



CESVOV – Centre of services for volunteering of the  
province of Varese

## “ EUROPEAN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP ”

**Giustino Trincia**

Responsible for international politics in Cittadinanzattiva

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## 1. THE ORIGINS

- The concept of citizenship of the EU (Maastricht Treaty, 1992) provides the European citizens with a few rights (free circulation, active and passive electorate for local elections and or the European parliament elections, consular assistance in another member state of the Union, right of the petition for access to the documents)
- This is a new concept which is trying to build, according to the principle of subsidiarity, a complement of the national citizenship, and not to replace it.
- A unique innovation in the world: we are born already with double citizenship

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## 1. THE ORIGINS

- In front of the deficit of the citizens' participation in the democratic life (low participation at the elections, minor knowledge of the institutional mechanisms, lack of a real civic education in the schools), the first European initiatives for supporting the „active citizenship” are beginning to appear .
- Basically the idea is that the citizens are not just owners of their rights, but they have to be also involved in the European public life with a real and not just symbolic participation
- The European Council, in 1997, launched the program “Education à la citoyenneté démocratique” to identify the necessary values and competences to become active citizens and the means to gain them and to transmit them

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# 1. THE ORIGINS

- The European Union in 2004 starts the program „European Active Citizenship”, financially supporting the active movements of this topic, promoting debates on European topics among the citizens, spreading informative material.
- The program „European Active Citizenship” from 2007 to 2013, is dedicated to reduce the gap between the citizens and Europe, involving them in the process of the construction of Europe.
- The interventions aim to finance the already active subjects, like the organized civil society, and to support the apposite events and studies.

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# 2. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AS A NEW DIMENSION OF CITIZENSHIP

## Attention:

- We are going nowhere and risking to waste a lot of resources if we do not redefine, first of all, the concept of citizenship.

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## 2. THE TRADITIONAL CITIZENSHIP

- A group of rights and duties that regulate the relation between the individual citizen and the State they belong to.

### Examples

- respect the laws
- pay taxes
- elect the representatives
- participate in different ways in the collective big choices

## 2. THE TRADITIONAL AND THE NEW CITIZENSHIP

Rights and duties

+

Power and responsibilities

New citizenship



## 2. A DEFINITION OF NEW CITIZENSHIP

THE EXERCISE OF THE CITIZENS' POWER AND RESPONSABILITIES IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE DEMOCRACY, WHERE THEY FACE PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

*An educational route*



## 2. THE NEW CITIZENSHIP IS THE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

**“To act as a citizen is the best way to be one”**

Being an active citizen means operating in a manner that the citizens could exercise their power and responsibilities in all the situations in which their rights are violated or ignored.

## 2. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- Different types of organizations
- Different fields of intervention
- Different targets of citizens involved
- A well constructed and complex phenomenon
- An essential resource for the protection of the common goods
- At the basis: citizens who are able to act and to resolve problems and not just delegate and ask

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## 2. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND CARE OF THE COMMON GOODS

- Property of everyone
- Everybody can utilize them
- Ex. environment, culture, health, water
- 2009 winner of the Nobel prize for economy – Elinor Ostrom – talks about them!  
“Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action” (1990)
- They are often threatened
- Their deterioration impoverishes the society
- They are not the exclusive competence of the nation-state
- Which are, nowadays, the common goods for the youth?

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## 2. EUROPEAN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- Important for building a Europe of the citizens
- The engagement of the states and representatives is not enough
- Essential for promoting and protecting the „old” and „new” rights
- A resource to build a common European feeling and to provide a political and social spirit to the Union.
- To enforce European directives and regulations on the crucial fields: ex. environmental protection and energy saving

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## 3. YOUTH AND EUROPE

- **The relation: innovation**
- **Why is the European Union more and more necessary?**
- **What is the basic idea of Europe?**
- **A way of the research: the Charter of fundamental Rights of Nice (in 2000)**
- **United States of America and United States of Europe?**

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### 3. YOUTH AND EUROPE

#### IDEAS FOR RESEARCH AND REFLECTION:

- Which are the main definitions of citizenship currently used in Europe and in your countries?
- The Charter of fundamental Rights of Nice
- The project of a European Constitution (after the referendum in Ireland)
- The already available rights of the European citizen

### 3. EUROPE'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- knowledge (the Lisbon strategy )
- mobility and communication
- work
- a wider vision of the world
- the culture of sustainability (environment, economy, social cohesion)
- the safeguard of peace and social cohesion.

**Attention: pro-activity and civic activism are required!**

## 4. THE RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS

1. Work
2. European citizenship
3. Information, communication, freedom of expression
4. Integration
5. Free circulation: goods, persons, services and capitals
6. Participation and consultation
7. Protection of personal data
8. Health protection
9. Choice and competition
10. Food safety
11. Products safety
12. Environmental protection and sustainable development
13. Equal opportunities
14. Education and continuing training

## 4. THE RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS (B)

15. Access to acts and to transparency
  16. Access to services of general interest
  17. Access to justice
  18. Travelling
- BUT, DON'T FORGET ABOUT**  
**OUR DUTIES AS EUROPEAN CITIZENS.....**  
**AND OUR RESPONSABILITIES**

## 4. EXAMPLES OF RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS

- European citizenship
- Information
- Free circulation: goods, persons, services and capitals
- Environmental protection and sustainable development
- Education and continuing training
- Travelling

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### 4.1 RIGHT TO INFORMATION (COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION)

- Vital core of democracy and basis of political systems
- Treaty EU and Charter of fundamental rights (art.11)
- Strong EU influence on member states' laws and politics (environment, consumers, work)
- European information networks
- The respect of the languages
- The Action Plan 2005: the priority of dialogue
  - Listen and not just inform; EU and daily life; operate on local level

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## 4.2 RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND CONTINUING TRAINING

- Art. 14 Charter of fundamental rights
- The EU choice: invest in the youth
- A European formative process
- Acceleration from 2004/5
- Communication (COM 596): a strategy for the MULTILINGUALISM

## 4.2 RIGHT TO EDUCATION (B)

- Leonardo da Vinci Programme (professional training)
- Socrates Programme (permanent education)
- Youth Programme (Europe knowledge):
  - Youth for Europe
  - European voluntary service (Evs)
  - Youth initiatives
  - Joint actions
  - Support measures

## 4.2 RIGHT TO EDUCATION (C)

- Recognition of academic degrees
- Recognition of study periods abroad
- Studies abroad and social security
- Integrated programme for education and lifelong learning (2007/2013)
- e-Learning (on-line learning)

## 4.3 RIGHT FOR FREE CIRCULATION...

- Features of the EU for free circulation:
  - of PERSONS
  - of GOODS
  - of SERVICES
  - of CAPITALS
- Essential conditions for a single market of goods, services and work (regarding youth and Europe)

## 4.4 RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Treaty of Maastricht 1992
- Treaty of Amsterdam 1997 sustainable development
- Charter of fundamental rights (art. 37)
- LIFE: financial tool for the environment
- European action programmes (2001 and 2008)
- Alarm 2008; the centrality of information
- Climate change and sustainable development
- Roles of the citizens (consuming choices), environment and health

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## 4.4 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT(B)

- Protection of natural resources and management of garbage
- European Environment Agency
- Sustainable urban environment (transports, construction, urban management and planning)
- Information and civic participation
- Access to justice in environmental matters
- The principle is “Who pollutes, pays”

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## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- Europe is already present among us: 85% of the decisions regarding the citizens consumers' daily life are taken at European level
- Urgent need to resolve the „dramatic” informational and cognitive deficit about Europe
- For the youth, knowledge, critical research and direct experience about Europe are indispensable (to avoid: the rhetoric!)

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### THE AVAILABLE TOOLS:

- European Programmes (ex. Lifelong Learning Programme and European active citizenship 2007/2013)
- Internet and the information society
- Work in network: communication and experience
- Exchanges and concrete experiences

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## 5. CONTACTS FOR FEEDBACK

**Giustino Trincia**  
**c/o Cittadinanzattiva**  
**Via Flaminia, 53**  
**00196 – Roma +3906367181 – +390636718333 (fax)**  
**[g.trincia@cittadinanzattiva.it](mailto:g.trincia@cittadinanzattiva.it)**