

# **EUROPEAN UNION CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY**

**Osman TİTREK**

Sakarya University, Turkey - otitrek@gmail.com

**Demet ZAFER-GÜNEŞ**

İstanbul Sebahattin Zaim University

**Gözde SEZEN-GÜLTEKİN**

Sakarya University, Turkey

## **Abstract**

Citizenship is an "institution which has been developed and refined to nurture and protect the homo politicus, who embodies the democratic expectation that individuals should play a part in the social and political life of the society in which they reside. It has some dimensions related socio-economical issues: democratic, socio-economic, ecologic, intercultural and equity. The European Union is facing challenges and questions to its legitimacy and democratic capacities due to a dual process of integration and decentralisation at both the national and European level. At such a time it is particularly important to address the issues around the concept of EU citizenship. There is one of the best way to develop European Union: we have to develop European Citizenship attitudes via schools and democracy is the main key of to develop European Union citizenship.

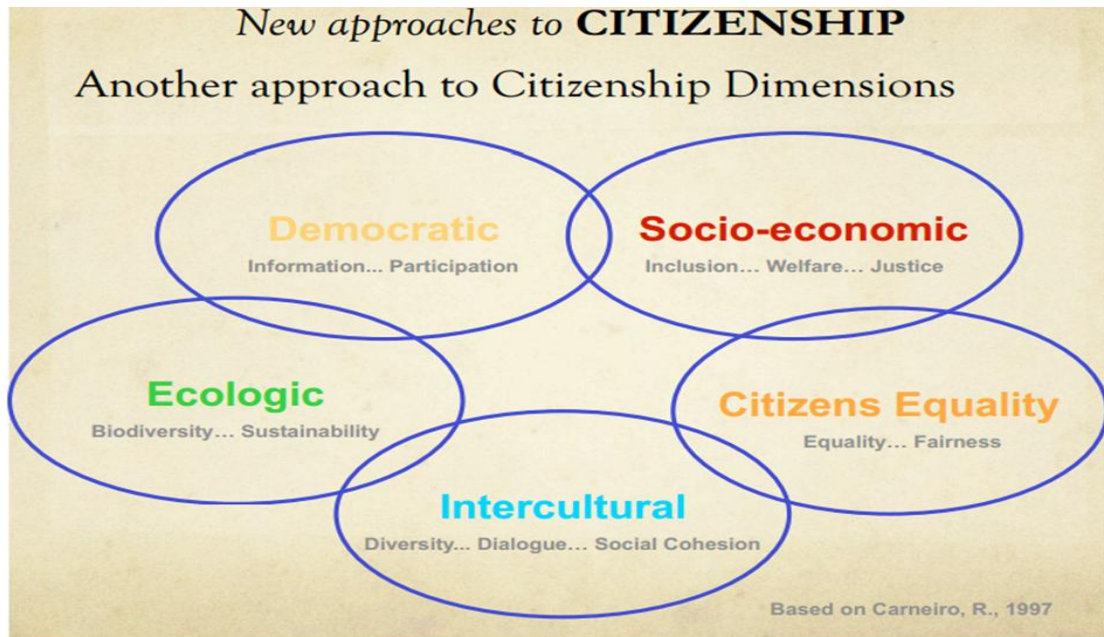
**Keywords:** citizenship, dimensions, democracy, European Union

## **The concept of citizenship**

The concept of citizenship has always been a matter of concern, not only for the academia, but also for the policy-makers, being a complex notion that lies at the intersection of law, social science, and political theory. Surely, the meaning of citizenship has evolved over time and has embraced different forms from place to place, but its importance has never decrease. In this sense, Everson considers that citizenship is an "institution which has been developed and refined to nurture and protect the homo politicus, who embodies the democratic expectation that individuals should play a part in the social and political life of the society in which they reside." (Everson, 2010).

Marshall (1950) argues that citizenship is essentially a matter of ensuring that everyone is treated equally in society by being offered three categories of rights: civil, political and social rights. In Marshall's opinion, social rights are extremely important, a citizenship limited only to civil and political rights would exclude many from full membership of society, because people who were struggling with poverty or disease, or who were poorly educated, would not have the time, resources or capacity to exercise their citizenship rights in practice.

Analyzing citizenship from a wider perspective, Jenson (2007) believes that it entails four dimensions: First of all, citizenship establishes the conditions for belonging to an „imagined community in both the narrow sense of nationality and the larger notion of identity. Secondly, it does not refer only to rights, but also to duties, the recognition of which may contribute to establish the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of a political community. Thrid, citizenship creates a specific responsibility mix that allocates the various citizenship-related responsibilities to different institutional actors from the society. Last, but not least it offers legitimacy to specific types of claims towards the state.



**Figure 1.** New Approches of Citizenship

### **European Union Citizenship**

European Union (EU) citizenship as a distinct concept was first introduced by the Maastricht Treaty, and was extended by the Treaty of Amsterdam. Prior to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the European Communities treaties provided guarantees for the free movement of economically active persons, but not, generally, for others. The 1951 Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community established a right to free movement for workers in these industries and the 1957 Treaty of Rome provided for the free movement of workers and services.

The establishment of European Union citizenship was realized in 1992, through the Treaty of Maastricht. According to article 8 of this Treaty (known also as the Treaty on the European Union, i.e. TEU): ‘Every person holding the nationality of a member state shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall be additional to and not replace national citizenship’ (Idor, 2013). The European Union has published papers and materials, including Education for Active Citizenship in the European Union (1998) which argues that the principles of European Citizenship are ‘... based on the shared values of interdependence,

democracy, equality of opportunity and mutual respect' (European Commission, 1998, p. 16).

If you are an EU citizen you have the right to travel, work and live anywhere in the European Union. If you have completed a university course lasting three years or more, your qualification will be recognised in all EU countries, since EU member states have confidence in the quality of one another's education and training systems. You can work in the health, education and other public services (except for the police, armed forces, etc.) of any country in the European Union. Before travelling within the EU you can obtain from your national authorities a European health insurance card, to help cover your medical costs if you fall ill while in another country (Idor, 2013).

Three elements of citizenship which appear to be constantly present, namely, appurtenance (the feeling of belonging to the polity), passive citizenship (protection by the polity) and active citizenship (participation in the polity) (Smirnov-Brkic et al. , 2010)

The idea of a 'citizens' Europe' is very new. Some symbols of a shared European identity already exist, such as the European passport, in use since 1985. EU driving licences have been issued in all EU countries since 1996. The EU has a motto, 'United in diversity', 9 May is celebrated as 'Europe Day' and 2013 designated the 'European Year of Citizens'. It marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, which first introduced European Union citizenship into the Treaties (Idor, 2013).

A sense of belonging together and having a common destiny cannot be manufactured. It can only arise from a shared cultural awareness, which is why Europe needs to focus not just on economics but also on education, citizenship and culture.

The EU does not say how schools and education are to be organised or what the curriculum is: these things are decided at national or local level. But the EU does run programmes to promote educational exchanges so that young people can go abroad to train or study, learn new languages and take part in joint activities with schools or colleges in other countries. These

programmes include Comenius (school education), Erasmus (higher education), Leonardo da Vinci (vocational training), Grundtvig (adult education) and Jean Monnet (university-level teaching and research in European integration).

In the field of culture, the EU's 'Culture' and 'Media' programmes foster cooperation between TV programme and film-makers, promoters, broadcasters and cultural bodies from different countries. This encourages the production of more European TV programmes and films.

However, in the globalisation era, when countries and people are more connected than ever and supra-national polities tend to develop more and more, citizenship might receive new meanings. Therefore, in order to analyze and decide whether EU citizenship fulfills the criteria required by the notion of citizenship, three perspectives will be taken into account:

### **1. A Legal-Participatory Approach**

The legal-participatory approach sees European citizenship as a formal means which offers legal and political rights that member states alone cannot provide. In a practical sense, the institution of citizenship aims „to put political integration on a par with economic integration creating spaces for individual participation in European governance (Crowley, 2001).

### **2. An Identity-Based Approach**

From an identity-based perspective, the European citizenship is not principally about political and legal rights, but it is the symbol of a shared history and culture. It is the victory of unity over diversity, a declaration of —Europeanism||, a concept of belonging despite all the inherent differences. In this sense, Marcelino Oreja, former European Commissioner for Culture, has declared that the aim of the European citizenship is — to show Europeans what unites them, and to show them the strength of their common cultural roots, despite the wide variety of cultures that Europe has produced (Oreja, 2003).

### **3. A Constructivist Approach**

The constructivist approach suggests that European citizenship did not emerge as a natural consequence of some previous decisions taken at

the EU level (such as the establishment of the Single Market), but it has been artificially created through discursive practices and given visibility through different programs (for instance, Youth in Action) (Idor, 2013).

### **European Union Citizenship and Democracy**

European Union is indeed not a nation state but it is nonetheless a political entity with its own institutions – not completely disconnected from national institutions –, defining its own rights, laws and rules. The exercise of democracy in the EU has then some very specific features that must be taken into account notably because the idea of citizenship is not well established as in the member states. This is why measuring regularly sentiment towards European construction is a first and necessary step to understand democracy issues (Blot, Rozenberg, Saraceno and Streho, 2014).

The European Union is facing challenges and questions to its legitimacy and democratic capacities due to a dual process of integration and decentralisation at both the national and European level. At such a time it is particularly important to address the issues around the concept of EU citizenship.

The European goal has been to encourage autonomous, critical, participatory and responsible citizens who are perceived as the central requirement for any society that respects the principles of democracy, human rights, peace, freedom and equality. Yet European citizenship, while clearly a form of democratic citizenship, is problematic. Issues of the relationship between European and national identity remain unresolved (Naval et al. 2002).

The framework clarifies what education for democratic citizenship should be concerned with and summarises this in seven parts:

- \* What is democracy?
- \* Who belongs and who rules in a democracy?
- \* Why choose democracy?
- \* What makes democracy work?
- \* How does democracy function?

- \* How do democracies develop, survive and improve?
- \* How does democracy shape the world and how does the world shape democracy?

### **Rejections**

A recent Standard Eurobarometer survey shows that between autumn 2009 and autumn 2012, the number of Europeans holding a positive image of the EU has dropped from 48% to 30%, while the number of those with a negative image has risen from 15% to 29% (European Commission, 2012). The reasons for this degradation of the EU's image can, amongst others, be found in the perception that the recipes it proposed to deal with the economic and financial crisis have not improved citizens' socio-economic conditions over the past few years (European Commission, 2013).

The concept of European identity is, at least, problematic. To some extent, a great part of our continent's inhabitants feel themselves as Europeans, but a majority feel more intensely their belonging to France, Portugal, Spain, or Catalonia, Scotland or Flanders. Identities are not easily separated and, often, different feelings of affinity -ethnic or racial group, gender, political ideas, cultural affinities...- are mingled. A genuine European Union requires a European identity, but it does not exist. There is no linguistic or cultural homogeneity. A common identity cannot be constructed on neither Christianity, nor democracy, nor economical identity, or, of course, ethnic identity<sup>7</sup>. A lot of scholars have been lately trying to get to the bottom of what means to be a European (Buzăianu, 2006).

Samuel Huntington, a celebrated American academic, affirms that Europe finishes where Eastern Orthodox Christendom and Islam start. So, Greece, member State of the EU, is it not a European country? The Muslims that have been so long living any neighbourhood of London, Paris or Düsseldorf, are they not European?

From another point of view, a French scholar, Henry Mondrasse, has claimed that a common cultural European identity does exist and that it could be the base for a political Union. Should this identity be based on

individualism, the idea of nation developed in the last centuries, a certain way of combining science and technology or a certain idea of democracy, according to this definition of European culture, which is the difference between an American or an Australian and a European? Could a Russian or a Bulgarian be considered as Europeans?

It is often said that the future is already contained in the past and this is also true with respect to European Union citizenship. It has been the product of institutional design and co-creation by actors at all levels of governance and is actualised by citizens' formal and informal citizenship practices. In this respect, continuing to encourage practices, dialogues and mechanisms that facilitate its co-creation, and viewing citizens, residents and their families as equal partners in its future development and the delivery of solutions to impediments to its exercise are important. For there is hardly another European institution which captures more clearly and profoundly Jean Monnet's dictum 'we are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men [people]' (European Commission, 2013).

## REFERENCES

Blot, C.; Rozenberg, O.; Saraceno, F. and Strehö I. (2014). Reforming Europe? When economists, law scholars and political Scientists care about the future of the EU.

Buzăianu, A. (2006) European Citizenship And Identity. <http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/125/art11-buzaianu.html>.

Crowley, J.(2001). Differential Free Movement and the Sociology of the Internal Border," in Implementing Amsterdam: Immigration and Aylum Rights , EC Law, 13: 18.

Everson, M. (2010). The Legacy of the Market Citizen", in New Legal Dynamics of the European Union, p.73.

European Commission, Brussels (2012). Standard Eurobarometer 78, Autumn 2012, page 15.

European Commission, Brussels (2013). Co-Creating European Union Citizenship. [http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/co-creating\\_eu\\_citizenship.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/co-creating_eu_citizenship.pdf)

Idor, R.(2013). European Citizenship. University of Southern Denmark.

Jenson, J. (2007). “The European Union’s citizenship regime. Creating Norms and Building Practices” in Comparative European Politics, No. 5 (1), pp.53-69.

Naval, C.;Print, M.and Veldhuis, R.(2002). Education for Democratic Citizenship in the New

Europe: context and reform. *European Journal of Education*, 37(2):107-128.

Oreja, M. (2003). European Citizenship and the Regions”, published in Queen’s Papers on Europeanization No. 7.

Smirnov-Brkic, A.; Christopoulos, M.; Karakosta, K.; Martinez Bermejo, S.; and Reboton, J. (2010) ‘Milestones in the Development of the Concept of Citizenship’, in K. Isaaks, *Citizenship and Identities: Inclusion, Exclusion, Participation* (Pisa University Press,) 2-12.

T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and social class*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.

## ANNEX

