

European Civic Days  
La Rochelle - 4-5-6 September 2008

Workshop 4

**Education (formal, non formal and informal): a driving force for an active European citizenship?**

EUCIS-LLL organised a workshop on “**Education (formal, non formal and informal): a driving force for an active European citizenship?**” in the frame of the European Civic Days which were held on September 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> in La Rochelle. The three transversal topics of the Days were participation, dialogue and mobility. Around 1000 association stakeholders came to share their points of view in 14 thematic workshops. These Days were organised by the European Civic Forum with the support of the European Commission and the French Presidency of the European Union. The workshop on education gathered more than 80 participants and gave the opportunity of discussing important issues.

The workshop was chaired by **Stefano VITALE**, member of EAICY (European Association of Institutions of Non-Formal Education for Children and Young People) and vice-president of FICEMEA (International Federation of Training Centers for the Promotion of New Education). Various actors of education and training were represented. **Juan DEL RÍO**, member of the management committee of the Spanish League of Education and representing the Cives Foundation (which is member of FEED - European Federation for Education and Culture), **Ingrida MIKISKO**, director of the Association for the Education of Adults in Latvia (which is member of EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults), **Monika STACHNIK-CZAPLA**, in charge of the international activities of the youth centre JORDAN in Krakow and vice-president of EAICY and **Tommaso GRIMALDI**, secretary general of the European Vocational Training Association (EVTA), presented their concrete experiences and their reflections on the issue of education to active European citizenship. Each of these associations is a member of the Platform EUCIS-LLL which promotes lifelong learning. Several concrete proposals were made and mentioned again during the general conclusion of the Days.

**Issues raised in the workshop**

Apart from its role of imparting learning content, education has a crucial social and civic role to create social bonding and a feeling of belonging in the citizens. Through the integration of people having social difficulties (migrants, marginalised young people, etc.), the promotion of European exchanges, the development of active citizenship through sports, ITC, environment, etc. education contributes to the prosperity of democracy and of social cohesion in Europe. By “education” we mean both formal, non formal and informal learning, education of adults, continuous and vocational training. Everyone is concerned. *How does education participate in the emergence of an active European citizenship? What roles do schools, networks and associations hold in this process? How to fill the gap between citizens and the European project?*

The workshop also focused on the accessibility to European exchanges, which are a condition for a better appropriation of the European Union by citizens. Since their childhood and throughout their lives, European people have to be involved in European exchanges. However, in most cases, the accessibility of European programmes remains limited to the wealthiest persons. *How to generalise the access? How to favour participation, mobility and dialogue for everyone? What role can civil society organisations play? Are community programmes enough to meet the objectives set by the European Union?*

### Mobility

- Favouring physical, geographic, mobility as well as trans-cognitive/cultural mobility of people (open-mindedness).
- Giving everyone the possibility of accessing European mobility programmes (trainees, students, workers, etc.) by spreading information and developing European mobility programmes.
- Providing the possibility of shifting from one learning system to another by multiplying the bridges between formal and non formal education.
- Making lifelong learning a “constitutional right” in Europe.

### Dialogue

- Taking all kinds of education and training into account (formal, non formal, informal) and ensuring a transversal dialogue.
- Recognising the role of non formal education as complementary to schools and not only as filling the gaps left by schools.
- Ensuring an improved dialogue between actors of education and training: through common courses during initial and continuous training for educators, animators and teachers in order to give them means to act.
- Developing intercultural and intergenerational exchanges in Europe.
- Implementing civil dialogue between public authorities and civil society organisations : adoption of a statute for a European association.
- Setting up a European institute for lifelong learning in the EU similar to the UNESCO's.
- Maintaining a framework favouring dialogue : common values of “laïcité” (secularism) and democracy.
- Networking of actors of education and training, through for example, the European platform EUCIS-LLL.

### Participation

- Lifelong learning has to be a social project: everyone should be able to find his or her position in our European societies.
- Reconsider the notion of “competence” from the Latin “learning how to ask questions” = which goes past the sole adaptation to the labour market. We have to develop education to critical thinking and to contradictory debate.
- Developing education to European citizenship, especially in formal education.
- Strengthening information around the opportunities of participation in European exchange programmes.
- Making sure everyone has an access to information (ITC, languages, etc.).
- Implementing actions promoting lifelong learning (Lifelong Learning Weeks) in order to ensure that everyone can participate.
- Adopting sustainable attitudes / lifestyles to promote the link between education to active citizenship and sustainable development.