



www.ey2013-alliance.eu

The European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA) is an open network of European and national civil society organisations and networks willing to promote active citizenship as a core element of the European project in the context of the European Year of Citizens 2013.

Aiming to advocate for a broad understanding of **active citizenship***, major European civil society organisations and networks have created a civil society Alliance in 2011 whose principles can be found in its Manifesto adopted in spring 2012. The first key achievement of this Alliance was to mobilise its network for the translation of this Manifesto into 23 European languages and into English Braille so as to be as accessible as possible.

A wide variety of European networks, platforms and organisations have joined the Alliance throughout the Year and it now consists of 62 European members representing more than 4000 individual organisations in 50 European countries and working in different areas such as education, culture, health or youth, to name but a few. The EYCA has also been active in the EU Member States thanks to 19 National Alliances and 3 National Alliance initiatives involving national and local civil society organisations to promote active European citizenship throughout the Year. The EYCA has also contacted organisations in 6 other European countries.

In spite of the lowest budget ever allocated to a European Year, the EYCA obtained a limited financial support from the European Commission (DG COMM) for its activities at the European level whilst at the national level, EYC Alliances almost exclusively functioned on a voluntary basis.

ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION BY INFORMING CITIZENS AND RAISING AWARENESS

Debates, conferences, screenings, workshops, exhibitions etc have been organised at the local, national and European levels to raise citizens' awareness of their rights and their means of participation in the EU decision making process by member organisations and in partner-ships with other stakeholders involved in the European Year of Citizens. These actions and discussions on citizenship have also been fuelled and continued online through the EYCA website (www.ey2013-alliance.eu) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Flickr: EYCA2013).

Furthermore, throughout the Year we have tried to capture European citizens' vision of "active (European) citizenship" on Polaroid photographs. The collection gathered will be exhibited (physically and online) under the title **[Work in Progress] What does active European**

citizenship mean to you? (www.polaroidproject.eu) which suggests that this project will never be a complete piece of work since, just like democracy, active citizenship is a process that can never be fully completed.

DEVELOPING A POLICY AGENDA FOR EU CITIZENSHIP

We have been advocating for citizenship to become a transversal dimension of European policies and a key priority in all areas of the Union's action so as to move toward a truly citizen-friendly European Union that would no longer be reduced to merely economic preoccupations. For us, EU citizenship should not be confined to an individual rights-based approach but should have a strong value-based dimension so as to tackle the Europeans' sense of belonging to a common European project.

Throughout the Year, the members of the EYCA have contributed to a transversal and transnational reflection process on key themes linked to active citizenship in Europe via three working groups: citizens' participation and civil dialogue; economic, social and political rights as a coherent whole; an inclusive European citizenship for all residents.

The detailed proposals made by each working group can be found on our website and have been included in this document.

Introduction.

Sixty-two European networks of associations and non-governmental organisations backed by coalitions at the national level joined forces to form the European Year of Citizens Alliance 2013 (EYCA) with the aim of engaging **civil society*** in a broad debate on what European citizenship means today, identifying the challenges ahead and formulating solutions.

One of the main aims of this wide cross-sector and transnational network is to ensure that active citizenship is understood as a lasting cross-cutting theme in European public policies. After a year long reflection and consultation process, the EYCA presents its key proposals for the reinforcement and enhancement of active citizenship in Europe in this document.

The concept of citizenship of the European Union, introduced by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, added a political dimension to the primarily economic nature of European Community. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the Union "places the individual at the heart of its activities" by establishing a citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of

freedom, security and justice. These principles have been further strengthened by the provisions of the **Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*** and more particularly its articles 2, 3, 6, 9, 10 and in article 11 aiming to enhance the role to be played by organised civil society.

Despite its official recognition in the Treaties, EU citizenship is now in crisis. Popular disenchantment towards the European project should not be underestimated by decision-makers and elected representatives. In an increasingly systematic way populist forces build on this widespread disaffection and stir nationalist and xenophobic attitudes in order to undermine the possibility of a shared future based on democratic and progressive values. The stakes are high and the European Union institutions need to prove their capability to rebuild solidarity and to provide a framework for **citizens*** to better live together. From the EYCA perspective, addressing these challenges and reversing the trend requires major changes in the way European policies are developed and implemented in order to regain momentum in Europe towards greater integration and the pursuit of peace.

1. Active European Citizenship as a Project of Society

Although the EYCA proposals are heavily influenced by the current economic, social and political crisis; they first and foremost give substance to a political vision for society and to the Europe EYCA members want to live in, namely, an open, inclusive and participative Europe. In the current context, reinforcing citizenship implies a reply to the core question "how do we (re)create solidarity so that Europeans regain trust in a common European future?".

These proposals aim to regenerate the European project by bringing back citizens, solidarity, equality, fairness and vision to where they should be: at the heart of Europe. This implies a shift from a dominant approach of regarding citizens as individual-consumers to an approach of a citizenship that both respects individual aspirations and takes into account collective needs for a shared future.

Achieving this model requires a paradigm shift from a Europe that is largely considered as an economic project to one that restores and promotes the values of solidarity and equality among States and European citizens. Only by emphasizing these fundamental components can the legitimacy of the European project, the trust and enthusiasm for Europe and greater progression in the integration process be ensured.

2. An Open and Inclusive European Democracy

The EYCA vision for Europe will not be achieved until the persistent inequality and discrimination faced by many vulnerable, marginalised and excluded citizens is resolutely tackled.

The indivisibility of rights is an indispensable pre-requisite of social inclusion and active citizenship. This requires specific attention to ensure that no citizen residing in the EU is excluded, is at risk of exclusion or is discriminated against due to a lack of respect for their social and economic rights. At the core of the European social model is care and protection for all especially the more vulnerable members of society. The EYCA believes that citizens can only be conscious of their responsibilities towards each other in a society that enables effective and universal access to rights.

In times of crisis more than ever the European Union institutions should pay particular attention to ensure that fundamental rights such as free movement, political rights or access to justice for vulnerable, marginalised and excluded populations are protected.

3. One European Democracy, Three Democratic Pillars

Beyond these core questions all democratic pillars need to be functioning optimally so as to ensure a vibrant European democracy that is fit for purpose. Education and media should be delivered independently whilst reinforcing their European dimension. Within the framework designed by the universal values enshrined in the international treaties, European Union institutions should ensure that decisions are in line with citizens' needs, aspirations and vision of society. Organised civil society defending human rights and the common good with constructive and collective solutions should be reinforced since its role as an advocate and agent for change is crucial for democracies especially in times of crisis.

The issue of European citizenship returns to the question of the construction of the European project. If the European Union institutions really want a social and political Europe, then citizenship of the Union must be granted to all the people who live in the territory – including third country nationals who become residents in Europe.

Such an internal shift would also strengthen the role played by the EU at the international level and send a positive message of openness and cooperation to third countries, particularly neighbouring ones, and their citizens.

This is the EYCA vision for strengthening citizenship in Europe and all stakeholders are urged to take immediate action and ensure that these recommendations are heard and taken into account, in particular within the debates around the upcoming European Parliament elections. Progress on citizenship in Europe is only possible if European and national institutions prove to be responsive interlocutors to fulfil the expectations that have been raised within the "European Year of Citizens" by the citizens themselves.

Active European Citizenship as a Project of Society.



1.

Building a Europe...

1.1 ... based upon solidarity

1.2 ... of equal opportunities for all citizens

1.3 ... fully involving citizens in decision-making

« We shall accompany an EU citizenship building process which, beyond an individual rights-based approach, tackles the Europeans' sense of belonging to a common European future »

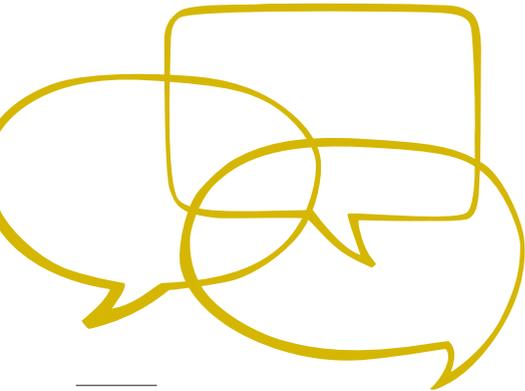
– EYCA Manifesto

EU decision-makers have failed to promote a political vision for Europe. Consequently, active European citizens cannot but be concerned and critical of the political and institutional developments of the European Union. The EYCA believes that it is its responsibility, as a gathering of active European citizens, to contribute to the European debate by putting forward a vision for Europe. This vision of the project is that of an open, inclusive, sustainable, participative and political Union.

Achieving this model implies a shift from the current paradigm where Europe is mostly regarded as an economic project, to restoring and promoting the value of solidarity among Member States and European citizens as

a fundamental component of progress in the integration process and of ensuring the legitimacy of the European project.

*The EYCA conviction is that this project shall fully be grounded on international and regional human rights laws, by which EU Member States are legally bound, notably the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**^{*}, according to which all individuals have a number of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, the EYCA believes that the enjoyment and exercise of citizenship rights are inalienable, regardless of an individual's residence status.*



1.1

Building a Europe based upon solidarity

In recent years the need to strengthen the fiscal consolidation and to realise a monetary Union has become a priority for the European Union. This has sometimes obscured the social dimension of Europe 2020 and created an atmosphere of competition between Member States that hampers the idea of an integrated and cohesive Europe.

Both the economic and fiscal dimension and the social one are complementary to achieve a political Union and should thus be given the same attention and be more fairly articulated. Indeed, replying to citizens' social anxiety, counteracting the increasing risk of poverty and marginalisation of many Europeans and ensuring their security through social cohesion requires that the European Union strengthens the social dimension of its policies, even the more austere ones.

STRENGTHENING SOLIDARITY AMONG EUROPEAN MEMBER STATES

☑ To ensure solidarity between EU Member States, we urge EU institutions to move towards a growth model with people at its heart whilst accommodating the need for fiscal consolidation to link economic performances with the realisation of social progress towards active inclusion* and empowerment.

☑ The EYCA also supports all measures promoted by the EU and its Member States which allow European citizens to have more control of the economic and financial world and to create an environment where markets conform to democratic rules and not vice versa, by, for instance, introducing tax on capital and combating tax havens.

STRENGTHENING SOLIDARITY AMONG EUROPEAN CITIZENS

☑ To restore citizens' trust in a Union that is willing and has the capacity to meet their needs, the EYCA urges EU institutions to ensure equal access to economic and social rights by:

- Harmonising social policies upward;
- Promoting universal access to social services and adequate safety nets;
- Asking Member States to ensure social cohesion and address the social impact of the economic crisis by supporting a fair and equal redistribution of wealth and prosperity through progressive taxation.

The EYCA notably calls upon EU institutions and Member States to ensure tax justice by putting in place redistributive tax policies with a focus on income, capital and environmental taxes.

Likewise, and in addition to the measures ensuring the political participation on all levels of all citizens, Member States are urged to keep, maintain and develop an adequate social protection system comprising an adequate and accessible minimum wage, income schemes, health-care, unemployment insurance and appropriate pensions.

☑ Access to the labour market is considered to be a key component of EU strategies to fight poverty and enhance social inclusion. The EYCA thus urges EU institutions to promote the values of cooperation, inclusion, trust, democratic legitimacy and equality in the economic sector, notably by adopting policy strategies and tools supporting personal development, participation in society, realisation of potential and life chances and thus, active citizenship for all.

Given principles as an economic model serving the public good and social cohesion, its resilience in the face of the crisis and its interest in line with the current changes faced by our societies, the **EU institutions** should promote and support the development of the **social economy*** sector.

Member States are also called upon to promote initiatives and strategies accompanying job activation policies with social or educational service provision (e.g. social protection, vocational education and training, lifelong learning opportunities and social guidance) in order to support both the empowerment of individuals and to respond to the growing need of social and health services.

ENSURING WELLBEING FOR ALL IN EUROPE

👉 Access to social services, one of the three strands of the EU Active Inclusion Strategy* together with “adequate income support” and “inclusive labour market”, is fundamental to empowering people and to providing them with the opportunities to be able to exercise their economic and social rights as well as to participate in society.

The EYCA thus urges **EU institutions** to promote the idea of universal access to social services as a pre-requisite in the fight against poverty, to realise equality and to fully guarantee people's access to the fundamental rights foreseen in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with particular regards to the right to education (art.14) and the right to healthcare (art.35).

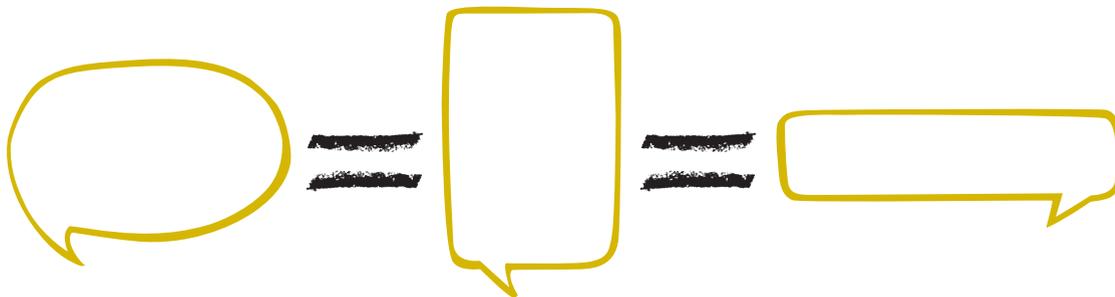
Member States are also called upon to guarantee universal access to public and high quality education and healthcare services, as stated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, for instance by removing obstacles created by privatisation and unfair competition in the social and healthcare sector and by supporting civil society organisations which provide social and healthcare services.

1.2 Building a Europe of equal opportunities for all citizens

The EYCA vision for Europe is that of an egalitarian and fair society where each citizen would be able to exercise their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Ensuring the full enjoyment of these rights for all citizens is a fundamental pre-requisite for effective and meaningful active participation in society.

ENSURING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

👉 The EYCA urges **EU institutions** to promote equal and effective access for all to the right to education and vocational and continuing training, including the possibility of receiving free compulsory education as foreseen in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (art.14).



PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE, EQUAL AND FAIR LABOUR MARKET

☞ Equal opportunities in the labour markets should be offered to all, ensuring that citizens' right to work is respected without any form of discrimination. In this respect **Member States** are requested to fully implement the Employment Equality Directive* (Council Directive 2000/78/EC) prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the area of employment.

The EYCA therefore asks **Member States** to develop strategies to fight long-term unemployment and combat discrimination in access to jobs.

Member States are also urged to immediately implement the **Youth Guarantee*** adopted by the European Council in April 2013 which stipulates that unemployed people under 25 should be provided with an apprenticeship, a traineeship or further education within four months of leaving school or losing a job as well as to adopt concrete measures to complement and support the Youth Guarantee scheme in order to make it a real and effective instrument to fight against youth unemployment.

EU institutions and Member States are asked to ensure fair mobility of people and workers, equal pay and the promotion of labour and social rights, for instance by making sure that the legal rights of workers posted abroad are respected and protected from employers who abuse legal uncertainties and loopholes in the law.

GUARANTEEING CITIZENS' ENJOYMENT OF THEIR CULTURAL RIGHTS

☞ Cultural diversity as well as access to and participation in artistic and cultural activities for all must be promoted and ensured in all **Member States** and through all relevant **EU institutions'** programmes and policies.

The mobility of artists and of cultural professionals is still impeded by fiscal obstacles, the visa regimes for artists from third countries, work permits or right of residence, social security and intellectual property issues. The EYCA thus urges **EU institutions and Member States** to further coordinate their policies in order to concretely encourage and support artistic mobility.

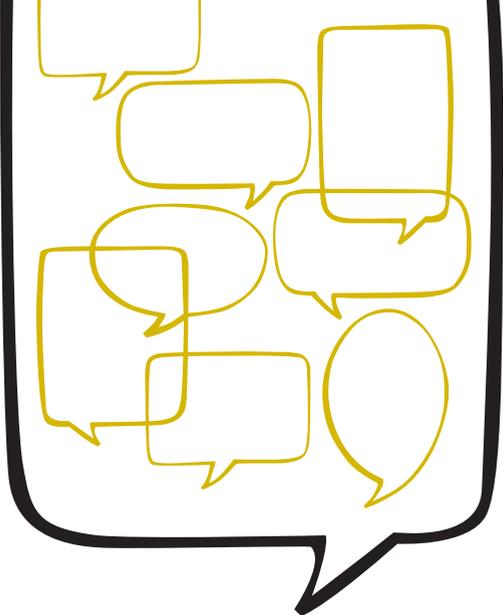
According to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, integrating cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue perspectives in learning and education systems enables talent development and encourages critical and creative thinking. **Member States** are called upon to mainstream cultural initiatives that recognize diversity through a human rights-based approach within their educational strategies.

Member States should foster equal access for all citizens, including those who are vulnerable, marginalised and excluded, to cultural resources, venues and activities and should enhance opportunities to recognise one's own and others' heritage and to learn from it, as well as to develop one's creative skills and take part in individual and collective cultural practices.

1.3 Building a Europe fully involving citizens in decision-making

Together with electoral participation, implemented at the European level since the 1979 European elections, the concept of citizen participation at the European level mainly refers to the innovations introduced by the Article 11 of the TEU. Besides the political and legal recognition of this concept, there are many difficulties concerning the article and its implementation.

Despite the fact that to move towards a true political Union, based on more representative and participative democracy, changes in the treaties are needed, the EYCA believes that some improvement is possible within the current institutional and legal framework. Participative democracy mechanisms should be strengthened with the aim of reinforcing representative democracy. This section will focus on the existing tools for citizens' participation at the European level, and the need for greater transparency and better implementation of Article 15 of the TFEU in terms of access to documents.



REINFORCING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

✎ Within the current institutional and legal framework, more political weight should be given to the **European Parliament**, the sole European institution directly elected by European citizens.

The elections to the **European Parliament** should be held on the same day in all Member States.

Transnational lists should be established so as to promote the image of the **European Parliament** as an institution that makes decisions for the European common good and to give more substance to EU democratic and political life.

REINFORCING PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

✎ The European citizens' initiative (ECI)* was conceived as a tool for the enhancement of the European model of democracy. Nevertheless, two years after its introduction and the efforts of the European Commission to regulate its application, the ECI has not yet realised its full potential. The European Commission should thus revise the rules of the ECIs whilst ensuring that ECIs respect the values and fundamental rights enshrined in the Preamble and first articles of the Lisbon Treaty, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights* (of which the EU should become a member).

EU institutions should simplify the procedures to apply for an ECI to make this tool more accessible for citizens and civil society organisations.

The **European Commission** should eliminate the application of any discretionary principle it might use to evaluate and take into consideration successful initiatives.

EU institutions and Member States should ensure that civil society organisations are involved on an equal footing with other stakeholders at all levels of decision-making.

The **European Commission** should initiate an immediate review of the "Minimum Standard of Consultation" / COM(2002) 704* at the European level with a view to the inclusion of better standards of participation for civil society in the European decision-making process by including systematic, organised and financially supported mechanisms and opportunities for consultation.

Member States should ensure that, at least, consultative bodies are created at the local level to elaborate recommendations on environmental, economic and social development involving a wide range of social partners with the aim of promoting social dialogue and consensus on democratic governance.

✎ The EYCA urges **EU institutions** to improve the quality of interaction and communication between citizens and the European institutions by increasing the transparency of decisions and negotiations taking place in the European institutions and making information and documents accessible and available.

EU institutions should avoid the use of overly technical language in European consultations since it discourages and sometimes prevents citizens and their representative bodies from contributing to the debate.

EU institutions should publish the largest number of EU key documents in all the official languages and encourage **Member States** to reach the EU Barcelona objective of 2002 which aims to enable citizens to communicate in two languages plus their mother tongue.

An Open and Inclusive European Democracy.



2.

Guaranteeing...

2.1 ... inclusiveness and equality in Europe

2.2 ... free movement and fair mobility for all citizens

2.3 ... civil and political rights and the participation of all

« European citizenship should be founded on the principle of residence and in the name of universality of rights all residents of the European Union should enjoy equality of treatment and the same right to participate in public life as EU citizens »

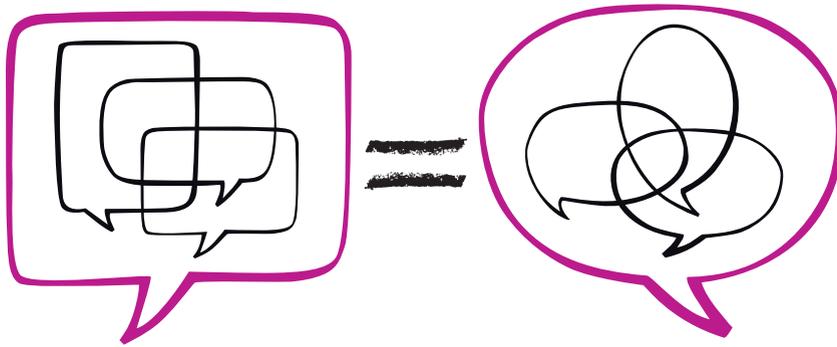
– EYCA Manifesto

The EYCA vision for Europe will not be achieved until the persistent and numerous inequalities and discrimination faced by too many vulnerable, marginalised and excluded citizens are resolutely tackled.

Indeed, although the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that all EU residents have a number of civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights; vulnerable, marginalised and excluded residents face pervasive barriers to enjoying these rights. This

significantly hinders their inclusion in society, their participation as active citizens and prevents them from enjoying the same level of protection as other EU citizens.

Recalling the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the need for society to “reflect the diversity of its citizens”, the EYCA calls on all decision-makers in the EU to pay special attention to vulnerable, marginalised and excluded citizens both in terms of inclusion and participation.



2.1 Guaranteeing inclusiveness and equality in Europe

The indivisibility of rights on the one hand and the responsibilities implied by citizenship on the other hand are the indispensable prerequisites of social inclusion and active citizenship: being a citizen not only means to have rights but also to take civic responsibilities and to participate in the life of the community. This implies that every citizen should enjoy the social and economic rights enabling them to have a decent life as well as to engage in and contribute to the life of their communities.*

Vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups are particularly affected by systemic misapplication of EU law and poor administration by national and local authorities. In particular, residents and undocumented migrants face numerous restrictions and obstacles when involved in administrative procedures or when trying to access justice and social and healthcare services.

ENSURING ACCESS TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

✎ **Too many citizens are still prevented from being and feeling included in society due to a lack of respect for their social and economic rights. EU institutions and Member States are therefore urged to provide equal access to economic and social rights; the pre-requisites for active inclusion and participative citizenship.**

EU institutions and Member States should also promote an effective and inclusive dialogue in order to make sure that the experience and perspective of the most vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups, such as people experiencing discrimination because of their socio-economic condition, are taken into account when developing policies and strategies at all levels of decision-making.

ENSURING EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EU TERRITORY

✎ **Notwithstanding the existence of various European directives which aim to ensure equality and non-discrimination in the EU, the rights of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups remain far from ensured at the national level due to a lack of commitment or reluctance on the part of certain Member States to ratify or implement existing EU legislative frameworks.**

The EYCA thus urges **EU institutions and Member States** to take fully into account in the development of all legislation and policies the non-discrimination clause of the Lisbon Treaty and to adopt a common and coherent non-discrimination strategy to promote inclusive citizenship in a holistic manner.

Member States should finalise negotiations, without further delay, on the European Commission proposal of 2008 for a Council Directive on protecting equal treatment outside employment irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (**Equality Directive**)*. In addition, **Member States** that have not already done so should ratify Protocol 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights prohibiting discrimination on similar grounds.

Member States should ensure that national equality bodies monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation pay particular attention to combating multiple/inter-sectional discrimination (where an individual experiences discrimination on more than one ground e.g. where Muslim women face discrimination on the grounds of both gender and religion).

The **European Commission** should ensure that National Roma Integration Strategies contain measures to fight discrimination against Roma, including the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth and older Roma who face multiple forms of discrimination.

📌 **EU institutions, Member States and all relevant stakeholders must combat negative stereotyping, including gender stereotypes, through the use, inter alia, of correct terminology in policy discussions, communication materials, official documentation and translations. In certain instances, the wording that is currently used in these documents may require alteration to comply with that used in the EU treaties and international human rights conventions.**

GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

📌 **EU and national authorities should ensure that the right to good administration and the right of access to documents, as guaranteed by Article 41 and Article 42 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, are realised in practice and that all residents, including vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups and new residents, are made aware of their rights and enabled to challenge improper decision-making processes and outcomes with which they are confronted.**

In order to best implement EU law in line with these rights, **national and local authorities** should:

- Provide continuous accessible training for all staff and agencies on all aspects of EU law, including applicable human rights standards, to prevent misapplication.

- Introduce effective enforcement measures to ensure the correct application of EU law and the design of sanctions for those who violate EU laws.
- Provide awareness raising and accessible information to residents on how they can challenge improper decision-making processes and outcomes.

📌 **All residents, including vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups, should be able to enjoy their basic human rights and have access to justice and legal aid, in particular when their human rights are violated.**

Member States should provide higher standard detention conditions in accordance with the values promoted by the EU and should ensure the reintegration of detainees into society.

Member States should ensure accessible and effective access to justice for every individual, including migrants, during all stages of the judicial process, from the preliminary stages such as initial investigations to the court hearings. In addition, all information and communication processes regarding legal rights, legal aid and judicial proceedings should be accessible to all. Sign language interpretation and information in Braille, among others, should be available for all participants in the justice system.

The necessary financial resources should be ring-fenced to provide legal aid, which has been vastly reduced in many **Member States** to the detriment of their citizens.

Member States should ensure that the transposition and implementation of **the Victim's Directive*** provides equal and effective access to the rights of information, support,

respect and protection contained therein. Equal and effective access to such rights should be ensured for all victims in a non-discriminatory manner, regardless of residence status (as per Article 1 of the Directive).

2.2 Guaranteeing free movement and fair mobility for all citizens

Even though the Treaty rights are in place with regard to free movement, these rights are not implemented in practice for all citizens and, particularly, many vulnerable, marginalised and excluded Europeans still face insurmountable obstacles which prevent them from studying, working or carrying out volunteering activities in another Member State, or even simply visiting another Member State. Such obstacles are often multi-faceted and deeply hinder the inclusion of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups in society.

Additionally, the enforcement of border controls is frequently carried out in violation of the human rights of all those trying to enter the EU, including those seeking international protection. It must also be noted that civil and political rights, including the right to family life, are affected by the rules for granting Schengen entry visas and UK-Ireland visas. This discriminates against EU residents with scarce financial resources and can have a disproportional impact on women and people with disabilities.

ENHANCING THE RIGHT TO FREE MOVEMENT

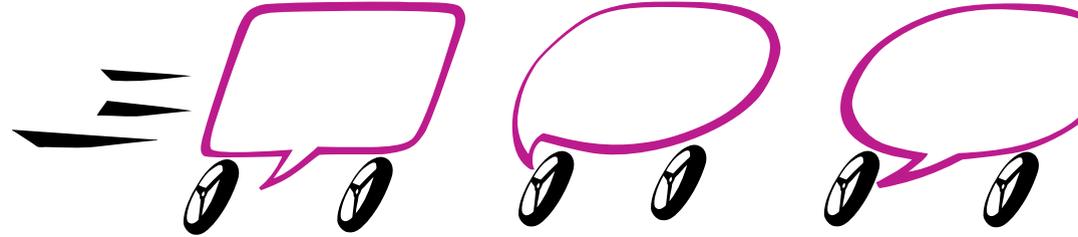
EU institutions and Member States should take all appropriate measures to ensure that all EU residents, in particular vulnerable, marginalised and excluded residents are able to enjoy their right to free movement in the in the European Union on an equal basis with others and right to be included in mobility and cooperation actions and programmes.

EU institutions, Members States and other relevant stakeholders should take all appropriate measures to ensure just and favourable conditions of residence and work and an equitable standard of living for third country nationals residing and working in the European Union.

EU institutions should review the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems to incorporate the needs of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups. Implementation guidelines and training opportunities for local authorities should focus on the needs of specific groups.

EU institutions and Member States should adopt the proposed 'European Accessibility Act: improving accessibility of goods and services in the Internal Market*' in order to further ensure access to goods and services for all its citizens, and in particular for persons with disabilities.

Every EU resident visiting another EU Member State, including vulnerable, marginalised and excluded residents, should receive essential services provided by the Member State in question on equal terms with nationals. The principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment should also be mainstreamed throughout all EU programmes.



EU institutions should ensure that Member States respect the Directive on Free Movement 2004/38 and the principle of equal treatment to ensure that all EU citizens, particularly Roma, exercise their rights to free movement and to prevent the deportation and expulsion of Roma by Member States.

ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF THIRD COUNTRIES' RESIDENTS WHEN ENTERING THE EU AND ACCESSING CITIZENSHIP

EU institutions and Member States should reform existing legislation and policy regarding entry, the EU asylum system, and residence in order to ensure the proper implementation of the international, regional and Community obligations in respect of human rights for all residents.

EU institutions and Member States should establish harmonised criteria for determining regular residence for migrants in all Member States. As such, any individual with a pending application or appeal to the immigration

or asylum authorities, or any individual who is involved in criminal, labour or other court proceedings, or who is otherwise unable to return to their country of origin, should be considered as legally residing in the Member State and should accordingly be granted a residence permit and/or permission to reside when such requirements exist.

Member States should increase their efforts to effectively guarantee the right to family life and family reunification for all migrants and beneficiaries of international protection procedures.

EU institutions should review the conditions for enabling access to European citizenship and, notably, to extend and harmonise the conditions in the EU Treaties under which long term residents have access to the rights and obligations of European citizenship.

2.3

Guaranteeing civil and political rights and the participation of all

Restrictions to the right to vote exist in a large number of EU Member States and prevent many EU citizens from participating in the political life of their country of residence as well as from voting and standing in European elections. Third country migrants are excluded from the right to vote and stand for election in local, national and regional political processes. This constitutes a major barrier with regard to the exercise of their right to participate in political life and is not accepted by EU citizens. Indeed, as underlined by the European Commission "EU Citizens' Agenda 2013", "[in the online public consultation on EU citizenship held from 9 May to 27 September 2012] many participants also felt that there should be no taxation without political participation."

Furthermore, vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups are not adequately represented in political parties, electoral lists, and administrative and national bodies.

ENSURING THAT ALL CITIZENS RESIDING IN EUROPE CAN VOTE

☑ **EU institutions, Member States and other relevant stakeholders** should take all appropriate measures to ensure equality, non-discrimination and accessibility for all, with a particular attention to the needs of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups, in relation to participation in political and public life, in particular regarding the right to vote.

EU institutions and Member States should review the EU treaties and repeal any restrictions that Member States have in place with respect to EU citizens regarding the right to vote in local and European elections.

EU institutions and Member States should provide accessible information on the electoral process, programmes or political parties. They should provide support for citizens in order to ensure informed voting, with particular attention to vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups. Elections should be made accessible for all, regardless of the means of voting: attention should be paid to the accessibility of ballots, electronic voting, e-voting and physical access to premises where voting takes place.

Member States should remove legal restrictions which prevent citizens from exercising their legal and political rights including the right to vote, for example for persons with disabilities or for detainees.

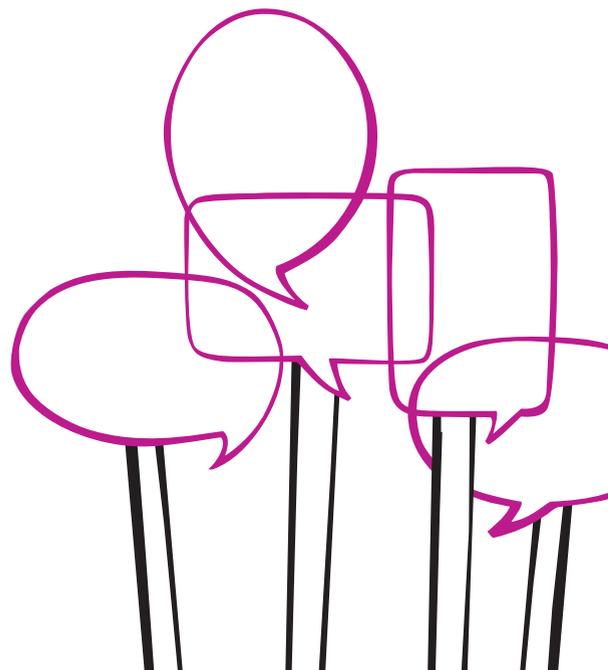
ENSURING THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATION OF ALL

☑ **Alongside with ensuring the right to vote to all citizens residing in the EU, the political and public participation, notably representation, of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups needs to be improved significantly at all levels of decision-making in Europe.**

EU institutions, Member States and political parties should ensure, as a matter of priority, gender balance and the participation of diverse social groups in standing for elections, effectively holding office and performing public functions at all levels of decision making.

Member States, party to the **Convention of the Council of Europe on the "Participation of foreigners in public life at local level"**** should guarantee to regularly resident foreign nationals the "classical rights" of freedom of expression, assembly and association (including the right to vote and to stand in local authority elections) on the same terms as they guarantee those rights to their own nationals.

EU institutions and Member States should ensure active civic participation of Roma in the social and economic spheres of the European Union, notably by organising awareness and outreach activities towards Roma communities in order to their involvement.



One European Democracy, Three Democratic Pillars.



3.

Democratic pillars

3.1

#1: educated and informed citizens

3.2

#2: open and responsive institutions

3.3

#3: strong and recognised organised civil society

« For us, active citizenship means primarily the active involvement of citizens as participation in the life of their communities, and thus in democracy, in terms of activity and decision-making »

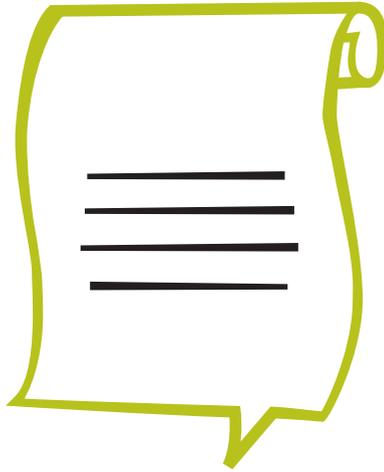
– EYCA Manifesto

The EU is often seen as a procedural machine and not as a lively entity gathering 500 million people around the same democratic project. The EYCA is convinced that the European Union is more than a legal and economic framework because it is built around the principles of democracy, human rights, rule of law and social welfare. Nonetheless, these principles are not clearly perceived as leading forces or representing the actual essence of the development of Europe. This hinders a real European integration process with more transparent and accountable decision-makers and appropriate ways to ensure citizen engagement.

The EYCA concludes that a functional democracy relies on three complementary pillars:

- *institutions considerate to citizens and fully involving them in decision-making process;*
- *a strong and independent organised civil society.*

In order to achieve a vibrant European democracy, these three key pillars should not only be individually reinforced but the communication and/or interaction between them should also be improved. This requires significant reform of the EU treaties.



3.1 Democratic pillar #1: educated and informed citizens

There is still an enormous lack of information and awareness among European citizens, of communication between EU institutions and citizens, as well as a lack of understanding the respective roles of the European institutions and of other stakeholders (national government, interest groups, etc). These gaps need to be filled in order to encourage the engagement of all Europeans in their common project.

However, there is still a long way to go until there is a truly independent European media landscape that stimulates informed debates about EU policies. Similarly, in order to become a vehicle for creating awareness, knowledge and understanding of European citizenship and its values, citizenship education should be protected and reinforced in all Member States.

PROVIDING QUALITY INFORMATION ON EUROPE AND ITS VALUES

👉 **EU institutions** should instigate structural changes to ensure that citizens receive quality and relevant information about the EU. These efforts must be particularly made at national and local level and should not only be delegated to decentralised actors of the European Commission.

EU institutions should develop innovative and creative communication strategies which engage closely with citizens, promote processes and focus on the national and local level. They should be appropriately addressed to diverse groups, focus on the vision of a common European project for all EU citizens and promote the active participation of all Europeans in the decision making process.

EU institutions and Member States should develop policies which eradicate the digital divide and should promote effective actions to favour the integration of marginalised groups into e-society.

👉 **Both traditional and new media play a crucial role in this process and they should be used to contribute to more effective communication and understanding between EU institutions and citizens.** EU institutions and **Member States** should favour the development of a responsible environment for media that would ensure that EU matters reach citizens in a fair way. In this respect, media freedom, media pluralism and respect of the work of journalists should be particularly monitored.

National media, especially public TV and radio broadcasters, should ensure a fair coverage of EU affairs by dedicating time and space, monitored by national regulatory bodies, for broadcasting and media in general, to cover EU issues.

EU institutions and Member States should strengthen European and national programmes which support small and independent media.

EU institutions should translate EU documents into the official languages of the Member States to increase the access to EU information for national media and citizens.

👉 **A positive image of the groups that face discrimination and negative stereotyping should be promoted in European and national media and such stereotypes should be actively fought against in the coming years whilst paying specific attention to media freedom.**

PROMOTING THE EUROPEAN PROJECT AND THE VALUE OF DEMOCRACY THROUGH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

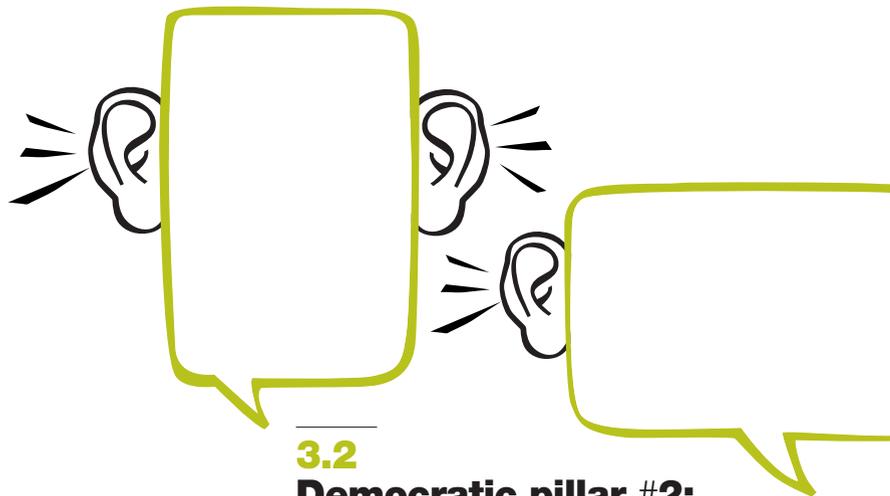
☑ **Citizenship education is an opportunity for positive change and a crucial tool in developing democracies. EU institutions and Member States should thus ensure that European citizenship and civic education are promoted in both formal and non-formal education.**

Member States must guarantee that **democratic citizenship*** and human rights education is present in the national education systems at all stages through specific courses as well as cross-curricular subjects. They should also ensure that national educational programmes promote the study and knowledge of the universal values included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the study of EU institutions and of the different national and cultural identities of the members of the EU in order to increase citizens' awareness of the European project.

EU institutions should promote and support the role of civil society organisations which provide non-formal, informal and multicultural education opportunities and as a vehicle for the realisation of citizens' empowerment and the promotion of active European citizenship.

☑ **EU institutions and Member States should ensure that Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity is promoted and that negative stereotyping of vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups is prevented and combatted.**

EU institutions should include the learning of different European languages in all mobility programmes by adding training elements to these programmes.



3.2

Democratic pillar #2: open and responsive institutions

Member States should provide national languages courses to EU residents and ensure that national language courses are made available and free to members of vulnerable marginalised and excluded groups.

Member States should ensure that attitudes, discourses and actions that are particularly discriminatory are effectively addressed and, where appropriate, are subject to legal proceedings and publicly condemned (while at the same time respecting freedom of speech and opinion).

EU institutions should encourage the involvement of schools and higher education institutions in projects that aim to fight gender inequality, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discriminations.

The idea of the "Europeaness", of a European project, with a democratically engaged citizenry, cannot simply be promoted from on-high and should be driven by European citizens themselves. If citizens need to be better informed about the EU and to better understand this political system so as to be better equipped to change it; they also need to be better engaged in it and listened to by institutions and decision-makers.

The EU Institutions lack the capacity to take decisions that would benefit the entire Union since decision making is still monopolised by different national interests. The EU institutions lack legitimacy due to the absence of democratic checks and balances.

Incremental changes have been made to the European Union project since its beginning, but today there is a need to go towards a true political union, inspired by the principles of representative democracy, participation and accountability, and more and better opportunities for the exercise of democracy. The EYCA believes that this democratic impetus requires substantial institutional change.

👉 The **European Union institutions** should launch a Treaty revision process in order to reinforce especially and representative democracy in order to put citizens back at the heart of the European integration process and restore the legitimacy of the European projects by democratic control. This process should include all the relevant stakeholders and be used as a tool to raise awareness about European integration for the general public.

👉 In order to work towards a more democratic Europe that is accountable to its citizens, the role of the **European Parliament** in European decision-making should be reinforced, with a move towards genuine European governance and European democracy.

👉 The executive and political role of the **European Commission** in EU decision making processes should now be evaluated and discussed in detail especially regarding the appointment of the college of Commissioners.

👉 The **European Council** must not be allowed to dominate the European decision making process and should be made accountable to the European Parlia-

ment (i.e. by justifying its decisions in front of the Parliament). A public discussion on the direct election of the President of the European Council should be launched among European citizens.

👉 A reform of the democratic functioning of the EU should consider the role of other bodies and ensure that national institutions are better involved in the European decision-making process.

The **European Economic and Social Committee** should be structured in a way that transparency and clarity is ensured in the appointment of its members that all sectors of society are properly represented in it. A discussion about its role of representing European civil society should be launched.

Member States' institutions should play a crucial role notably by highlighting the role of national Parliaments and politicians in the EU decision making process and increasing inter-parliamentary co-operation.

3.3 Democratic pillar #3: strong and recognised organised civil society

« Participative democracy meets the present-day needs of European democratic governance across the Union by supplementing and reinforcing representative democracy. Involving organised civil society in policy-shaping and the preparation of decisions strengthens the democratic legitimacy of public institutions, of their work and activities. The quality of civil dialogue – including social dialogue, which is its crucial element – is an indicator of the state of health of our democracies »– EYCA Manifesto

Despite the political and legal recognition of the concept of citizen participation introduced by Article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, a clear and structured framework for European civil dialogue that would allow a permanent and transversal dialogue is still lacking. As underlined by the European Economic and Social Committee's Opinion on the Article 11(1) and 11(2) of the Lisbon Treaty, a gap still remains between the applicable legal rules and the reality of citizens and civil society organisations' involvement in decision-making in Europe. According to the EYCA the potential of Article 11 is still to be fully understood and implemented by the EU institutions.

In addition, civil society organisations defending the public good are weakened by repeated threats to freedom of association and the lack of financial sustainability with which they are confronted, particularly in the current times of crisis.

RECOGNISING THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY TO DEMOCRACY

➤ The EYCA urges **EU institutions** to acknowledge and support the role of volunteer and civil society organisations in bridging the gap between the EU and its citizens by supporting and recognising the role that non-governmental and volunteering organisations working on youth policies, elderly policies, children rights, social rights are playing to achieve a more inclusive society and to foster active citizenship through people's empowerment, both at a local and a European level.

EU institutions and Member States should implement the recommendations developed in the **PAVE (Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe)*** during the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and thereby show their commitment to "promot(ing) and support(ing) volunteering as a demonstration of European values, providing a vehicle for active citizenship and contributing to economic and social-capital growth".

The EYCA urges **Member States** to support European and local volunteering networks which aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, best practices, skills and capacities among organisations in order to build a feeling of European identity in new generations.

ENSURING THE FUNCTIONING OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

➤ **EU institutions and Member States** should commit to the independent functioning and sustainability of civil society organisations, especially in a period of crisis.

Associational life must be protected everywhere in Europe and resources must be made available by **EU institutions and Member States** to support civil society organisations so that they can facilitate the sharing of best practice on the involvement of citizens and civil society at the local, national and EU level; voice the concerns of citizens, especially vulnerable, marginalised and excluded groups; and create alliances aiming which aim to represent them effectively at all levels of participation.

EU institutions, National governments and other funders should facilitate and encourage the inclusion of volunteer time as income in the accounts of organisations therefore allowing its use as co-funding.

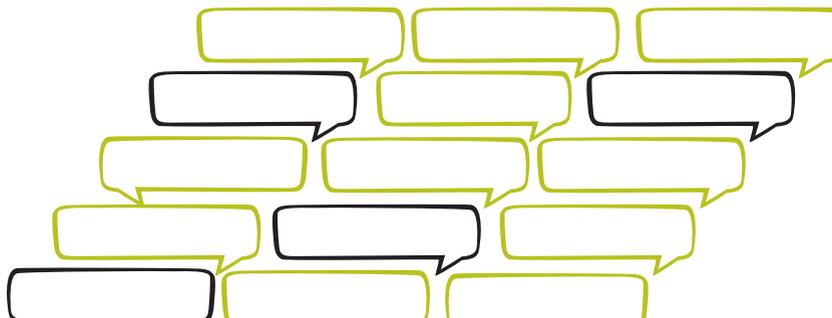
BUILDING A CONSTRUCTIVE CIVIL DIALOGUE IN EUROPE

➤ Civil dialogue in Europe should be actively supported and implemented by relevant stakeholders (**European Commission, national and regional authorities, etc.**) at all levels of decision-making in order to ensure that citizens' are concretely, effectively and sustainably involved in the European democratic process.

More specifically, the EYCA urges the **European Commission** to adopt a Green Paper in which a clear policy proposal is developed to establish a permanent and stable framework for vertical, transversal and horizontal civil dialogue.

Member States are called upon to set up the necessary mechanisms and bodies to enable civil dialogue to take place at the national and subnational levels.

➤ **The European institutions** should adopt the **Statute of European Association and the Statute of European Foundation** to ensure higher recognition, visibility and legitimacy of civil society.



Resources.

The following definitions are not meant to be scientific or exhaustive but reflect our understanding of notions extensively used during our work and in this document.

What do we mean by...

Active citizenship

For us active citizenship primarily means the active involvement of citizens as participants in the life of their communities, society and/or political life in terms of activity and decision-making and in accordance with the principles and values of human rights and democracy.

Citizens and Residents

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims: "All human beings are born free and equal in rights." Being a citizen is to enjoy, with all those who constitute a democratic society equal in rights that are indivisible and universal: civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. Therefore, all those living on a given territory must be recognized as citizens and be able to exercise their citizenship:

a citizenship of residence, from the local to the European level. This is the fundamental right for anyone who lives, works and contributes to the common expenses of an area. The Tampere European Council and the fourth report of the European Commission on access to citizenship, including European citizenship, do not say anything else. In this document we use the terms "citizens" and "residents" without distinction unless obstacles and recommendations are specific to people with a particular residence status (such as EU citizens, long term-residents, regular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants). In such cases, the status is specifically highlighted.

Civil society and civil society organisations

Our members are civil society organisations and networks which are essentially citizens organised collectively to promote a project of general interest,

for all or a specific part of society. In addition to this dimension of defending the common good, our members are non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations with a purpose of democratic and social change. Civil society organisations are, in our understanding, "schools of democracy". Following the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) definition, civil society can be defined as "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests." When targeting "civil society" and "civil society organisations" we address these organisations defending general interest and not those, using the term of "civil society organisation" or "association" which represent particular, notably business, interests.

Democratic citizenship

Democratic citizenship refers to "citizenship as a set of civil, political and

social rights and as a political practice [which] can help generate desirable feelings of identity and belonging" to a political system relying on democratic institutions and the respect of human rights (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Our understanding of "democratic citizenship" is built upon the Council of Europe definition of this notion

Vulnerable, marginalised and excluded citizens (or groups)

We consider as 'vulnerable', 'marginalised', and 'excluded' citizens or groups people who face discrimination on the basis of their ethnic origin, nationality, religion, sex, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, social or other status (including people experiencing poverty, problems related to migration or residence status and status as a detainee) which puts them into a disadvantaged position.

What is...

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

The Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU brings together in a single document the fundamental rights protected in the EU. The Charter contains rights and freedoms under six titles: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizen's rights and justice. Proclaimed in 2000 the Charter has become legally binding on the EU with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009.

Communication on "Minimum Standard of Consultation" (COM (2002) 704 final)

The European Commission Communication of 11 December 2002 "Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue – General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission" establishes a consultation process, therefore "[helping] to improve the effectiveness of policies whilst

reinforcing the involvement of interested parties and the general public".

Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level

This treaty of the Council of Europe, adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1997, grants foreigners the right to vote in local elections, provided that they fulfill the same legal requirements as apply to nationals and have been lawful and habitual residents in the State concerned for the 5 years preceding the elections. As of 2013, the Convention has been ratified by 8 Member States of the Council of Europe and signed by 5 others.

Employment Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/78/EC)

This Directive of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, puts in place a general framework to ensure equal treatment of individuals in the European Union, regardless of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, as regards access to employment or

occupation and membership of certain organisations.

European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights is an international treaty to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. Drafted by the Council of Europe, it entered into force in 1953. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the 47 Council of Europe's Member States. The European Union is preparing to sign the European Convention on Human Rights.

EU Active Inclusion Strategy

In order to fight inequalities and exclusion, the European Commission adopted the Recommendation on the Active Inclusion of people most excluded from the labour market in October 2008. It calls for a comprehensive policy strategy combining three strands: adequate income support, access to quality services and inclusive labour markets.

European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

Introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the ECI is an invitation to the European Commission to propose legislation on matters where the EU has competence to legislate. An ECI has to be backed by at least one million EU citizens, coming from at least 7 out of the 28 Member States. ECIs' rules and procedures are set out in an EU Regulation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in February 2011.

Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe (P.A.V.E)

The P.A.V.E was elaborated by the European Year of Volunteering Alliance 2011 (EYV2011) and provides recommendations for a more efficient and effective European policy framework to support and promote volunteers, volunteering, volunteer-involving organisations and their partners. Its recommendations promote and support volunteering as a demonstration of European values, providing a vehicle for active citizenship.

Social Economy

Social economy is a way of organising human activities, based upon collective solidarity and democracy and leaning on the economic efficiency of its means. It deals with the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services and intervenes in all economic, social, environmental and societal areas. It therefore contributes to express an active citizenship and to ensure individual and collective prosperity.

Social and Active Inclusion

Social inclusion is about combating poverty and social exclusion so that everyone can fully participate in society. The concept of active inclusion – that has to be considered as a strand of the broader concept of social inclusion – is to be intended as a vehicle to enable any person, notably the most excluded and disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including having a job.

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Lisbon Treaty or Reform Treaty)

Entered into force on 1 December 2009, the Lisbon Treaty amended the Treaty on European Union (TEU, Maastricht) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC, Rome), this latter being renamed Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) in the process.

The articles mostly referred to during in the EYCA work are Articles 2 (values of the Union), 3 (aims of the Union), 6 (provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU), 9 (on the principle of equality among citizens), 10 (on representative democracy) and 11 (on citizens' participation).

Victim's Directive

The Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime [Directive 2012/29/EU] was adopted on 25 October 2012. In all EU Member States, it ensures the fundamental rights of victims (eg: that victims are treated with respect; victims get information on their rights and their case in a way they understand; vulnerable victims are identified and are properly protected; etc.).

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee adopted by the Council in April 2013 ensures that all young people up to 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.