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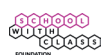
# EU white paper on the role of formal, informal and non-formal education in promoting the Global Civic Education

by the Build European Solidarity Today (BEST): "Let's replay the Fraternity Card!" partnership



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# Preamble

In light of the environmental, economic, social and political challenges we are facing, there is an urgent need to explore new ways to structure our societies. Climate change, rising inequalities, globalization, migration, digitization and peacekeeping are pushing us to adapt to new realities and find new ways to shape the world we live in, which will enable well-being of not only present but also future generations. This calls for critical awareness and understanding of the world today, its histories and present realities and global interdependencies. In the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, Global Civic Education (also referred to as global Education) is integrated under SDG 4 (Quality Education) as an answer to this need. Target 4.7 states: 'By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.'

While the meaning of GCE has been subject to many debates over the last decades, one of the main references in the field till today still remains the Maastricht Global Education produced by the Council of Europe in 2002, which defines global education as "education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equality and human rights for all." (Maastricht declaration).

GCE thus aims at "preparing learners to develop a sense of belonging to the global community, to get involved and to take an active role in society in order to contribute to a peaceful, just world in which ecological resources are preserved"<sup>1</sup>.

The assumption of this document is that GCE (or GE) has become one of the key fields in formal and non-formal education that aims to challenge the way we understand and interact with the world today.

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<sup>1</sup> - Andreotti, Vanessa (2006). Soft versus critical global citizenship education. Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, Vol. 3, Autumn, pp. 40-51.

# BEST. Build European Solidarity Today: defining the policy priorities

This document was produced as part of the "Build European Solidarity Today (BEST): Let's replay the Fraternity Card!" project, co-financed by the Erasmus plus program of the EU which involves various organizations committed in popular education and promotion of citizenship: the coordinator Center for Peace Studies (Croatia) and the partners Arci Aps (Italy), Ligue de l'Enseignement (France), School with Class Foundation (Poland), Humanitas (Slovenia) and CIVES Foundation (Spain). The reason that pushed the group of partner organizations to implement this transnational project is the awareness that the key challenges the world is facing are global in nature and cannot be tackled within a nation-state framework alone. This is why they joined their efforts to draft the present White paper to define a road map for correctly framing and addressing the GCE in Europe.

The project **BEST** advocates for giving global education the right place in the educational system, in coherence with target 4.7 of SDGs, in order to enhance the acquisition of social and civic competences, fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights.

## In concrete, this means:

- Introduce Global Civic Education in the formal school curricula;
- Foresee preservice and in-service teacher trainings on Global Civic Education;
- Recognize informal and non-formal education - with the support of CSOs engaged in promoting active citizenship - as a means for developing Global Civic Education in the formal school curricula.

## In order to process the three mentioned priorities, Member States should:

- Foresee a specific budget for systematic inclusion of GCE into school curricula (for curricula development, for trainings, development of pedagogical tools etc.);
- Foresee a national monitoring mechanism on how target 4.7 is being implemented.





# The role of EU: main recommendations and policies towards global and civic education

In midst of many challenges listed in the introduction, it is important to understand what are the roles and responsibilities of the European Union in ensuring the conditions for all learners to turn into active citizens and in ensuring that national legislations and regulations provide education systems that follow and entice key EU principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

It is common knowledge that the EU does not get directly involved in educational policies of member states. On the other hand, it guides member states towards a set of benchmarks and standards that should be acquired in a unison matter around the Union. The role of education not only in providing quality work force but also in developing a sense of European citizenship is fundamental; therefore, the EU has to keep finding ways to influence its MS in this area.

One such set of standards is the **Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2006**, that describes which key competences all students across MS should develop during their formal education. It invited Member States to ensure that their education and training systems are able to equip people with these competences. Among the mentioned key competences, one is of particular interest for the purpose of this policy document: the *Citizenship competence*, described as *'the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability'*. Besides knowledge, it also comprises values and skills that support it such as the skills *'to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, including the sustainable development of society. This involves critical thinking and integrated problem-solving skills, as well as skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European and international level'*.

Also, the EC Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, when describing the citizenship competence states that *'respect for human rights as a basis for democracy lays the foundations for a responsible and constructive attitude. Constructive participation involves willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels and civic activities. It includes support for social and cultural diversity, gender equality and social cohesion, sustainable lifestyles, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, a readiness to respect the privacy of others, and to take responsibility for the environment'*.

The Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning recognizes also the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and reflects that within the development of Key competences MSs need to pay special attention to mainstreaming *'the ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular within the SDG4.7, into education, training and learning,*

*including by fostering the acquisition of knowledge about limiting the multifaceted nature of climate change and using natural resources in a sustainable way.*

'The council of the European Union, in the context of the ongoing discussions on the future of Europe, underlines that: 1. Europe is facing an era in which globalization, technological progress, sustainability challenges, persistent social inclusion challenges, political instability and demographic change are having a profound impact on European societies and citizens. These common challenges require common reflection and coordinated actions from the Member States; 2. The role of education and training in promoting citizenship and democracy, personal development, social inclusion, equal opportunities and empowerment, and in fostering wellbeing and supporting cohesive societies, are priorities for future cooperation in this area. The two main societal roles of education and training – their contribution to competitiveness, innovation and employability and their contribution to active citizenship, social inclusion, cohesion and personal development – are closely intertwined and fully complementary in today's societies'

As highlighted by Solidar's "Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor 2020", GCE is considered across the EU to different degrees and to better understand the situation, attention must be given to how it is included in the curriculum, to how teachers/educators are prepared to deal with it, to how funding is allocated and to how CSOs contribute to it.

Focusing on its presence in the curriculum, GCE is not provided as a separate subject across Europe, and it is either approached from a cross-curricular perspective or it is integrated in the civic and citizenship education classes..



# Global Civic Education in Europe and in project partners' countries

Since the inception of the European Union, it has been clear that education will stay in the domain of national governments as a crucial part for ensuring MS sovereignty. Moreover, in some MS it is regulated even on smaller regional, cantonal or local levels, bringing about great discrepancies between all subjects like for example the study of civic education in schools. This leads to a very differentiated landscape in Europe.

Civic education in most cases covers at least a part of the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that comprise the citizenship competence as one of the key competences of Long-Life Learning (LLL). In most cases it helps students become active and aware members of community/ies. But this is not the case for all Member States.

If we only consider the BEST partner countries, it is evident that commitments of national governments towards education directed to developing the above described citizenship competence and based on human rights, rule of law and democracy are inhomogeneous and in continuous evolution, also depending on political situation: in some partner countries such as Slovenia and Poland, schools were more open to topics of GCE and there was more support for it in the last years than there is now. Some issues that should be addressed within GCE as crucial to Europe at this time, such as the climate crisis, migration, inequality and women's rights are in some MS considered now as controversial topics and even teachers otherwise motivated and trained on these topics are being marginalized and discouraged to work on them.

As far as the BEST partner countries are concerned, a very diverse situation has emerged from the national policy papers, confirming that the educational system is not only a matter of pedagogical order, but also a social, cultural, moral, legal, economic and organizational issue.

We can find countries such as France, where civic education is deeply embedded in school programs all along the educational path, countries as Italy and Croatia, that have introduced this subject in the school system as a cross-curricular topics with a rather narrow focus, or as Slovenia, which attributes high importance to the topic but trudges in its way to integrate of it into the formal education and countries like Spain and Poland, characterized by a strong resistance of society and political class to introduce the teaching of values that remain very controversial.

Despite the described diversification, in all of the six countries, even in those where the teaching of civic education has a stronger place in the formal education system, many steps still have to be taken to adopt the "global" dimension, to pass from a national focus of the teaching of this topic to a really global one. Moreover, even when civic education is given the "right place" in the strategic and programmatic documents, apart from France, no or too few resources are devoted to its serious concrete application. In particular, all studies and researches highlight that training of the teachers is absent or weak, giving no legs to any concrete reform.

More details about the situation in the countries under examination can be found in the single countries Policy brief. We present here a very synthetic overview, country by country.

## France

**France**, according to the National Center for the Study of School Systems (CNESCO), devotes considerable resources to civic education and is the European country in which students begin learning about citizenship at the earliest, from 6 years old.

The Civic and Moral Teaching structures social and civic education throughout compulsory education. It is the responsibility of history and geography teachers and, depending on the content covered, it may involve other disciplines. Education for citizenship covers first of all the global socialization of pupils, meaning the development of a sense of living together, as early as kindergarten and primary school. For higher levels, it applies to the transmission of values of the French Republic, through debate and reflection. Citizenship education is thus part of the set of "key competencies for lifelong learning". The main themes addressed by teachers in the framework of Civic and Moral Teaching are predominantly social ones: the fight against discrimination, human rights, prevention of harassment in schools and the rights of the child.

The development of skills (soft and hard) within the framework of education for citizenship also relies on the participation of students in the social life of the school and its environment: several frameworks allow students, especially in the second level, to exercise representative functions and responsibilities that are opportunities for them to be involved in citizenship practices. Moreover, within schools many events, prizes and contests allow educational teams to conduct their mission of citizenship education with students in more participative and creative dynamics. The work carried out in the schools benefits from the support of associations that complement the school, including the Ligue de l'Enseignement.

## Poland

**Poland** is one of the few countries where GE has been included in the core curriculum, but with the absence of GE national strategy. In Poland, in fact, Global Citizenship Education is part of the formal education in primary and secondary schools but only to a small extent. Some of the issues are

included in the national curriculum, both in its general part and specific subjects such as Civics (in Poland it goes under the name 'knowledge about society'), History and Geography. However, after the reform of the Education system in 2017 global education has diminished and plays a minimal role. Even when the national curriculum for advanced courses in CE (Civic Education) allows for GCE, it does not provide explicit standards or guidelines for its authentic implementation.

But what is mostly alarming is the strong connection of GE and anti-discrimination education to the political situation in Poland: right-wing government implements in all parts of the social life national-oriented points of view, focused on military successes, victimization of Polish nation and importance of catholic religion, leaving little or no space to principles and values that represent the basis of GCE as it is described in EU / Council of Europe recommendations on the matter.

In conclusion, GE in the recent Polish national curriculum is seriously marginalized and the anti-discrimination education does not exist in practice in Polish formal education system because it is not a priority for decision makers and by consequence there is no frame for it.

What is done by CSO's or single teachers in schools or in other institutions (e.g. community centers) with respect to GCE and anti-discrimination education is hidden under other names like "peer violence" or "cultural diversity", due to the risk that this kind of activity is perceived as a political declaration against current leadership.

## Spain

In **Spain**, the introduction in school curricula of Civic Education is very controversial, leaving little space to even think about introducing GCE. The Organic Law of Education (LOE), in force from 2006 to 2013, introduced Education for Citizenship and Human Rights as a new area of knowledge, with an ad hoc school curriculum, but this determined a very harsh attack by the Catholic hierarchy.

Various opposition strategies were launched, including a campaign for the introduction of the possibility





of a conscientious objection, i.e. the right of school children not to attend Citizenship Education and Human Rights classes. This subject was in fact considered an unacceptable interference by the State in the moral education of students, which sought to impose things such as "gender ideology" or "ethical relativism", and which addressed controversial issues that, in their opinion, should not be the subject of education.

The Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE), which has been in force between 2013 and 2020, entailed the dismantling of the Education for Citizenship and Human Rights subject. In fact, although the LOMCE Statement of Motives refers to the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship of 2002, the actual content of its precepts avoids the use of both the terminology adopted by the Council of Europe (Education for Democratic Citizenship), and the terminology adopted in the LOE (Education for Citizenship and Human Rights) and significantly weakens its scope, both in curricular content and in terms of the group that should receive it.

In December 2020, a new law was approved that repealed the disputed LOMCE. Since then, some steps forward have been made but the reality of the school conflict in Spain has not been modified. On the contrary, in the current situation where the far right has entered the Spanish democratic institutions, it is easy to foresee a period of attacks on the pillars of Education for democratic citizenship and human rights in the Spanish educational system.

## Croatia

The main document governing education in **Croatia** is the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, which was unanimously adopted by the Croatian Parliament in October 2014.

The adoption of the Strategy entailed a Comprehensive Curricular reform, which has been implemented only partially with one of the priorities being the necessity of "the introduction of civic education in educational institutions in order to ensure the development of civic competence for all students". Civic education could

have served to develop global civic competence, but it failed: it was not introduced into the obligatory formal education system as a stand-alone subject, but as one of 7 cross-curricular topics with a rather narrow focus. Moreover, the global dimension is not present in the curriculum at all. Among the seven cross-curricular topics, the curriculum having the highest correlation with global education is the Sustainable Development one.

In synthesis, Global Civic Competencies of young people in Croatia is neglected: curriculum analyses show that even after the so-called reforms and the introduction of the 'School for Life', curriculums are still predominantly nationally oriented without sufficient links between local and global realities. Moreover, teachers and professors are provided with too few training opportunities to work on the topics of (global) citizenship education.

## Slovenia

The climate for GE in **Slovenia** has been very favorable in the last decade. First of all, in 2018 the Strategy on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic of Slovenia was adopted by the National Assembly; it recognizes the role of GE in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development and defines the long-term objectives of the GE as the increased knowledge and awareness of Slovenian citizens of root causes and consequences of the world events, such as poverty, hunger, inequality, climate changes and international commitments in the field of sustainable development, in addition to encouraging citizens to take actions in realizing more equal and more sustainable development.

In addition, Ministry of Education, science, and sport (MoE) in Slovenia is working on a new White paper on Education that would define Slovenia's education strategy for the next years: although it does not mention the concept of GE, it highlights the concept of education for sustainable development and covers the general objectives of education, related to the developing of capacity to live in a democratic society. According to the White Paper, knowledge and practices related to sustainable development must be integrated into the educational system in a systematic, coherent, and comprehensive way

from kindergartens onwards to make it one of the key foundations in the school system that shape the knowledge, attitudes, values and functioning of young generations and lead to personal and shared global responsibility.

Finally, a series on institutional forums and events have been organized in recent years: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport organized the National forum on GE and Education for Sustainable Development in 2018; in the same year, the Institute of Republic of Slovenia for education organized a conference on “GE for encouraging sustainable development in education”.

Despite many positive developments and actions in the field of GE, though, there are still many challenges existing. Many actors in the field of GE (MFA, MoE, National Institute for Education, Platform SLOGA, Humanitas, etc.) recognized as a key challenge the lack of a national coordination structure and a lack of systemic, coherent and continuous approach to integration of GE into the formal education and its monitoring. Representatives of MFA, MoE, and representatives of NGOs all agreed that it would be necessary to develop a joint body for inter-ministerial coordination, however, they are not united about the choice of the institution that should initiate and be responsible for this coordination (*ibid.*, 2019: 34). The establishment of such a coordination body was proposed also in the National forum on GE and Education for Sustainable Development, and it is on its way; it should become operational before the end of 2022.

All key stakeholders agree that regular training and capacity building of pedagogical workers in the field of GE are of a key importance, both during the studies of pedagogics or education at the university, and as training and workshops for in-service teachers and pedagogues. However, at the moment there is not enough quality support from the formal system for in-service teachers working on topics of GE. Therefore, the GE is entering the school curricula slowly and mainly from the side of motivated teachers, supported by NGOs.

## Italy

In Italy, the teaching of civic education was included in the first and second cycle of education with the law n. 92 of 2019. Civic education was introduced not as a separate subject, but as a transversal course to be included in the curriculum for no less than 33 hours per year. However, no concrete reference is made to the global dimension, except for a feeble reference to the sustainable development goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

There are three areas that the guidelines of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (D.M.n.35 of 22.06.2020) identify as the main ones on which civic education should focus:

- the Constitution, also understood in its broadest sense of inspiration for behaviors and reflections aimed at fostering daily practices and principles pertaining to the constitutional provision;
- Sustainable Development, as indicated in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and in the 17 SDGS;
- Digital citizenship, understood as the ability of an individual to consciously and responsibly use virtual media.

Within this general framework it is also possible to insert different forms of civic education, collaborating with local institutions and third sector organizations. Since the legislative framework is relatively recent, it is difficult to translate the legislative direction into practice, which still does not correspond to a strategic plan that defines the implementation framework in detail, specifying the provisions for teacher training, a system verifying the implementation of the guidelines and identifying the resources to implement them.

This inevitably leads to a strong lack of homogeneity in dealing with the subject, leaving it to the initiative of schools, if not of individual teachers.



# A road map for the concrete integration of Global citizenship education in the European systems of key competences for lifelong learning

In front of the recalled recommendations, it is reasonable to pose the question on how can the EU steer its MS towards this target, and in particular how it can influence MS that are taking a turn into the illiberal direction, characterized by limiting human rights of certain groups with also clear consequences on the content of their formal school curricula? Also, what influence can the EU institutions pose when official curricula in MS are clearly going in the opposite direction from the one outlined in the recommendations, being national-centered and not providing opportunities for developing the European and global dimension in education?

Even though it is clear that most pressure in advocating for quality Global citizenship education is to be made on national levels, paying especially attention to MS in risk of letting their students down in terms of developing active citizenship, there no subsequent clarity on the fact that this in practice means elaborating a clear financial scheme, in order to encourage, promote and support mutual learning among Member States and to develop cooperation with Member States reference material and tools such as frameworks for specific competences, evidence-based guidance materials, tools for educational staff, assessment of key competences as listed in the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning.

More can be done also in terms of listening to the voices of civil society in strengthening non-formal and informal learning and in advocating towards the national governing bodies. In practice this could mean a continuous and stable financial support for projects focusing exclusively with topics of social inclusion, HR, democracy and rule of law and support that is grounded in national realities and accessible also to smaller CSOs. At national level, this could mean to foresee a stable mechanism that allows for CSOs to propose GCE non-formal activities to school students recognized as part of the formal curriculum.

In saying stable support, emphasis could also be put on having more longer term projects and not insisting always on their innovative aspects but, on the very contrary, investing in continuous fine-tuning of good practices. As for supporting the national advocacy towards the importance of quality GCE especially in some member states, international bodies and centers (as for example the North-South Center of the Council of Europe) can help bring different stakeholders to the table and can help CSOs in their reach. Concise and direct recommendations also stemming from comparative research like the one done by Eurydice could focus also on GCE while some peer-to-peer assessments between Ministries on the topic of GCE as the ones offered by GENE (Global Education Network Europe) should also be strengthened.

## **“Best” proposals to make the path concrete!**

The following are operational suggestions resulting from the comparison between partners of the Best project, representing countries with extremely diversified situations, as repeatedly emphasized. It is therefore evident that some of them may sound anachronistic or utopian, depending on the case, in this or that country, and in any case inadmissible.

Equally evident is the fact that in order to make each proposal concrete, a process of in-depth analysis and comparison between all the parties that have specific competence is necessary, so as to model each single proposal on the specificities of the implementation context.

But it is a starting point, and the document is intended as an open document that can potentially grow including analysis on the ongoing situation in other European countries, as well as also being updated.

BEST policy priority	Scope	Detailed recommendations	Institutions and to whom it is addressed
<b>Introduce quality Global Education in the formal school curricula</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION OF GCE</b>	Introduce / Reinforce the teaching of CE with a cross-curricular approach. Introduce / strengthen the Global dimension in Civic Education Devote to GCE a proper number of hours.	Ministries responsible for public education and/or schools
	<b>THE DEFINITION OF CONTENTS</b>	Introducing a mechanism of control on the definition of contents, i.e. defining who has the responsibility of defining the contents of the GCE program (parliament / government / schools) and which principles should inspire the defining of contents (national constitutions, EU and/or international treaties subscribed by the MS...).	Ministries responsible for public education and/or schools
	<b>EVALUATION SYSTEM</b>	Establish an evaluation system with regard to: - implementation - learning outcomes.	Ministries responsible for public education
	<b>TEACHING METHODS</b>	Foresee participative methodologies to animate and implement GCE, based on practical experiences, in order It can be a support process for pupils and youth, for them to be able to take action collectively	Ministries responsible for public education
	<b>PROMOTING GCE</b>	We recommend promoting and underlining the importance of GCE in schools as a part of civic education at EU level.	EU Committee on Culture and Education
<b>Foresee preservice and in-service teacher trainings on GE</b>	<b>INITIAL TRAINING</b>	Formalize the skills necessary for the GCE teacher in their initial training. Outline ad hoc training courses for the acquisition of these skills. We recommend including the GE subject in the university studies preparing teachers and in pedagogical studies.	Ministries responsible for higher education and/or training, Universities, training centers
	<b>CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)</b>	provide systemic GCE teacher training for those already in service and interdisciplinary courses in preservice; set up a system of training credits that prove the real possession of the skills. We recommend more opportunities for teachers and educators for networking and to strengthen not only their skills and competences but give them feelings that they are not alone with introducing GCE topics in schools Design training in order to fit the needs and objectives of teachers. In fact, training should be considered as a lever for teachers' projects and should be adapted to the needs and the actions of teachers.	Ministries responsible for public education, Teacher Training Agency, relevant Universities

BEST policy priority	Scope	Detailed recommendations	Institutions and to whom it is addressed
<b>Recognize informal and non-formal education as a means for GE</b>	<b>RECOGNISING CSO'S ROLE IN TRAINING THE TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS TO DELIVER GCE</b>	Recognize CSOs to deliver training courses for teachers to provide them with the necessary skills (see point 1). Enable CSOs to deliver training courses for teachers to provide them with the necessary skills .	Ministries responsible for public education
	<b>RECOGNISING CSO'S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING GCE PROGRAMS WITHIN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM</b>	Recognize educational credits to students participating in non-formal and informal educational, cultural and recreational activities delivered by recognized CSOs. Formalize the complementary role of informal and non-formal education as a lever tool for GCE. Promote a GCE territorial community anchored as closely as possible to the lives of children, young people and their families: an education to which all the educational actors on a territory contribute (teachers, associations, local councils, families). Enable NGOs specialized in GCE to provide extra classes in schools. Establish spaces for dialogue and recognition between schools and NGOs	Ministries responsible for public education
	<b>FINANCING / SUPPORT</b>	Provide stable, long term and accessible governmental (or regional/local) funding for GCE projects rooted in non-formal and informal education - making GCE a priority when programming funds. This is relevant also for the EU level - stable and accessible funding for international projects. Include CSO experts in the elaboration of programs and policies.	National, regional and local authorities  EU institutions providing funding for key European objectives / actions related to GCE



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