple question:

WHY ARE WE HERE? We asked Nelly for an hour but she gave us five minutes. But before we start attempting the impossible...

We want to welcome all of you, who have made it to Glasgow today: a very special welcome and thanks to our partners and colleagues here in Glasgow who have been invaluable and indispensable in helping us to organize this.

Another and equally special welcome goes to all our partners and colleagues from countries and networks outside the European Union: A big applause for our colleagues from partner networks NACE, EENCE, and CENESA guests who time and again had to struggle to get their visas in order to join this meeting. There is way too much bureaucratic barbed wire you need to cross in order to join such a conference. We are happy that you have made it!

A bid word of thanks also to all those (among them all our partners and who were engaging with this conference, sharing thoughts and giving advice, investing time and energy in preparing workshops, lectures, the open spaces and last but not least our field trips. Thanks also due to the Robert Bosch Foundation who has been so generously and faithfully supporting NECE over the last years.

Last but really not least: also join me to give a hand for our organizing teams: from the Federal Agency for Civic Education: my special thanks to Yvonne, Elma and Lisa and the Agency labconcepts to Rachel, Sonja, Marie and Bianca who are with us today.

Without their work and spirit, we would never have made it to Glasgow...

Why are we here?

A first and very simple answer: we want to know and learn more about Glasgow as a vibrant international and Scottish city. NECE is always about places and cities although and maybe just because we are a transnational network.

All politics is local, as we know, and that may also apply to citizenship education.





So, on the one hand:

We are here to explore the new confidence of Glasgow as an active laboratory working for solutions and meeting challenges. The TIC, our conference venue, is displaying that spirit, I believe. Roger Rogerson from the Institute of Future Cities will tell us more about the complexities and potentials of Glasgow before we start our field trips.

At the same time: our choice of Glasgow is not a coincidence. Glasgow is well known for its extreme social inequalities and discrepancies in the life and health of its citizens. Lots of facts and figures in the essays we have put on our website.

The city in a way provides a mirror to one of the most fundamental questions in citizenship education and in education in general. And let me add: not only for education but also for the future and well-being of democracies in the world.

The key questions we invite you to explore with us are simple but also hard to answer: I rephrase here from Michalis Kakos' essay on our website: Can and should citizenship education do something to address these divisions and challenges?

And, if the answer is yes:

- What exactly, then, could citizenship education, with its many stakeholders, initiatives, school and out of school formats, do to enable citizens and students to overcome inequalities?
- What kind of knowledge and practice do we need to be successful in such an engagement?

It is our hope, that this conference can come up with the spirit and the confidence (also taking clues from the citizens of this city) and the ideas and resources to really confronting the impact of inequalities in our lives and the lives of our fellow citizens beyond borders.

On that note, over to you Alicja.

