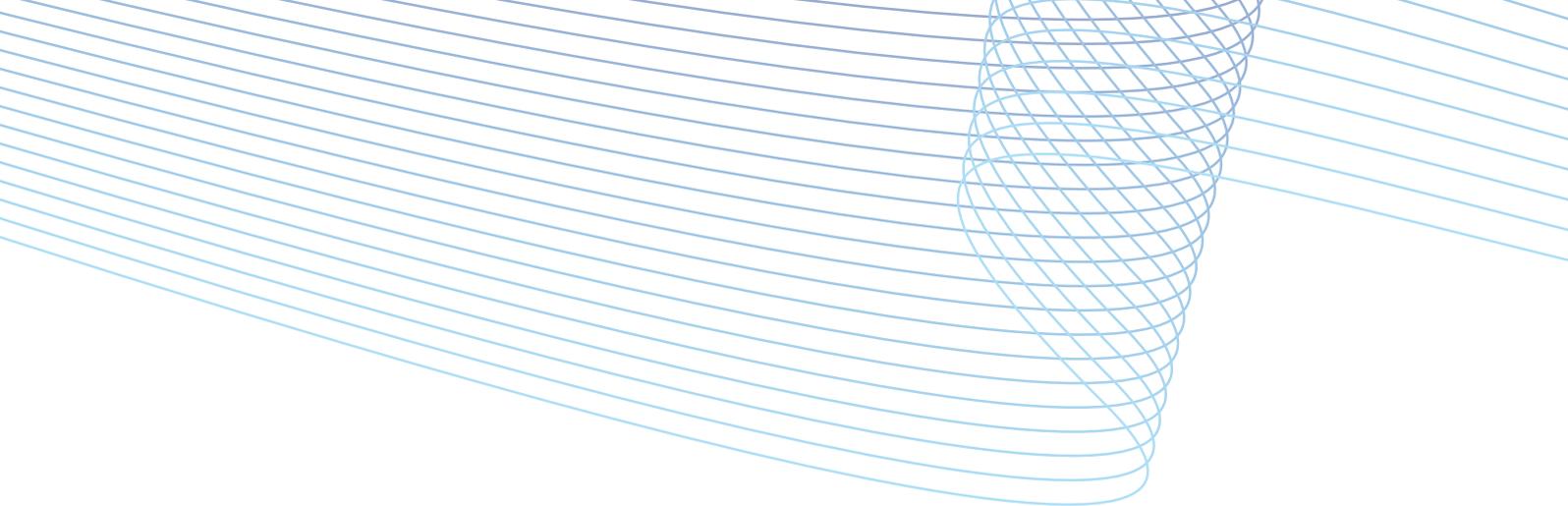




**European
Movement**
International

Policy Position EU Education at School



The European Union is today facing a host of challenges. Existing trends of polarisation are accelerated by geopolitical changes and social inequalities. Far left and far right political parties as well as anti-establishment movements are gaining ground, often rejecting the values that the EU stands for. This year, Article 50 was triggered for the first time and the United Kingdom has started the process of leaving the EU. One of the underlying issues is a general detachment of citizens from both national and EU politics. The European Movement International believes that citizenship education and a better understanding of the EU are essential in promoting an informed and critical debate about Europe without resorting to populist messages which are often grounded in misinformation or so-called 'alternative facts'.

Fostering active citizenship

One important way to foster trust and democratic legitimacy is by fostering the social, civic and intercultural skills which will allow citizens to actively participate in an open and inclusive society and democracy. The European Movement International proposes promoting active citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.

At EU level, there is a strong commitment to civic education, reflected in the [Education and Training 2020 strategic framework](#), the [2015 Paris Declaration](#), the [2016 European Parliament report](#) and the [revision of the European Key Competence framework](#). The overall objective is to assist young people to become active, responsible and critically thinking citizens.



Civil society organisations play an important role in the implementation of such an objective: They create space for students and teachers to engage in social and civil life and can bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education methods by carrying out different projects and school-based activities. Non-formal learning methods can create space for the personal development of students, awakening interest in national and international political processes, which in turn can form the foundations for developing a sense of identity with the European Union.

Several initiatives implemented by organisations who are part of European Movement International's network have proven successful and deserve the continued political and financial support of European and national policy makers. It is not only in times of crisis that civic education is important, funding and support must be guaranteed in a long term and sustainable way.

Overcoming barriers to non-formal education methods

Citizenship education programmes often employ non-formal methodologies that face a lack of funding, recognition and acknowledgement of their educational potential within schools and formal education. Youth organisations providing educational work on citizenship education are especially confronted with these barriers. The European Movement International believes that knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal learning methods, including volunteering experiences, are crucial for the development of civic skills. Therefore, increased funding and better integration in school curricula of non-formal education methods employed by civil society organisations is desirable. Taking into consideration the digitalisation in our societies and diminishing voter turn-out, the European Movement International believes that projects that encourage

e-tools for democratic participation and civic education are particularly well suited to address the challenges outlined above.



The European Movement International advocates a budget increase in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, in particular for highly successful non-formal education programmes such as Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens and Creative Europe post 2020. Continued financial support and participation of all European partners including EEA countries and candidate countries in student mobility programmes is desirable. To bring educational efforts in line with the transformation of the current work force, greater support needs to be provided for informal education programmes tackling basic and advanced digital skills.

Fostering education on the EU in schools

Efforts to include a European dimension in the education systems of the EU's Member States date back to

1988 when the Council passed a resolution holding that Member States should make every effort to explicitly incorporate the European dimension in their school curricula¹.

While since then, most Member States have implemented education on the EU into their curricula, the information therein is often fragmented, not progressive, too general and lacks of both consistency and complementarity with the other subjects that are taught. EU topics generally constitute at most a small part of the curriculum and all too often the focus lies on geography and the history of EU integration and less on how the institutions function and on how they relate to national institutions². This makes it difficult for learners to build a comprehensive picture of the EU and the individual citizen's role therein, which does not lead to the development of a sense of European identity.

The voter turnout in the last European Union elections was 42.6 percent. In addition, according to the latest [Eurobarometer report](#), 42 per cent of Europeans state that they do not know how the European Union works³. [The](#)

1. Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council on the European dimension in education of 24 May 1988 (88/C 177/02), available at [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:41988X0706\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:41988X0706(01)&from=EN).

2. ICF GHK, Learning Europe at School, Final Report of 11 April 2013, available at <http://www.eupika.mfdps.si/Files/Learning%20Europe%20at%20School%20final%20report.pdf>

3. Eurobarometer, Spring 2016, "Report. Public opinion in the European Union", available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail>

“increased funding and better integration in school curricula of non-formal education methods employed by civil society organisations is desirable.”

[2016 European Parliament report](#) on Learning EU at school therefore calls for an increased European dimension in education across different disciplines, levels and forms of education in Member States⁴.

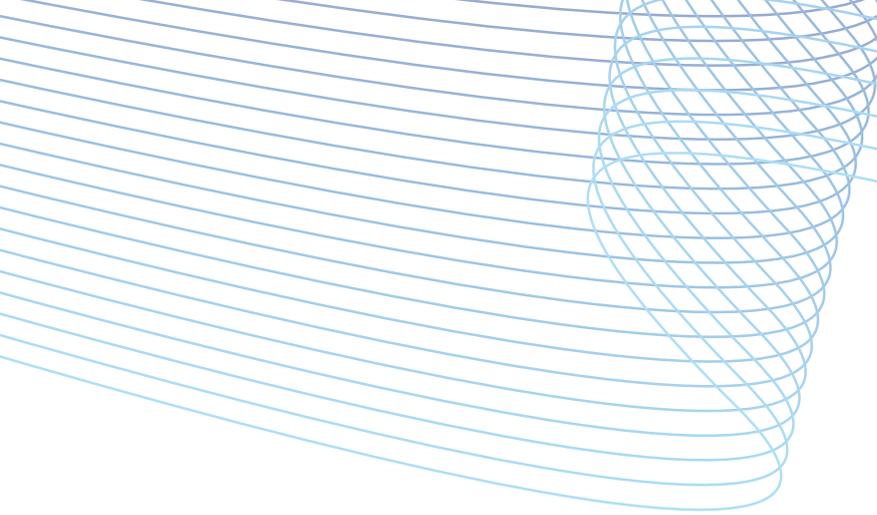
In support of the Parliament's report, the European Movement International firmly believes that education on the EU needs to have more space in the school curricula. While the European Union is a project with many imperfections, much of the criticism circulating in the media is based on, and preys upon, insufficient knowledge of the EU and the lack of information on its added value for the individual citizen. All political actors must therefore act to foster a comparable political, cultural and digital education for all generations across Europe.

Again, non-formal methods can play a part in bridging the gap between the EU and its citizens. Existing educational activities such as the Jean

[vevDetail/yearFrom/1974/yearTo/2017/search/citizenship/surveyKy/2130](#), p. 109.

4. European Parliament report on Learning EU at school (2015/2138(INI)) of 3 February 2016, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A8-2016-0021+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

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Monnet Learning Europe at School action, e-twinning and EU learning networks at the national level should be strengthened. University education should also pay more attention to education on the EU. One opportunity to do that is by integrating classes on the EU for all participants of the Erasmus study exchange programme.

More integration in education policy
When it comes to education policy, the European Union has a supporting role, while the Member States retain national sovereignty. EU education policy thus serves to coordinate the sharing of good policy practice and mutual learning, to encourage mobility of teaching staff and students as well as to harmonise the recognition of diplomas between the Member States.

The European Movement International would like to see more integration in education policy. As a start, the development of a common framework with guidelines for learning about the EU would be desirable to

assist Member States' contribution to fostering a sense of objective and critical thinking about the benefits of the EU for its citizens.

Such a framework should be complementary to the EU's revised [Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#) Framework reflecting current political, social, economic, ecological and technological developments. In view of the growing importance of online tools in democratic processes against the backdrop of a continuing digital divide, it is also crucial to foster digital competencies and media literacy in schools to encourage active e-citizenship participation early on.

Fostering citizenship education and promoting education on the EU in schools by means of both formal and non-formal methodologies helps improving democratic culture and political literacy at both EU and national level. It is thus an area of common concern for all Member States, deserving of common guidelines and increased financial support.

The European Movement

seeks to provide a platform to encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens and stakeholders in the development of European solutions to our common challenges. We offer thought leadership on the issues that affect Europe and we give the opportunity to representatives from European associations, political parties, enterprises, trade unions, NGOs and other stakeholders, through our 39 National Councils and 36 International Associations, to work together, towards improving the way that Europe works.

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