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## Studying Civic and Citizenship Education in the European Context

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## **Introduction**

This paper explores how civic and citizenship education in the European context is being addressed through the new IEA International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS). It sets out the rationale for the inclusion of a European regional perspective as a new and innovative part of the study. It focuses in particular on the rationales for the purpose and content of the European Module. It describes the process of construction of the European Module instruments and outlines how the outcomes will be reported.

### ***Civic and citizenship education in Europe – Setting the Scene***

The past two decades have witnessed a growing interest in civic and citizenship education in Europe and seen its promotion and evolution through research, policies and practices at national, regional and European level. There has been particular interest and activity from supra-national, regional organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and European Commission (EC). This interest has mirrored that across the world where civic and citizenship education has come rapidly up the policy agenda for national governments and supra-national organisations. There are a myriad of reasons for this rapid interest: some are globally driven, while others have a particular European focus. Some of the main drivers include:

- *Democratic deficit* – which has produced a concern about a weakening political and civic engagement in Europe as manifested in low election turnouts, particularly among younger people, declining membership of voluntary and civic associations and a lack of interest in taking part in community activities.
- *Fall of old Soviet regimes in Central and Eastern Europe* – which has presented the on-going challenge of replacing these old regimes with institutions and processes that lay strong foundations for democracy and command public support in these regions.
- *Impact of global and European events* – which has fostered, in the wake of the reaction to global events such as 9/11, tsunami and two wars in Iran, as well events on European soil, notably the bombings in Beslan, Madrid and London, an urgent need to address issues of diversity, inclusion, intercultural relations and social and community cohesion at all levels of society.
- *Rapid movement of peoples into, as well as within and across Europe* – which has been driven by economic reasons and further encouraged with the emergence of a larger, ‘borderless’ Europe where workers have greater opportunities to move to where the jobs are. It has led to increased migration and presented challenges in the management of such population movement across Europe and in the integration of migrants into countries and local communities in ways that foster community cohesion and strengthen intercultural dialogue and relations
- *Enlargement of Europe and of the European Union (EU)* – which has fuelled an ambition, at European policy level, to construct a Europe fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that has a strong economy, based on skilled knowledge workers, and which is

underpinned by a society, within and across European countries, that is socially inclusive, equitable and cohesive.

Taken together, these and other drivers, help to explain the growing interest in civic and citizenship education in Europe.

The growing interest has been matched by a series of European developments and initiatives over the last decade, led by supra-national organisations, and supported by European countries, which have sought to:

- Build and make use of an up-to-date evidence base on policy and practice in civic and citizenship education
- Develop effective policies, frameworks, and networks for civic and citizenship education that underpin and strengthen evolving practices
- Consider what are successful outcomes of civic and citizenship education and how they can be measured.

Four landmark initiatives, in particular, have had and continue to have a considerable impact in relation to creating an evidence base, developing effective policies and practices and measuring outcomes. They are:

- ***IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED)*** - involving 28 countries, 24 of whom were European and providing the first large-scale evidence base for policy-makers concerning the development of citizenship education in schools and communities across European countries (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 1999 and 2001). The last decade has seen national governments and supra-national organisations in Europe wrestle with how to use this evidence base to develop effective policies and practices (Torney-Purta and Barber, 2005).
- ***Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) Project*** – which began in 1997 and has involved the majority of European countries. The project has pioneered efforts to establish networks and frameworks through which effective policy and practice can evolve across Europe. The first phase (1997-2000) explored and mapped the terrain (Council of Europe, 1999). The second phase (2001-2004) focused on EDC/HRE policies, including an All-European Policy Study (Birzea *et al.*, 2004; Kerr, 2004; Losito, 2004; Pol, 2004; Mikkelsen, 2004; Froumin, 2004), and establishing a website and networks (Council of Europe, 2002). 2005 was designated as the *European Year of Citizenship through Education*. The current third phase (2006-2009) focuses on capacity building, governance and training. The groundbreaking work has been picked up by national governments and by other supra-national organisations.
- ***EURYDICE survey Citizenship Education at School in Europe*** – an overarching survey of the provision of citizenship education in schools in 30 European

countries, which was commissioned under the Dutch EU presidency (Eurydice, 2005). The survey provides the most up-to-date overview of approaches and challenges in citizenship education.

- ***European Commission initiative to develop programmes and indicators for civic competence and active citizenship*** – an initiative linked to the 2000 Lisbon Objectives in education and training. Active citizenship and social inclusion are central to the Lisbon process. Lisbon identified eight key competencies that Europeans need to acquire by 2010 if Europe is to respond to globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based economies. Among these eight key competencies is *social and civic knowledge* linked to the capability to be an active citizen. Subsequently, the European Commission (EC) has launched an active citizenship programme, *Europe for Citizens* (2007-2013), to stimulate opportunities for active citizenship in civil society and in informal and non-formal settings. The Commission has also attempted to construct a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks to meet the original Key Competences Framework (EC, 2006). This EC framework proposes to develop core indicators that cover five key competences, among which is *civic skills*. Work has begun to develop indicators for each of these five key competences, including one for *civic competence* in the form of a composite indicator to measure the ability to be an active citizen. The development of a composite indicator to measure the ability to be an active citizen has seen the launch of a research project, *Active Citizenship for Democracy*, run by the EC sponsored Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) in collaboration with the Council of Europe (Hoskins, 2006; Hoskins *et al.*, 2007). The composite indicator is recognised as only a first step in measuring outcomes in this field. It will continue to be revised with further conceptual development and with the advent of more and better data, particularly from the ICCS Study.

This overall regional context for civic and citizenship education helps to explain why the ICCS Study has chosen to focus on the European context, as part of its regional component and, in so doing add depth to the international dimension. There remains considerable appetite among policy-makers in Europe, at national and supra-national level, to strengthen the evidence base for civic and citizenship education through the collection of up-to-date data. This is supported by a conviction that that data can then be used to help further shape policies and practices and measure outcomes in this area. The next section explores how the European context will be addressed through the study components.

## ***Coverage of the European context in ICCS***

The European context will be covered in a number of ICCS components, namely:

1. **main study's international instruments**, which contain a small number of regional items
2. **National Contexts Survey**, towards which initial data is currently being collected and which will provide a wealth of contextual information about civic and citizenship education at a national level in participating European countries. In stage 2 of the survey, due to take place in 2009, the survey may also include some specific European questions
3. **European Module** which, together with other regional modules, constitutes a new aspect of this IEA international study on civics and citizenship education and enables regional issues to be addressed in greater detail

The regional modules, including one for Europe, are a new and innovative feature of the ICCS Study. The following sections of the paper focus on the European module. They explain its purpose and detail its on-going construction.

### ***Purpose of ICCS's European Module***

The purpose of ICCS's European Module is to investigate specific Europe-related issues that derive from the overarching assessment framework of the study – the framework which describes and builds the constructs that underpin the span of the content of all ICCS instruments. (For details of the ICCS assessment framework, see Fraillon and Schultz in this same AERA symposium and IEA (2007).)

Support for the development of a European Module has come from two main sources: a) participating European countries, which (with only a few exceptions) are all members of the IEA Association and b) the European Commission (EC). ICCS as a whole, and the European module in particular, have generated considerable interest amongst European countries, with 25 currently agreeing to take part in the study, and also from supra-national organisations such as the European Commission and Council of Europe. Such interest stems, as explored in the opening section of the paper, from the fact that the concept of citizenship and approaches to civic and citizenship education in European countries are undergoing fundamental review and reform in many European countries. This review is occurring in response to global issues as well as specifically European ones, such as the enlargement of the European Union, cultural diversity, European identity and the movement of peoples within and across countries. The interest and review have helped to shape the form and content of the European Module.

## Constructing the European Module

The process of the construction of the European Module has been a **consultative** one and has involved the input of representatives of individual European countries as well as that of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRELL). This process has been in keeping with the nature of ICCS, which is an independent international study framed by the interests of participating countries. In the end, in spite of the range of inputs, the final decisions on the issues chosen for inclusion in the European Module have been dependent on the interests and priorities of the European countries that participate in ICCS, through their National Research Coordinators (NRCs), as well as their fit with the study's assessment framework. The European Module is not additional to or separate from the ICCS Study but is an integral and complementary component that adds depth to the international components.

The construction of the European Module has been a detailed **iterative** process, involving numerous consultations and the drafting of several versions of the European Module instruments. This process is summarised in the following table below:

2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• European Module paper produced by ICCS Consortium</li><li>• ICCS Consortium and NRCs meet in Amsterdam to discuss the paper (October)</li><li>• ICCS European Module Expert Group paper</li><li>• Contributions from European countries participating in ICCS received by ICCS Consortium</li><li>• Version 1 of instruments produced</li></ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ICCS Consortium and NRCs meet in Langley, UK to consider Version 1 (May)</li><li>• Version 2 produced (May)</li><li>• ICCS Consortium and NRCs meet in Rome, Italy to consider Version 2 (June)</li><li>• Version 3 produced for pilot study (July)</li><li>• Version 4 produced following pilot study for Field Trial (Autumn)</li></ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hamburg – Field Trial Analysis, Data Lab (March)</li></ul>

## Delineating the scope of the European Module

To kick-start the process, the ICCS Consortium produced, in 2006, a European Module paper which suggested potential elements to be covered in the European Module instruments, mapped onto the ICCS assessment framework. The paper underlined how the European Module is integral to, rather than separate from, ICCS's international core. This was discussed with the National Research Coordinators (NRCs) of the European countries taking part in ICCS at a meeting in October 2006, in Amsterdam (The Netherlands).

Following this initial meeting, the construction of the European Module was helpfully informed by further developments, in the shape of documents produced by sources with a keen interest in the development and outcomes of the module:

- **ICCS European Module Expert Group paper** (European Commission Directorate General JRC Joint Research Centre: Centre for Research into Lifelong Learning (CRELL) and Council of Europe). The expert group comprised representatives from European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) member states, and countries candidate to EU ascension. This document mapped how data from the module (and other ICCS instruments) has the potential to help the EU to add to their evidence base on the active citizenship of young people, and education and training for active citizenship in Europe. In turn, this will add to evidence as to the progress made on active citizenship in the context of the EU's Lisbon strategy (2010). The paper lists four dimensions that the expert group believe should be given the highest priority in the module, namely:
  - Intercultural competence (relationship to migration and racism)
  - Conflict resolution and openness to change and to differences of opinion
  - European identity
  - Attitudes to foreign language learning
  
- **Contributions from a number of European countries participating in ICCS** following the NRC meeting in the Netherlands and prior to the Langley (UK) meeting.

The consortium and the NRCs from the European countries taking part in ICCS then came together again in May 2007, in Langley (United Kingdom), at a meeting where a map of constructs as well as Version 1 of the draft instruments of the European Module were discussed. (See appendix for constructs map.)

## **Refining and piloting the European Module instruments**

Inputs from countries about the initial instruments were taken into account and a Version 2 of the European Module was presented and discussed with NRCs in June 2007, in Rome (Italy). This was followed by the development of Version 3, based on NRC's Rome inputs, and its piloting in two European countries (England and the Netherlands), in July 2007. Although the data yielded by the pilot needed to be treated with caution given its limited scope, the findings from the pilot study were helpful in further revising the instruments in the preparation of Version 4 for the Field Trial.

## **Field Trial and revision of the European Module instruments**

The Field Trial of the ICCS instruments, including the European Module, took place in Autumn 2007. The data yielded are currently being analysed for their psychometric properties and were discussed at a Data Analysis Lab that took place last week in Hamburg (Germany). The revision of the instruments in preparation for the Main Study is on-going.

### ***Instrument components – Field Trial***

Based on the consultation process, it was proposed that the European Module should consist of a test and a questionnaire to be completed by students after they have completed the international instruments. In order to minimise the burden on participants and their schools, it has been decided that the European Module should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete. The module, at present, comprises a cognitive test (allocated 10 minutes) and a questionnaire (allocated 20 minutes). Each of these components is now described in turn.

## **Cognitive Test**

### ***Knowledge***

The test consists of five batteries of true/false items and four multiple choice items aimed at assessing students factual knowledge about European civic institutions. The questions have been grouped under the following headings:

- European laws, policies and conventions
- The European Union – facts
- The European Union – laws and policies
- The European Union – institutions and conventions
- The Euro currency (money)

The selection of topic areas for the test was based upon the topics suggested at the Langley (UK) meeting in May 2007. It reflects the fact that the topics suggested were centred around factual knowledge (rather than understanding), and that the main area of civic-related knowledge which is common to a sizeable number of countries is that of the European Union, its institutions and its functioning.

The cognitive domain of *knowledge* has been prioritised over *analysing and reasoning* in the European Module. This is primarily because the areas of analysing and reasoning, which are also relevant to European countries, are well covered in the international ICCS instruments.



### ***Knowledge self-assessment***

The cognitive test is complemented by a battery of items designed to capture students' perceptions of how much they know about the topics covered in the cognitive test.

### ***Contextualising participant's perceptions***

It is intended that responses to both the knowledge and the knowledge self-assessment questions will provide contextual background to responses given by students in the behaviours and perceptions questionnaire: *how well informed are students perceptions regarding European-level institutions and policies?*

### **Perceptions and behaviours questionnaire**

As in the core international student questionnaires, the perceptions and behaviour items of the European Module do not have any correct or incorrect responses. The module's questionnaire addresses region-specific aspects of the following affective-behavioural domains of ICCS: value-beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. These are described in the next section.

In the meantime, it is worth noting that the coverage of the European Module takes into account the fact that European regional options are included in the international student instruments. These options concern: a) level of interest in European politics; b) sense of belonging to Europe as a community; c) trust in European-level supranational institutions; d) expected participation in European elections as an adult.

### **Constructs covered**

The constructs covered in the European module are listed in the table below, which also indicates the content domains of the ICCS framework which are tapped by the constructs.

<b>Affective-behavioural domain</b>	<b>European Module Construct</b>	<b>Content Domain</b>
<i>Value Beliefs</i>	Belief in equal opportunities within European countries	Civic principles
	Beliefs regarding how European countries should be organised – politically and economically	Civic society and systems
	Beliefs regarding the enlargement of the European Union	Civic society and systems
<i>Attitudes</i>	Sense of a European self-identity	Civic identities
	Openness to other European countries/cultures, focusing on the role of schools	Civic principles
	Attitudes to learning foreign European modern languages	Civic principles
	Attitudes towards freedom of travel, settlement and work within Europe	Civic principles
<i>Behaviours</i>	Participation in European-level groups or events	Civic participation
	Interpersonal communication behaviours	Civic participation

### **Knowledge of European foreign languages - self-assessment**

Data on (self-reported) knowledge of European foreign languages will help contextualise data on students' attitudes, particularly those to foreign European language learning.

### **Confidence self-assessment**

The questionnaire is complemented by a final battery eliciting students' perceptions of how confident they were when answering the questionnaire. European matters may feel remote to young people and this battery should reflect how much they feel able to express confident, informed views.

## Next steps

The next steps in the process of developing the European Module instruments will involve careful consideration of the outcomes of the Field Trial data analysis with a view to refining the instruments. This process will lead to the presentation of Version 5 of the European Module instruments for discussion at the NRC meeting in Windsor, England, June 2008. This process will culminate in the production of Version 6 of the module's instruments by the end of June 2008 ready for the Main Study (2009).

## Outcomes

Data from the European Module and the European items included in the international instruments will feed into the international report of ICCS findings (2010). In addition, it is likely that a European regional report will also be produced. This would draw on the findings of the European module and the European items in the international instruments, as well as relevant data from European countries from the National Contexts Survey.

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## Appendix

### European Module – Mapping Document (European NRCs meeting, Langley, UK May 2007)

	Cognitive Domain 1:Knowing	Cognitive Domain 2:Analysing and Reasoning	Affective- behavioural Domain 1: Value beliefs	Affective- behavioural Domain 2: Attitudes	Affective- behavioural Domain 3: Behavioural Intentions	Affective- behavioural Domain 4: Behaviour
Content Domain 1: Civic Society and Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of European Institutions and organisations for protecting citizens' rights</li> <li>• knowledge about the history of European conflict and integration and common history</li> <li>• knowledge of the processes of enlargement of Europe and the European Union.</li> <li>• Knowledge of political parties in European Union and of local European MP</li> <li>• Knowledge of role and membership of the Council of Europe</li> <li>• Knowledge of role of the European Court of Human Rights</li> <li>• Knowledge of European Currencies – which countries use the Euro and which don't</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underlying reasons for the creation of the European Union</li> <li>• Underlying reasons for the existence of the European Union</li> <li>• Underlying reasons for enlargement of the EU</li> <li>• Understanding of the processes of the EU (ie parliament/commission etc)</li> <li>• Understanding of the processes of European Law (who is responsible for what?)</li> <li>• Identification of states within and without the EU</li> <li>• Identification of states within and without the CoE.</li> <li>• Understanding of Euro</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief in the importance of European level political unity</li> <li>• Belief in importance of single European Currency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in the European Union</li> <li>• Attitudes to European Currency (ie it is useful/it takes away from our national identity)</li> </ul>		

<p><b>Content Domain 2: Civic Principles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of immigration to Europe and migration within Europe</li> <li>• knowledge of minority groups within Europe</li> <li>• knowledge of European legislation re: Equal opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief in the importance of membership of the European Union</li> <li>• Belief in equal opportunities within Europe</li> <li>• <i>Belief in importance of learning a foreign/European language</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes towards freedom of movement, of settlement, of work in Europe.</li> <li>• Attitudes towards the enlargement of the European Union</li> <li>• Attitudes towards immigration to Europe</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Content Domain 3: Civic Participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of opportunities to visit and to participate at the European level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ how to influence European Union</li> <li>➤ keeping self informed</li> <li>➤ on-line participation</li> <li>➤ real communities (ie Europe Region WAGGGS; European Scouting Federation; town twinning trips; school exchanges; vacation trips)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in media from other European Countries</li> <li>• <i>Reasons for learning a foreign/European language</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected future participation in European Elections</li> <li>• Expected future participation in European level events/activities (ie on-line protests, youth forums, NGOs; European youth groups such as WAGGGS and ESF etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of media (web-pages and TV) from other European Countries</li> <li>• Current participation in European level events (ie on-line protests, youth forums, NGOs etc)</li> <li>• Past and current visits at the European level (ie Europe Region WAGGGS; European Scouting Federation; town twinning trips; school exchanges ; vacation trips)</li> <li>• <i>Knowledge of another language</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Content Domain 4: Civic Identities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of what it means to be European for different states within and without the EU/EEA</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Belief in a European Identity</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sense of European identity</i></li> <li>• Opinion about what it means to be a good European</li> <li>• Trust in those from other European Countries</li> <li>• Attitudes towards immigrants from other European Countries</li> <li>• <i>Views on conflict resolution within Europe</i></li> <li>• <i>Openness to change and differences of opinion within Europe</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future intention to move within Europe to study or work.</li> </ul>	
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<sup>i</sup> This relates to content domain 4 but is listed here for continuity reasons.

NB: Items in Italics are European Commission areas of priority