



Citizenship Beyond Brexit: An Agenda for Times of Trouble

Introduction: **Christoph Müller-Hofstede**, Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), Germany

Eve Hepburn, PolicyScribe, UK

Maia Mazurkiewicz, Front Europejski, Poland

Adam Ramsey, openDemocracy, UK

Katerina Toura, Council of Europe, France

Moderation: **Nelly Corbel**, Global Civic Consulting, NECE Advisory Board, Egypt/France

This is a transcript of the video-recording of the panel, which took place at the NECE Conference in Glasgow, UK, on 25 October 2019.

Nelly Corbel: Wow, silence on its own. Thank you. Welcome to our last plenary of NECE 2019. We will be having now quite a discussion about European Citizenship Beyond Brexit: An Agenda for Time of Troubles. Unfortunately, Mr. Krüger, the director of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education, could not make it ironically because of fog in Germany, not here. We're very sorry to not have him, but we do have the pleasure to have the introduction by Christoph. Christoph, the floor is yours.

Christoph Müller-Hofstede: Apologies again from our director, but of course It's really the weather or the fog in Munich, who was preventing him to be here. I read out his statement he was supposed to deliver. Bear with me if it sounds too presidential in a way.

[laughter]

Dear colleagues, thank you so much for the opportunity and honor to address you with a few introductory words before this upcoming panel. I'm delighted to be in Glasgow, the city that stands not just for famous football teams: Celtic and Rangers, Glasgow is also the city which mirrors the European and British conquest of the world with all its great and dark moments. If I'm not mistaken, Glasgow class differences, social struggles and inequalities still shape the city today. At the same time, I see Glasgow as a large global network laboratory, in which many civic initiatives, vibrant civic society, and scientific lighthouses, such as the Technology and Innovation Centre here, are working to find ways how to address the challenges the city is facing.

Also, let me take this opportunity to thank our partners and citizens here in Glasgow, who have enabled us to learn more about the city, who have opened many doors





and who really have impressed us with great hospitality. Please, stay with us and on the map of NECE in the future.

Now to our panel. Just two brief remarks and reflections. Firstly, how do we see the future of European citizenship after Brexit? Secondly, what can citizenship education ultimately achieve when it comes to the major transformations of our societies in times of trouble?

As you all know, the elephant in the room has been getting bigger in the past two weeks. I only can quote the writer and British historian, Timothy Garton Ash, who is surely right when he suggests that, "We Brits owe all our European friends, a sincere apology, a bottle of whiskey and complimentary tickets to a Royal Shakespeare Company performance of Hamlet. For Britain is now Hamlet, forever agonizing over whether Brexit is to be or not to be."

[laughter]

As things stand now, the UK and thus, also the city and Scotland as part of the UK, will leave the EU either in a few days' time, or in a few weeks' time or maybe in a few months' time. As we are facing, not only a variety of timelines as the BBC put it recently, we are also facing a scandal coming up. A scandal that affects quite a few people in this room as well. 65 million UK citizens will lose the EU citizenship that day. Without accurate information let unknown rights of appeal and more than 3 million EU citizens living in the UK will also lose some of their rights and status.

Dear colleagues, this is clearly not a case of keep calm and carry on, however attractive the slogan may be. This will be a serious setback for all those for whom the European project, with its core ideas of equal and free European citizens, has been a fixed point in their lives and projects in recent decades.

On another level, it's also bad news, because Europe's weight in a power driven and insecure world of authoritarian superpowers in the West and in the East is being weakened. For me, European citizenship, the first transnational citizenship of modernity, stands in clear contrast to the scenarios of retreat to identity politics and nationalism.

Our networking platform, NECE was founded in 2004, based on the inspiration we took from a younger generation across Europe, to become true European citizens living and studying or working anywhere they choose. It's important to note that European citizenship is really not only about personal fulfillment, it also keeps Europe together because it provides a space for networks and collective values beyond the nation state. NECE and its platforms connect educators and active citizens in Europe and its neighboring European regions, regardless of their legal status.

We are, if you like, trying to enact transnational citizenship for EU citizens, as well as for people outside of Europe. More than ever, these formats and spaces should be protected, and if possible, expanded. What can we do? Keep calm and carry on is not an option as I said before. In the upcoming years, we need to find ways of working around Brexit to keep these spaces and networks that I just mentioned open for British citizens, regardless of their legal status.





The issue of European citizenship in itself should take a more prominent and visible role in our work as citizenship educators. This transnational entitlement of European citizens anchored in the European treaties should be strengthened and must become part and parcel of our educational activities. Above all, access and practice must be improved. I stress for the EU as well as for our friends and colleagues from non-European countries, we need equal access to information, we need civic education and practical appeal opportunities to enjoy the advantages Europe can offer.

The key question, of course, is how can EU citizenship become a citizenship for all and not only for the privileged and educated sections of the population? When it comes to disseminating this message, we need partners on the NGO level, such as the ECIT Foundation in Brussels, and of course, other transnational initiatives. We really hope for the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe to take an active role in that journey.

Finally, what can citizenship education, our profession, our working field ultimately achieve in such an insecure world? What are the lessons we should draw from Brexit and the fundamental challenges our democracies are facing? Here we come full circle on our subject of inequalities, which has been at the center of this conference. The link between rising inequalities and threats to the long-term viability of our democracy, are I think quite obvious.

It is almost like climate change. There are hardly any serious experts now who deny that inequality in our world has reached historic proportions in most countries of the world over the past 40 years. As Branko Milanović, one of the leading inequality experts in the world, shows in his new book *capitalism alone*, inequalities are deeply political on a global scale, be it in China with its version of political capitalism, or in the Western world with its version of liberal capitalism.

More and more wealth and power are concentrated in fewer hands, reinforcing the polarization between the elites and the rest, and the tendency toward the creation of a self-perpetuating upper class. Essentially, economic power gets conflated with political power and it remains the case that Brexit, I believe was unquestionably strongest in a more economically marginal and left behind Britain. For many people as the saying goes, the concern is not the end of the world, but the end of the month. That's why I firmly believe the social divide and inequalities in our societies have to become a permanent and prominent topic of citizenship education on the local, the national, and global levels.

For our times of trouble, we need to move out of our comfort zones and open up new areas of action, new approaches and new attention for people in structurally weak regions outside metropolitan areas are needed.

Too many people are living behind the invisible, but quite hard borders in our city. As educators and activists with a noble mission, we have to check carefully if we are not preaching to the converted way too often and if we are not too complacent about the moral high ground we are occupying.

For this, we need new actors who do not necessarily always follow the textbooks of such education. Surely, you have discussed this before in this conference. We





should avoid the impression that enlightenment and education for the hard to reach must come from above. Instead of talking about target groups, a term from advertising, we should think about core producers of citizenship education.

Many of the initiatives coordinated and networked by NECE and outside of NECE, I stress to say, have already opened up new avenues and spaces in that field. I am convinced NECE, with its many partners all over Europe can, and is able to create the powerful antidote to the toxic forces and dynamics in our societies. NECE is here to stay, together with you. Thank you for your attention.

[applause]

Nelly: Thank you very much, Christoph for Mr. Krüger. All right. Let's dive in. I would like to invite to the stage our four panelists. I've lost my panelists. No, they're here. May I invite you? As they take a seat, I'd like to share a quick introduction with you for this panel.

Brexit, not going to try to explain it, definitely, I'm the wrong person to do this, but what I know is that it's been a lot about politics. Here we're at a citizenship education conference so where is the citizenship education in all this? According to a recent survey that was done amongst leave voters, most think violence towards member of parliaments is a price worth paying. 71% in England, 60% in Scotland, and 70% in Wales think violence is a price worth paying for Brexit. This is where Citizenship Education meets Brexit.

Our first speaker today is Dr. Eve Hepburn. She is the founder and managing director of PolicyScribe, an ethical policy research consultancy. She is also an academic fellow at the Scottish Parliament, an honorary fellow at the Edinburgh Europe Institute, and a member of the Advisory Board of the Scottish Center on European relations. She has authored nine books and over 50 journal articles on public policy, devolution, European integration citizenship, and migration. Eve, the floor is yours.

Eve Hepburn: Hello, everyone. Can you hear me? Good. Well, first of all thank you very much to the organizers for inviting me and to Thomas through Christoph for his excellent analysis of European citizenship and citizenship education.

As important reminder of what the UK sets to lose in the way of our European citizenship rights when we leave the EU makes me think that on Brexit day whenever that is, it could be the first of November, could be on the 1st of February 2020, I will probably be heartbroken. I'll be heartbroken for many reasons.

Firstly, for myself, personally, who's taken full advantage of free movement rights to live work and study in other European countries. I will feel the heavy loss of not being able to do so in future. Secondly, for my children who will perhaps never know the freedom and beauty of living in different EU countries without the need for a visa, of experiencing other cultures, learning different languages with ease and possibility. Thirdly, and most importantly, I will be heartbroken because of the impact that Brexit will wreak on our communities across the UK. That's because Brexit will have an unequal impact on people living in this country.





Now, this conference has been focused on inequalities and citizenship. Once the UK leaves the EU, it will be a prime test case for how to make inequalities vastly worse with a single policy decision. This is because Brexit will have the most brutal impact on the least privileged and most vulnerable in our society including people with disabilities, black and minority, ethnic groups children in care, people on low incomes and women.

Now, part of this has to do with the loss of European citizenship which will be devastating to people who have sought to make another European country their home. Brexit will also involve the potential loss of legal protections including a freestanding right to non-discrimination contained in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and also the loss of employment rights if we don't put EU secondary like legislation onto the UK statute books to protect worker's rights.

Given that most economists say that Brexit is going to be very bad for our economy, this is going to have a massive social economic impact including potential job losses, rising food and fuel prices and cuts to public services. In other words, Brexit will exacerbate the divisions that already exist in our society and plunge many vulnerable people into an even more insecure status. Nowhere is that clearer than in the lives of EU nationals living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU.

Now, over the past three years since the referendum, EU citizens have experienced stress and uncertainty as the UK government has failed to guarantee their legal status and rights in law. This has been made worse by an increase in xenophobia and hate crimes against EU nationals making them feel even less welcome in the place they call home.

As a result, we've seen a significantly high number of EU nationals leave the UK in the last three years and lower levels of EU nationals moving to the UK leading to major skills shortages in our labor market. Now, a few days ago, the UK government published its withdrawal agreement bill that sets out provisions for citizens rights. Now, while these provisions set out to protect the rights of EU nationals to continue living in the UK, if you read the text more closely which I've been doing for the last few days, you'll see that there still remain many risks to EU citizens rights.

For instance, there is a risk of deportation of EU nationals who fail to register with the EU Settlement Scheme. This is the UK's compulsory registration scheme to verify the status of EU citizens. If they don't do that before the end of the transition period, they risk being deported. Now, so far, only 50% of EU nationals in the UK have actually applied to the scheme and only about 25% in Scotland. There are concerns that certain groups of EU nationals will lose these rights to live in the UK. This includes in particular, for instance, elderly people who have cognitive impairments, care experience, children, homeless people without proof of residence.

Secondly the settlement scheme is in itself creating inequalities of rights among EU nationals. Those who can prove that they've lived here for five years continuously get settled status, a kind of indefinite leave to remain, while those with less than five years get pre-settled status, a temporary form of residence with less social and mobility rights. Finally, the withdrawal agreement bill does not remove the rest of no-





deal Brexit, it merely postpones its cliff edge to the 31st of December 2020. If we have a no-deal Brexit, then EU citizens will lose even more of their rights.

What can we do to address these risks to our citizenship rights here in Scotland? Well, as you know, Scotland did not vote to leave the EU. In fact, 62% of people in Scotland voted to remain, and the main goal of the Scottish Government led by the SNP is to stay in the EU. Today, the Scottish Government has done a number of things to try and protect the rights of EU nationals. I don't have time to go into all of them here, but it involves giving funding to charities, creating a helpline to try and support EU nationals apply for citizenship and challenging the UK Government to try and change the status of citizens' rights.

All EU nationals are given the same rights to live here in the UK. Could it do more? I think it can. Immigration and citizenship rights are reserved to the UK Government. There is a lot that the Scottish Government could do to try and protect the rights of EU nationals, and in particular, protect our social and economic rights. For instance, the Scottish Government has committed to protecting the rights of EU nationals to access healthcare in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The UK Government has not done that.

The Scottish Government could push this even further and creating a set of devolved citizenship rights for EU nationals and other migrants in Scotland as well, along the lines of what places like Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Quebec have done to protect their voting rights, their rights to Social Security, their healthcare rights.

Of course, these issues may be overtaken by events. As the Scottish Government is currently seeking another independence referendum, we had one in 2014, it lost, and only 45% of Scots voted for independence. Last week a poll showed that that has risen to 50% largely going to Brexit.

If we do have another independence referendum that passes, that means Scotland will try to become a full member of the European Union, and we get to keep our citizenship rights. A lot could happen between now and then, and this could sway the minds of voters in Scotland and the UK. I'm afraid you'll have to watch this space to find out how the rest of this Brexit saga unfolds. Thank you for your time. I'll pass it over to my colleagues.

[applause]

Nelly: Thank you, Eve. Thank you for this insight. I know it's hard to describe that in such a few minutes. I'd like to invite our next panelist, but before I introduce you to her, I've asked her and the others to really give us a true understanding of how the citizenship education in their countries and in their work will be impacted and what strategies they can put in place.

Our next panelist, as you will hear is not from the UK. How does that resonate in the rest of the EU? Maia Mazurkiewicz is a co-founder and member of the management board responsible for strategy and fighting disinformation of Alliance for Europe, and the coordinator of the European Friends and Keyboard Warriors in Poland. Maia has over 15 years of experience in political management, foreign affairs, and communication. She's an expert in cyber security fighting disinformation, and for four





years she has worked in the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. Maia, the floor is yours.

[applause]

Maia Mazurkiewicz: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be in here. Also, during this troubled time in UK and see how Glasgow is dealing with the issue. I'm talking with all of you as well, discussing Brexit and beyond. I'm coming from Poland, also quite a problematic country nowadays. I must tell you one thing, in 2015, we actually been first and one of the first in the European Union that being a troublemaker, we had a problem with our populistic government winning the elections in 2015.

I must tell you that I wasn't that much surprised when I've seen that Brexit referendum failed, and when I also seen that's basically the experience of all the Polish people, when you've seen Donald Trump running for the president, we're like, "He's going to be elected."

The reason why is mainly because of the communication. I strongly believe that civic education is not only education that is being held in schools and at the universities or also at the different communication meetings with people, but it's also where the communication is. That's where basically the problem was in the Polish elections and also during the Brexit referendum.

I remember when I was shocked when I realized or noticed that the first entrance question that appeared after the Brexit referendum in Google, the day after Brexit referendum was a question what the European Union is, and this is something that shows that it was a lack of knowledge about the European Union. The education about the European Union must have failed in the UK.

The other thing that was very much surprise for me was that Boris Johnson actually was one of the first that started with the fake news about the European Union already in '90s. He was basically running out at the beginning of '90s and saying all the fake news about the European Union and saying like, "You cannot do anything for me, to me right now." Right now, he's the Prime Minister that's going to be taking out UK from the European Union. UK is not unique, as Poland is not unique either. That's basically the way of how you communicate with people, and that's the main problem, the main issue.

What we did as the European Front, and the European Front is the coalition of different NGOs in Poland, we've seen what may happen, because we are here now, and a lot of activists, NGOs, and people who are doing publication are thinking about now and what we can do with the problems that we are facing now, but the reality is, what we really can do in order not to have these problems in 10 years.

When we've seen the issue about the European Union, and my surprise, you're not, but Poland is one of the most pro-European nations in the European Union. Like 80%, 90% of polls were saying yes for the European Union. Another thing is that at the beginning of 2015, most of the polls were in favor of accepting refugees to Poland. Then there was a propaganda campaign done by Jarosław Kaczyński and Law and Justice [party] saying that refugees are bad. Poland is very much homogenic country, so we don't know people coming from other countries that much,





unfortunately, it's very easy to make the campaign and put any face you want, and fear is a strong emotion. There's a lot of fear involved.

What really scared us, it was December 2017. When we've seen the research done by the Polish Academy of Science, where they asked polls, what would you do if the European Union would force you to accept refugees to Poland? 51.2% has said they would be against even if that would mean leaving the European Union. That was our main question. If 80% or 90% of polls are for the European Union, but with this question, they are eager to leave the European Union, everything can happen.

That leads to my main point, is the change of the attitudes of people possible? Yes, it is. That's where we need civic education, because we are right now trying to maintain status quo. Nationalists, people who are trying to blame the European Union are having an easier job because they are reacting to what we already have, and they're also thinking about the new technologies.

When we were studying the European Union, we knew that we want to give this positive lack of the European Front and the Alliance for Europe as well, Alliance for the pan-European Organization, we knew that we want to talk about the positive communication, but then we've seen that disinformation is a huge issue. If you will not fight the disinformation, that will be the main problem and issue. We realized what actually disinformation can lead to and disinformation is huge.

Our brain is working in the way that if you hear the same problem or the same sentence three times, you start to believe in it, you forget from where you actually get to know it and might have been at the beginning that you've seen it in YouTube, or you seen it in some funny thing, but then you hear it from your best friend or other person. That's where you need to really fact check and deal with it. Very much working with the disinformation and it's crucial right now to realize what disinformation can lead to.

Disinformation is having different levels as well. I will tell you a bit about my personal experience because disinformation also leads to the hate speech. People in the internet, they react a bit different, they go beyond their normal behaviors in the outside world. They're allowed, or they think they're allowed to tell a lot of things in the internet. Hate speech leads to one of the worst examples I can give you that happened this year. I'm coming from Gdansk. Gdansk is a beautiful city of Poland. In January there was a murder of our mayor, Paweł Adamowicz. It is very personal to me as well because he was my friend. I'd been actually working with him for the first campaigns. It was like one of the first campaigns that I worked to. He was stabbed on the station in the charity event. Charity event that is bringing so many Poles actually to help people and to help each other. He was stabbed in the very day and was like a huge issue for us.

Poland has stopped for several weeks and we thought this is going to change something. Also, I must tell you the reason why it happened. It was because he was very much anti-government. OKO.press one of the free media in Poland had done the research saying that there was over 1,000 information about him that were fake or negative during the whole 2018 year. It means there was like in the national





media, so it means that was like free information about him that were fake or negative each day.

Then there was a person who was watching this TV, and of course, he probably was having a mental issue, but he decided to kill him. That's where disinformation, hate speech and lack of proper education can lead to. I think that we're having a huge task in front of us. To make civic education better but also simpler. I think we cannot just stand in here and say like young people are not reading books, what can we do with that. Let's try to communicate with them in the way they understand. Thank you very much, I'm looking forward for our discussion.

[applause]

Nelly: Thank you very much, Maia, for these insightful, factual, and also courageous inputs. Our next speaker today is Adam Ramsay he is an editor at opendemocracy.net where he has covered Britain's democratic crisis for six years. Including investigating the role of money and the influence industry. He lives in Edinburg and he is on the board of wishes for Scotland the campaign for Scottish independence. Adam, the floor is yours.

Adam Ramsay: Thank you, how are you all doing? Welcome to Scotland. I thought I talk very quickly about some of the causes of Brexit some of the consequences of Brexit and some of the things we can do about that in seven minutes. I have written a list. I thought I will run through it quickly. I know some of you aren't native English speakers, so if I talk too fast can just jump and down and wave, I can slow down a bit.

Audience: Slow down.

Adam: I'll slow down. I think the first thing we need to understand as a kind of citizen education conference is that one of the key forces driving Brexit was the way neoliberalism deskilled our citizens and transformed us from citizens into consumers over a phase of 40 years. They taught us we made decisions in society with one dollar, one vote; one pound, one vote; one euro, one vote, rather than one person one vote. We got bad at talking about things. We got bad at discussing political issues. We got very good at shopping, but bad at talking about things.

Then what you've seen is the breakdown of neoliberalism and its replacement with a kind of more sinister form of surveillance capitalism as Shoshana Zuboff has outlined. For me, Brexit is an absolutely key part of that. I spend my day job investigating some of the dirt money which drove Brexit. The universal story is it comes from Britain's Tax havens, it's offshore money and it's people who wanted Britain to escape the EU because they want to stash their money offshore because as capitalists, they can't see what to invest in yet. Again. they have lost track of opportunities since they plundered most of the world geographically. They're stashing their cash offshore and Britain is the world's most important offshore haven. It's the world's money laundry, and the EU was getting in the way of that and so they invested very heavily in the Brexit campaign.

Then alongside that, we've seen the rise of English nationalism which in a sense the product of they brought down British Empire and more recently the kind of centrifugal





forces unleashed by Blair in the late '90s, putting the British state apart, some which were good things, but which we need to understand more deeply and particularly I think we have to understand Brexit as an English vote.

It wasn't even Scotland who voted for Brexit, it wasn't even other European countries, it was people of England specifically that voted for Brexit. England outside London, in particular, voted very, very heavily for Brexit in a way that the rest of the UK just didn't.

I think we need to understand Brexit as a backlash against egalitarian movements, a backlash against feminism and against anti-racism movements we should stand up to it. As such, we need to understand that Brexit is the only change a lot of people were offered. I spent three weeks of Brexit in Doncaster interviewing people who said, "I don't like your idea of Brexit, but it's the only change anyone has offered me in 40 years. Of course, I'm going to vote for it."

I think we need to understand it as a consequence of the EU's failure to deliver social justice the way it's crossed Greece with austerity. I was at the docks in Athens the day of the elections in 2015 and a lot of people in Britain, who might have mobilized to defend the EU couldn't bring himself to do so because they'd been so shocked by the way the EU had behaved across Europe throughout the austerity crisis.

You also need to understand Brexit partly as a consequence of the way that liberals often talk about Europe, as though it isn't another emerging community. Europe is a real thing. We need to be honest with ourselves, that Europe is just the white sub-continent at the end of Asia, but not particularly special thing. It is mostly a racist idea, we need to disentangle our own racism from ourselves. I think of myself as European, but that identity is very deeply racialized and policed with violent borders which leads to the death we've seen in Britain of thousands of people over the last years.

As we think about the consequence of Brexit, as you've already heard, you'd think deeply about the way it's going to drive inequality deeply in Britain. Britain is already recently seeing the rise of white ghettos, the rise of gated communities, the increasing securitization of the wealthy and exclusion of the rest.

In our communities and the tearing of our society apart, we're now arguably the most unequal society in Europe and approaching the western world. Brexit will absolutely accentuate that as Britain becomes more and more the world's money launderer as our financial sector booms and industrialization collapses as the value of the pound soars through. That kind of speculation process. That's deeply worrying.

I think we need to think about the pedagogical consequence of Brexit. Some of which are positive. It's the first time that Britain has been forced to confront its own imperial legacy. The first time we've heard conversation in Britain through TV shows, through books, through society about the violence we wrought on people across the world. The amount of time I've had to explain to people what happened in Ireland, what happened in Kenya? What we did to the people of Australia over the last decades.





The fact that we're now beginning, finally, to have a conversation about these things is a positive consequence of Brexit. Although that conversation is sometimes highly wrought. I think we need to understand that we're likely to see, only if it's a very high chance we're going to see the breakup of the UK in the coming years. I was just down the road, a pro-independent conference which had hundreds of people out here singing, very high energy. They're quite likely to see another referendum in the coming years and there is a very, very good chance Scotland going to leave UK. There is a very good chance that Northern Ireland will vote to join the rest of Ireland.

The result of that will be the breakup of the British state as it was. England will then have to re-find itself. It's quite likely we will then see Scotland and United Ireland and England and Wales as separate countries rejoin the EU.

If the EU can, throughout that period, build itself into a constructive egalitarian open democratic force, that is what happens.

[applause]

Nelly: Thank you, Adam. Thank you very much and it was very comprehensible. Last but not least, let's welcome our next speaker, Katerina Toura who specializes in education and human rights. Since 2017, she's been working as a programme manager in the Education Policy division of the Council of Europe. Before that and since 2006, she has worked in the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Katerina has also been a researcher at the University of Athens. Katerina, the floor is yours.

Katerina Toura: Thank you very much Nelly, and thank you to the nice organizers for an invitation to the most exciting conference. When I first read the title of this plenary session, in my mind I instantly reformulated as European citizenship beyond Brexit, an agenda for times of one more trouble. The potentially upcoming Brexit as already mentioned yesterday is not exceptional. It's one more challenge and as explicitly explained earlier by Eve, definitely a very big one. Even more so today, when societies in Europe are faced with numerous challenges. The ongoing social-economic crisis and tense political situation in many countries, the large influx of refugees, the persistence of human rights abuses, the growth of homegrown terrorism.

We live in a Europe in which populism, extremism, and forceful nationalism are increasingly gaining ground. Democracy is being frightened and education seriously challenged, let alone citizenship education. In March 2016, a staff member at a nursery school in the United Kingdom asked a four-year-old boy about a drawing he had made. The boy explained that it depicted his father cutting a cucumber, but the nursery staff member understood it as his father preparing a cooker bomb, due to the child's pronunciation. She then informed the parents that she would report the child to a deradicalization program but as the issue became public, local authorities encouraged her not to do so.

Both the child and the parents felt discriminated against, and the boy was left reluctant to join in class discussions for fear of being suspected of extremism. Not much did I actually hear since Thursday about the effect of counter deradicalization policies such as prevent in the UK, on the education systems across Europe, but





also on citizenship and human rights education. It is more than a fact that the agenda has changed. Not that all these challenges are new, but the contexts are different. At the same time, the global recession of democracy which goes hand-in-hand with a distorted understanding or conceptualization of democracy's school is increasingly seen as being on the front line of all battles.

In this regard, citizenship education alone may not be enough. The focus should be on providing education for active democratic citizenship. The need for recontextualizing and revisiting the content of citizenship education is more than topical. Already back in 2016, the review of the Council of Europe Charter and education for democratic citizenship and human rights had three main conclusions. Inconsistencies between policies and their implementation were reported by 66% of government respondents in 2016, compared with 20% in 2012. Over 80% of government respondents felt that greater awareness of the relevance of citizenship and human rights education for addressing the current challenges in our societies is needed in order for such education to receive a greater priority in their countries and of course, relevance.

Over a third of government respondents stated that there are scarce or non-existent references to education for democratic citizenship and human rights in laws, policies and strategic objectives, in vocational education and training and higher education. The underlying then-emerging demand lies in addressing the issues concerning students and their families, as well as education professionals while preserving the core democratic values of education. The underlying emerging demand lies in actually developing and or maintaining democratic schools that are inclusive, and where students feel safe to or can express themselves without fear. [coughs] I would like to have some water.

[laughter]

Thank you. For education to play an important role in developing the democratic culture without which societies will not be democratic regardless of their institutional and legal framework, education programs and system should aim to develop competencies that support this goal.

In this respect, the Council of Europe has developed the reference framework of competences for democratic culture based on 20 competencies organized around four categories. Values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding.

Even if different competencies may be developed at different levels of education and in different learners, education systems should aim to develop all competences in all learners. A democratically competent individual will demonstrate all competencies to some extent. Knowledge is accompanied by critical understanding, and cannot be seen in isolation from skills, values, and attitudes. Competencies for democratic culture cannot just be taught theoretically. They also need to be practiced. Democratic citizenship relies on putting theory into practice. It combines knowledge and understanding, with the ability and will to act. These competencies must, therefore, be developed through education practice, as well as through theoretical learning.





Schools that are run in authoritarian way or that do not encourage student participation in the learning process and in the daily life of the school, will not develop a culture of democracy in its students and will in the worst of cases, lead students to become cynical of democracy as a system in which discourse and principles are contradicted by action. Education institutions and systems should, therefore, take a whole-school approach to develop active democratic citizenship. Schools should encourage student and staff participation in the learning process, as well as in institutional governance adapted to the age of the students.

In the same way, policymakers should take a whole system approach. Developing active Democratic citizenship is an important mission for all of Education. The mission includes higher education as well as vocational education and training, and preschool education. The purpose is then of education and its ability to further democratic culture and social inclusion should be important elements in assessing the quality of education.

Effective education systems and institutions, help students overcome barriers rooted in their socioeconomic backgrounds. They remove or compensate for obstacles that follow from student's backgrounds, and may prevent individuals from fulfilling their aspirations. When we think of democracy, the images that come to mind are often those of Parliament's, City Council's, constitutions and elections. However, these institutions and laws will not work in practice unless people and society have developed a democratic culture.

These designates attitudes and behaviors that characterize democratic citizenship and seek to resolve conflicts peacefully and through debate. Recognize that while majorities decide, minorities have rights, are respectful of diversity, are conscious of and concerned about our physical environment, and seek to include all members of society. Ultimately, these attitudes and behaviors help make our societies sustainable. Education at all levels and of all strands plays an essential role in developing and maintaining democratic culture. These attitudes and behaviors must be developed anew in each generation and maintained throughout life.

Formal education through education system and institution plays indeed a particularly important role in this regard. In the European continent, EU or non-EU countries inclusive, education is one of the few areas of which virtually all citizens have direct personal experience for much of their lives. As students, as parents, as education professionals, as representatives of public authorities or NGOs or in other capacities, many citizens will play several of these roles simultaneously or in the course of their lives. We need to take stock of this no matter what. Thank you.

Nelly: Thank you so much, Katerina. Here we go, it works. Thank you very much. How can we expect grown-ups to be democratic when as children their learning environment was everything but democratic? Thank you for that great point. I will allow myself one question and then I will leave it open to the audience as our speakers have been great in respecting the time. We do have time today. It's a question that itches me quite a bit often and I'm hoping maybe you can give me some of your insights. In the collective mind often, there is this synonymous that citizenship engagement is civil disobedience and that disobedience the end justifies the means.





We end up more and more across Europe throughout movements, seeing the violence rising. When you discuss, often the answer is, “We’re just doing civil disobedience.” There’s that blurry line understanding because of the lack in a way of access. My question to all of you in these times of turmoil, in your opinion as civic education actors that we are, how can we may be clear the path for true citizenship engagement for an impact as a means to stay away from this violence that we see? Any of you would like to--Then I will have to decide. Maia, I knew this would be for you.

Maia: I can do it. This is very interesting question. Thank you for that.

Nelly: You’re welcome.

Maia: Indeed sometimes, we might say that activism or being active it’s being against the government as well and especially in the countries like Poland, it is like that. I’ve been always engaged, I’ve been always engaged into more like in the different NGOs but rather political leaning and actually after 2015 or in December 2015 right on my birthday, I attended for the very first time the protests on the street and that kind of activism is definitely against something. I think what is most important is that we really need to work in order to give this positive power to people and show them that being active also in a positive way can make a change.

I will tell you about the experience what we were doing through the Alliance for Europe because I think that aim of Alliance for Europe is actually to make a change and to give this positive power to citizens of the European Union and different organizations. Alliance for Europe was formed by 26 people who are coming from all over European countries, coming from very different backgrounds. We were having experience in politics in NGOs, but also in business.

Our goal is to build a platform for cooperation for different actors that understand that the European Union is the key and are willing to walk on this positive part of the European Union on communication and issues.

I think that in the terms it’s important that we work together and nationalist if you also look at that, they are very much united and they follow one leader and one aim for Democratic side or however a pro-European Union or however you cannot say that there’s a lot of different actors, they are very active, they know that it’s important because they’re dealing with, but each of them want to be active in their small sphere.

I strongly believe that if we’re going to be working together, we can have better capacities, we can learn from each other, we can have our know how’s that they’re already there. We don’t need to repeat what already been done but rather build on top of that. That’s what I believe and that’s my answer for your question I hope.

Nelly: Thank you very much, Maia. You’d like to chime in, please.

Adam: I suppose I think that activism, and in fact, education as a form of activism is only effective if it’s confronting power. What we’ve seen in the last decade is the powerful increasingly militarizing and securitizing the police as a response to growing challenges to their power. That’s played out in different ways in different places in the





world, but it's absolutely the case that as the world changes now, as we shift from one economic model globally to another, and we're seeing elites being challenged, many of those elites are responding by using security forces and police forces with violence to crush those who are leading the movements against them.

The way you respond to that is by trying to get more people involved because ultimately, the only way you end that situation is removing from power those who are using violence against democratic forces.

Nelly: Okay. Yes, please.

Eve: Thank you. I think that's an excellent question. It's really personal. In the UK in the last few years as well with the Brexit debates, how to clear the path away from violence, I think is also to expect our politicians and lawmakers to reject violent language. This has been an incredibly problematic issue in the Brexit debates over the last few years where we have seen, for instance, that the killing of a politician Joe Cox a few years ago, we have seen death threats against our politicians, against journalists, against anyone who is willing to make a stand on the Brexit debates.

We've seen a rise in hate crimes against minority ethnic groups when politicians have decried these groups. For instance, Boris Johnson a few years ago talked about Muslim women as letterboxes. I think it's very difficult as citizenship educators to confront these notions of violence where the people who are most influential in our society are legitimizing that hateful language. I think and not only that, but also disinformation as well, and post-truth politics, which is what Maya was talking about earlier. I think we need to educate our children but also adults as well on ways of peaceful demonstration and ways of peacefully expressing yourself.

Nelly: Thank you. You can keep it. Would you like to add anything Katerina?

Katerina: I would just focus more on Education.

Nelly: Please.

Katerina: Not only on political violence but on any form of violence that it might be interesting to mention here that discussion on violence in schools is equally topical today. We used to have discussions on violence in education. In a similar way and equally intensely 20 years ago, does that tell us anything? There has been a lot of citizenship education out there and not only citizenship education. I would just like to go back to the argument I raised during my speech that citizenship education needs to be recontextualized.

We need to revisit the context of citizenship education. For us and the Council of Europe, the focus needs to be on having children and young people develop their competencies. Their competencies for democratic culture that will among other things maybe may make them able to address controversial issues, be able to deal with conflict in a peaceful way, be more capable in conflict resolution, effective conflict resolution, among many, many other things I could be discussing if time was available. So 20 years ago and now, really not many, many differences in the context of our discussion. To me, that should be a red alert. Thank you.





Nelly: Thank you, Katerina. What I'm hearing here and correct me if I'm wrong is maybe we need to think not just civic education to our hard to reach learner, but make our work a little less hard to reach by maybe addressing ministries of interior, doing maybe a civic education program there, maybe working on a civic education program for politicians and how they use their language. I think Katerina has a curriculum quite ready for us so maybe we have a program here. I'd like to open it for questions or comments from the audience.

[END OF RECORDING]

