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Mapping the Field:

Academic Discourses and Policy Frameworks on Democratic Citizenship Education in Europe.

A shortened, visual and interactive slide deck based on the Work Package 3 Research Report (YOUROPE, D3.1)

For young people, students and educators interested in European democracy and citizenship – to explore on your own or together in class.



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INTRODUCTION

Hello fellow European!

This interactive report booklet provides you with an overview of academic research on **European democracy and citizenship**. It summarizes the findings of the major research report from WP 3 (D3.1.) and is intended to encourage you to reflect on the findings – and on how your own experiences and ideas as a young European can help shape future research, policy and education.

We need you and your ideas. At the end of this booklet, you'll find a link to a survey. **Take part so your voice can be heard and the future of democracy and Europe be changed.**

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WORK PACKAGE 3?

We're all about European democracy and citizenship research!

Report on academic perspectives regarding European democracy and citizenship



New tasks:

Bottom-up Survey

Toolkit

New Framework on European Democracy and Citizenship (EDC)

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Short description of yourope

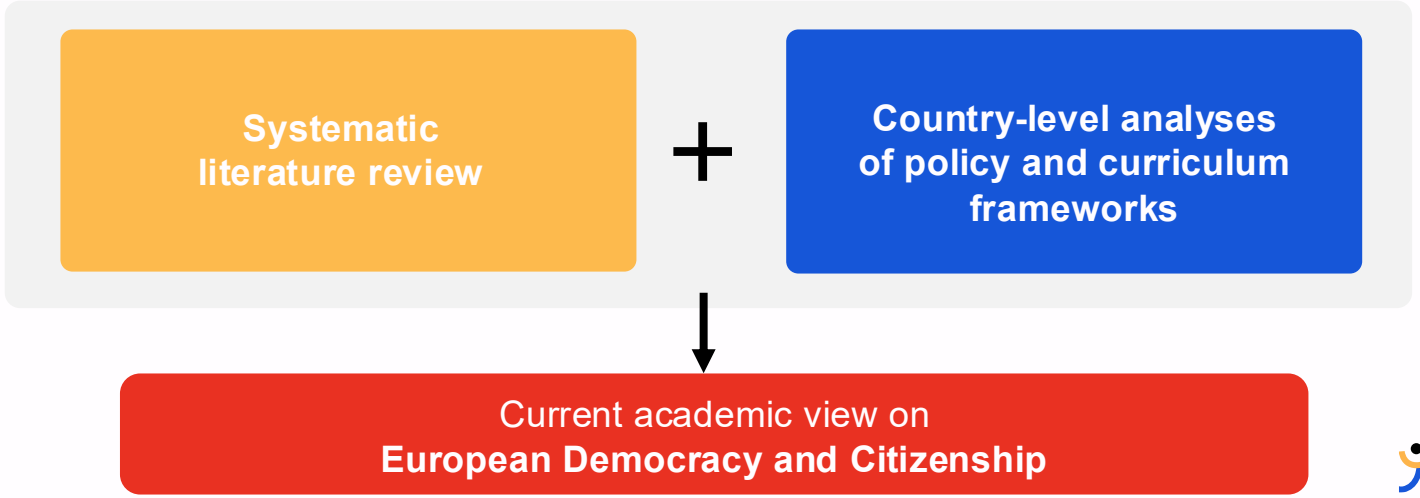
YOUROPE aims to empower under-represented youth to actively participate in European democracy through innovative, community-driven initiatives.

YOUROPE is a 36-month project designed to strengthen European democracy by engaging young people, particularly those from under-represented groups. The project is making use of the Community-Led Research and Action (CLRA) approach, to create opportunities where youth can actively shape democratic policies. By bringing together 17 institutions representing 11 countries across Europe, YOUROPE is hoping to foster more inclusive democratic processes. The initiative aims to connect young people with policymakers, helping to co-create democratic roadmaps for Europe's future.

OVERVIEW

The report on the current academic perspective on European democracy and citizenship consists of two parts.

In **Chapter A**, you will examine the systematic literature review, while **Chapter B** invites you to explore the world of country-level analyses of policy and curriculum frameworks.

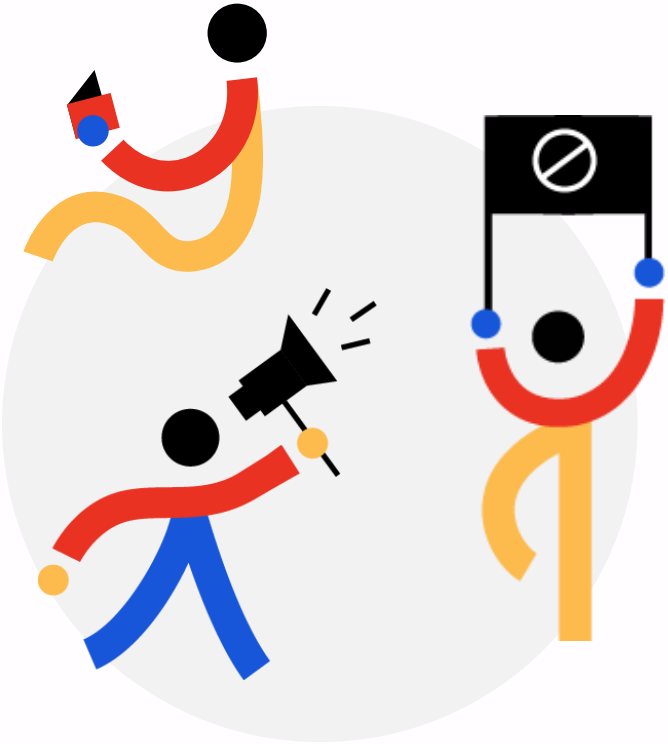


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CHALLENGE 1–3.

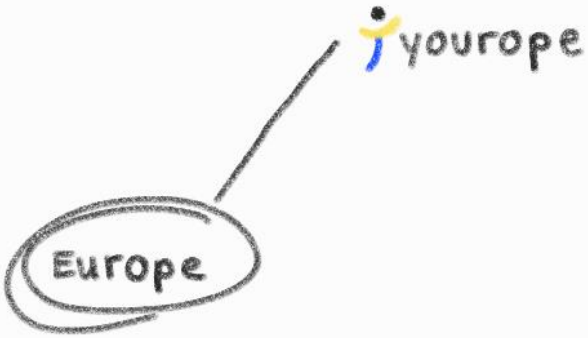
European democracy and citizenship can be a pretty bulky expression. Let´s break it down.

In the following you will find some challenges that are waiting to be explored by you.



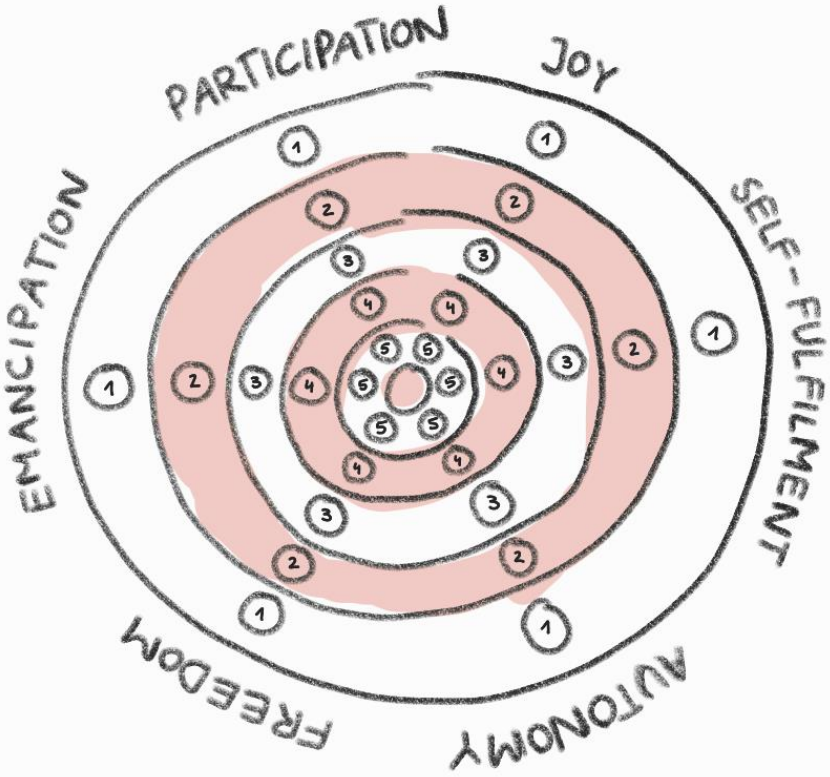
C1: A MIND MAP OF EUROPE

What comes to mind when you think of Europe? Fill in the mind map with your ideas. You can come up with keywords, name places or objects, draw pictures, or even add photos.



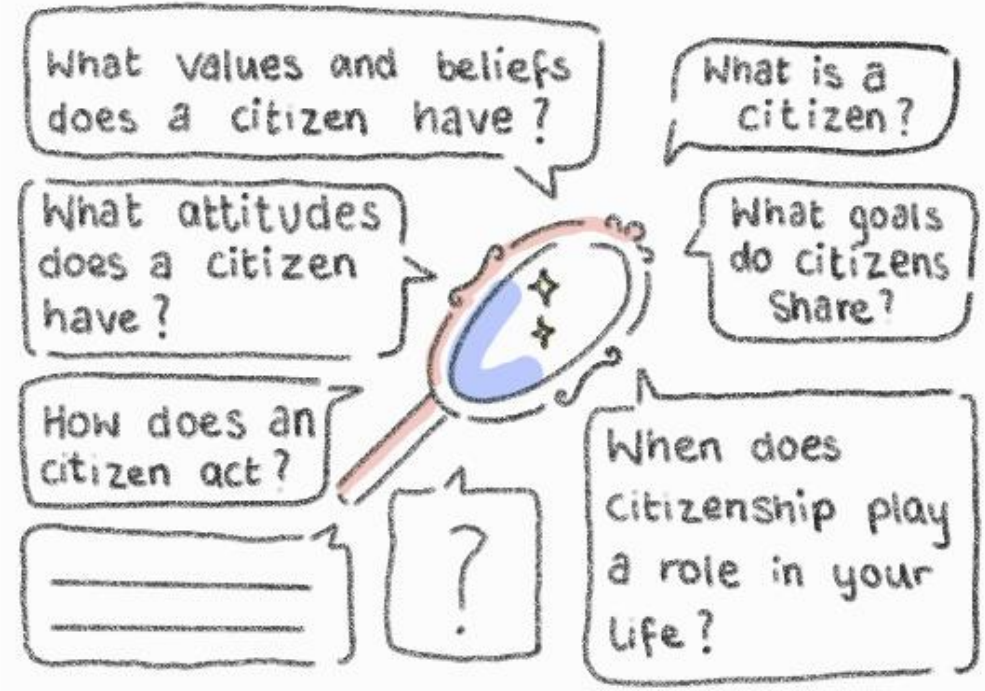
C2: DEMOCRACY – SPOT ON?

This target includes some concepts that people in a democracy consider very important. Take a shot and compare your position with that of your peers. Are there any aspects you've missed? Write them around your target.



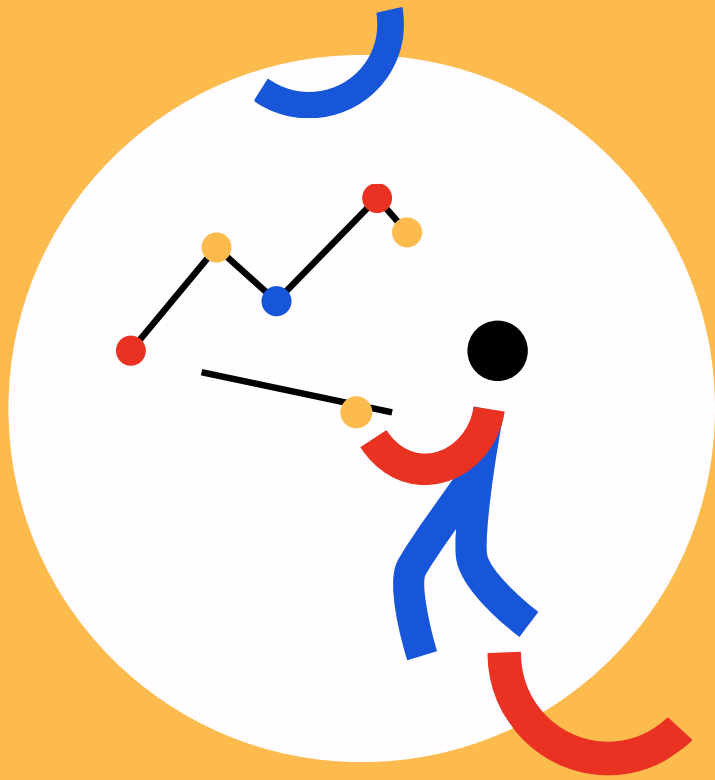
C3: CITIZEN – WHAT?

Ask yourself some of these questions and try to find your answers.



Room for notes:

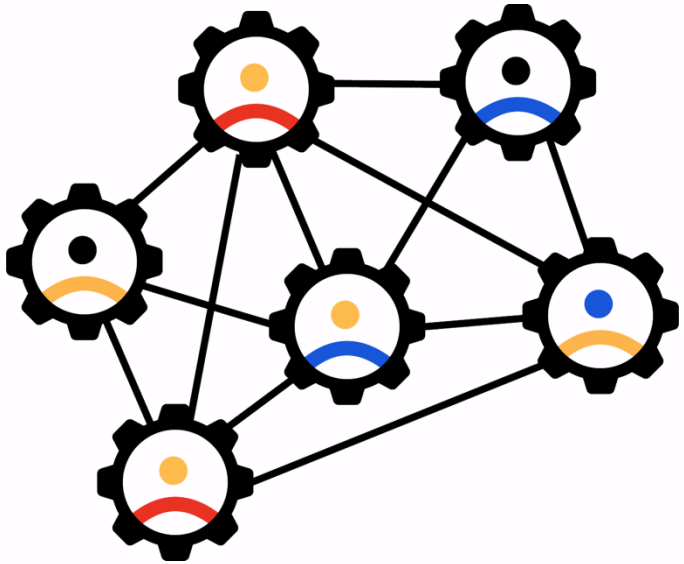
CHAPTER A



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WHAT IS A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (SLR)?

A **systematic literature review** is a rigorous method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research on a specific question using predefined, transparent procedures. Its goal is to minimize bias and provide a reliable summary of current research, including interconnections.



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THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These are the guiding questions the researchers set out to answer. A quick read is enough to get a sense of what the study covers. No need to answer them yourself!

- What is the volume, growth trajectory, and geographic distribution of publications on European democracy and citizenship?
- What documents within this literature have exerted the greatest influence on scholarly discourse?
- What is the intellectual structure of the European democracy and citizenship knowledge base?
- What is the conceptual structure of the European democracy and citizenship (EDC) knowledge base?

RESULTS



Rapid expansion of the research field

- 1,209 publications (1992–2025), with exponential growth after 2008/2013, indicating a maturing yet still consolidating field.



Strongly interdisciplinary

- Dominated by Education (≈52%), with Political Science (~10%), Social Sciences (~8%), and Sociology (~5%), reflecting mixed pedagogical–political approaches.



What data?

- 1,209 publications (1992–2025) from Web of Science: mainly journal articles, followed by papers, book chapters, early access publications, review articles and book reviews

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTIONS

Research on European democracy and citizenship is dominated by scholarship from **Western and Northern Europe**. As a result, these regions are often seen as the main examples for understanding EDC. This means that **Central and Eastern European countries** are often described mainly in terms of what they lack or how they need to change, rather than as places that can offer new ideas and perspectives. Research on **Southern Europe** often focuses on problems such as political and economic crises, low trust in institutions, difficulties in civic participation, migration issues, and sociopolitical instability. **Countries outside the European Union** receive less attention and are usually studied mainly in relation to joining the EU or adapting to EU standards and goals.



C4: THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH



Fill in the blank speech bubbles of the academic researchers behind this report. What are their demands for future research?

Use what you learned from the section “Geographic Distribution”.

VIEWS ON EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP (EDC)

European citizenship is viewed as something that goes **beyond the borders of its member states**. Because of this it is often connected with **global citizenship**, where critical thinking, human rights, diversity, sustainability and responsibility play a huge role. **European integration and migration** can influence how people view citizenship, define belonging and practice democracy.

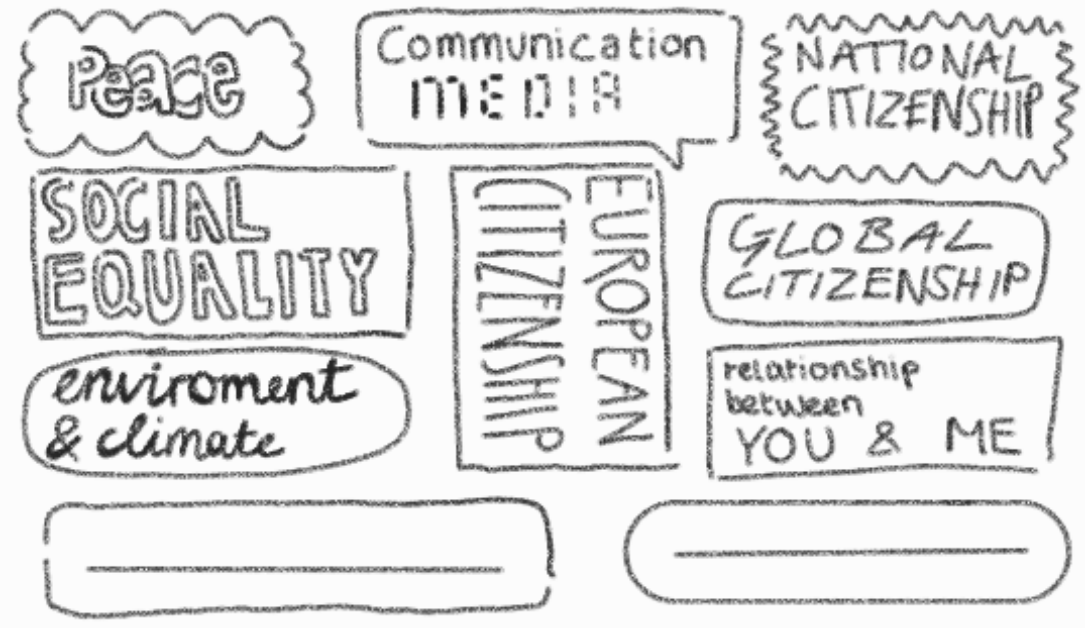


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C5: BUBBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Cut out the bubbles and arrange them however you like – for example by how closely they relate to you, or simply by your own preference. You can colour them, drag them or stick them to each other or draw connections.

Add your own bubbles.



VIEWS ON EDC

European Democracy and Citizenship are often framed as sets of measurable competences. Some measurable factors are for example your political knowledge, your participation skills and your civic values. This type of research prioritizes creating **cross-national comparisons** of such factors. Because of this focus, **real life and local and community-specific experiences may be overlooked.**



VIEWS ON EDC

European Democracy and Citizenship are seen as something mostly **legal and institutional**. They are therefore often reduced to different rights, duties, treaties and laws.



VIEWS ON EDC

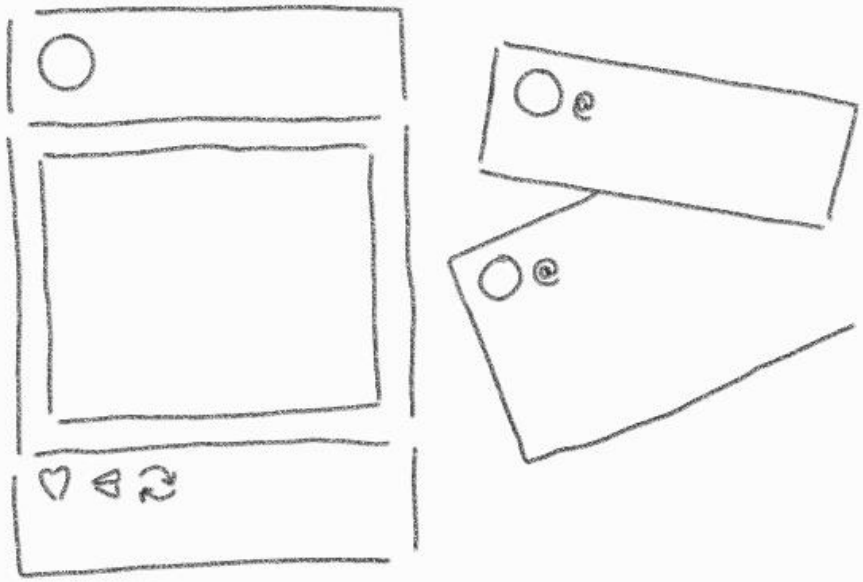
Collective and experience-based practices are viewed as key to **sustainable civic engagement and to strengthening EU citizenship** at both national and across Europe. Citizenship is understood as **relationally constructed**, **something that is created and constantly reshaped in dialogue and discussion**. It is **community-embedded**, which also means that it can be **unequal in access**, especially for marginalized groups such as migrants. At the same time policy ideals are not consistently mirrored in lived practice.



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C6: THAT MAKES ME FEEL…

Considering everything you have read, how does this make you feel? Do you think it is fair? How would you prefer it to be? – Write a social media post.



Room for notes:

VIEWS ON EDC.

Young people are often viewed as recipients of democracy and citizenship ideas. Textbooks, schools and education are commonly framed as a one-sided transmission site. In these spaces youth is viewed through **outcomes** (competences, attitudes and participation), instead of being co-creators. According to the literature, civic knowledge and democratic orientations are shaped not only through formal political socialisation, particularly at school, but also through informal political socialisation, through families, media and peer groups.

Bottom-up research is needed to reflect more precisely on your lived experience of participation and engagement.



C7: INTERVIEW

We prepared some questions for you.

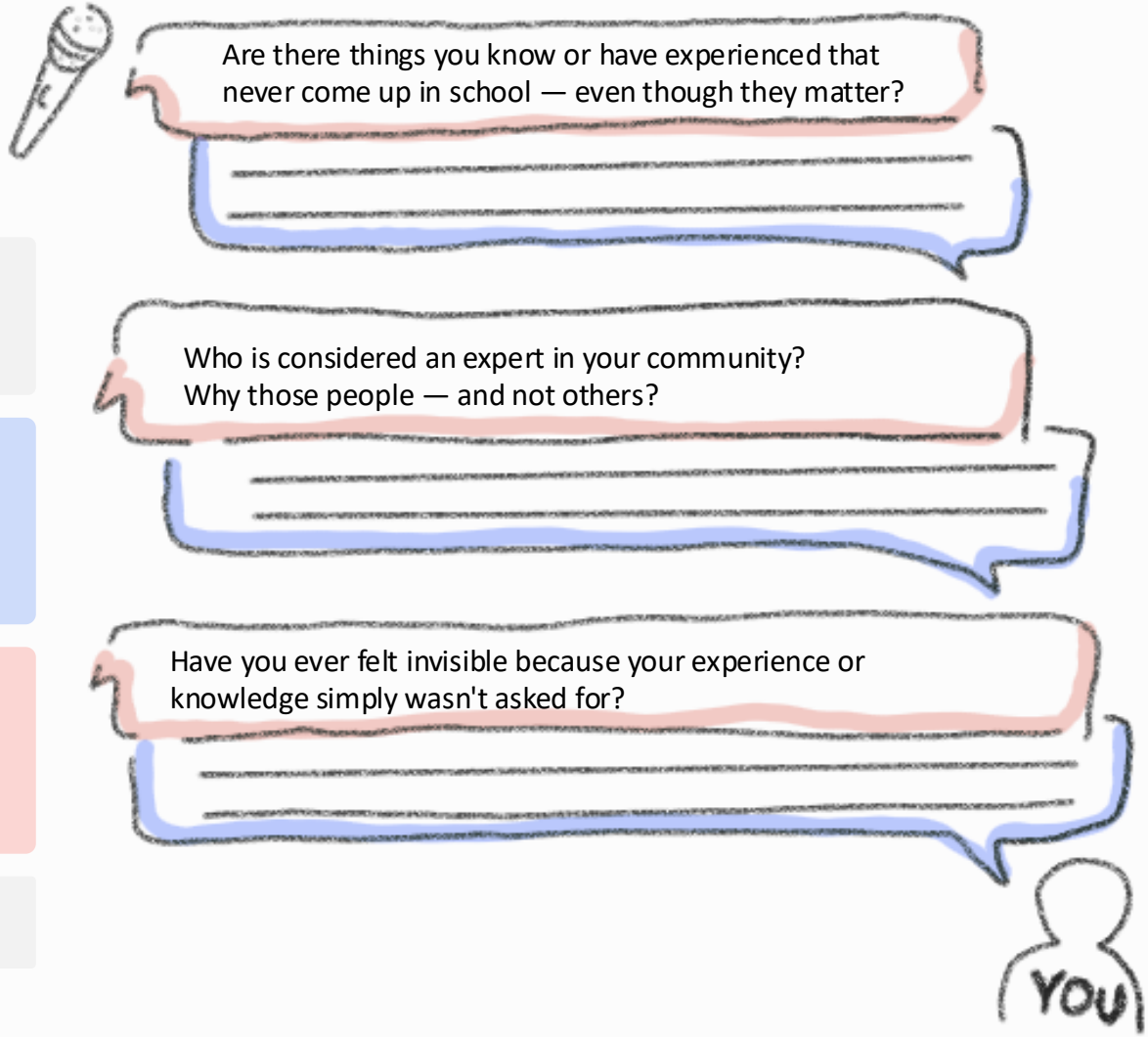
If you are currently alone:

Interview yourself with these questions.

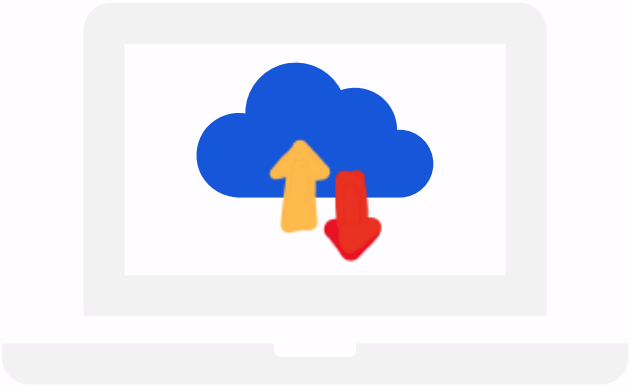
If you are in a group:

Interview someone in your group.

Write down the answers.



VIEWS ON EDC



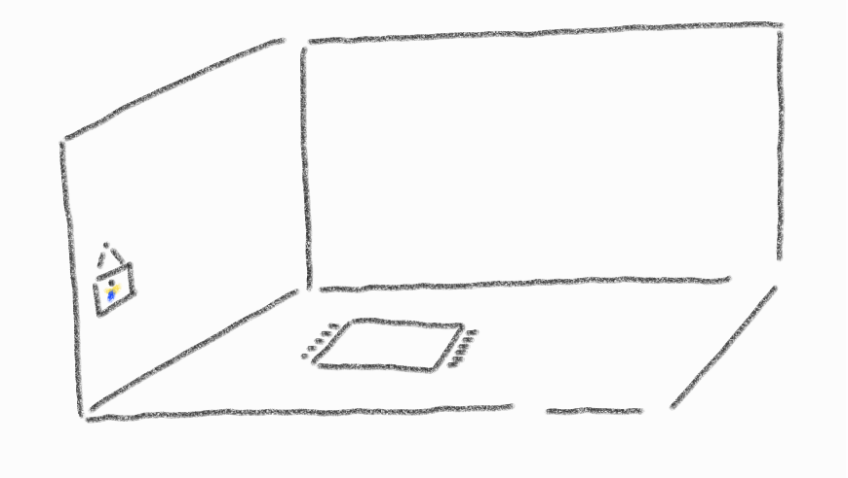
Citizenship increasingly seems to take place in **digital spaces**, such as social media platforms. Although research in this field is growing, robust **theoretical frameworks are still lacking.** Current focus is on digital skills, literacy and online participation. Researchers emphasise the need to equip citizens with skills to engage **critically, safely and responsibly** in digital spaces.

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C8: DIGITAL SPACE

Imagine the digital space as a room. For example: if you wanted to discuss your frustrations about the digital world, who would you want to be in that room with you?

What objects would you find in it? Who would use this room and its objects, and how?
Draw or paste your ideas into the sketch below.



VIEWS ON EDC.

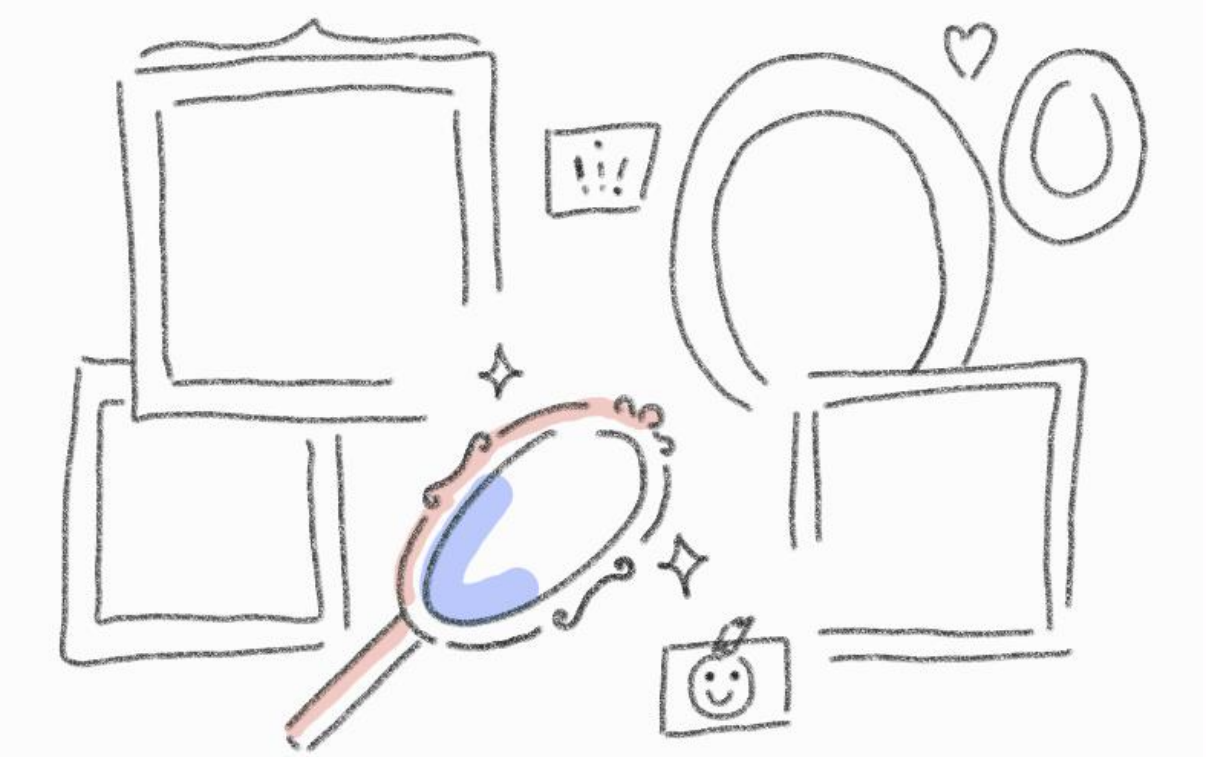
According to research, **identity and belonging** are the key to explaining citizenship. Identifying with Europe beyond national borders is often **connected with democratic orientations and civic engagement**.



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C9: MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL…WHO IS EUROPEAN AFTER ALL?

Draw or pin pictures of people you know that are related to Europe in some way. Connect them with lines.



VIEWS ON EDC

Participation can take many forms, such as civic and political action, taking part in elections, … but research is lacking to connect it with your lived context.

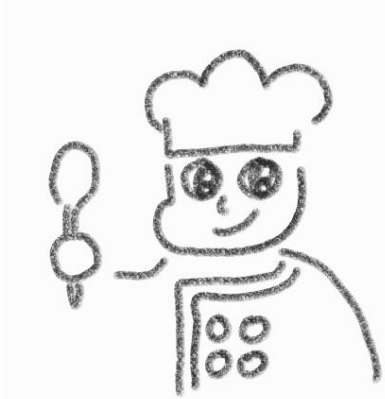


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C10: COOKING UP PARTICIPATION!

Write a recipe for participation. What do you need to participate? Think of people, situations, objects, places, and motives. What steps might be necessary to participate? Compare your recipe with your peers. What is different and what stays the same?





VIEWS ON EDC

Specific values such as **justice, inclusion, equality, solidarity and social rights** are seen as a **commonly shared goals**, but are **unevenly realized**.



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C11: AND SCENE!



Think of a situation in which justice and/or inclusion plays a role in your daily life.
Write a short film scene.

The following questions might help you:

1. Who in your class, school, or community is often overlooked or excluded — and why?
2. What rules or habits favour certain people without us even noticing?
3. What would concretely need to change for everyone to genuinely participate on equal terms?

Ready to turn your idea into a film? YOUROPE is hosting a short film contest.
Submit your film by 30 November 2026!

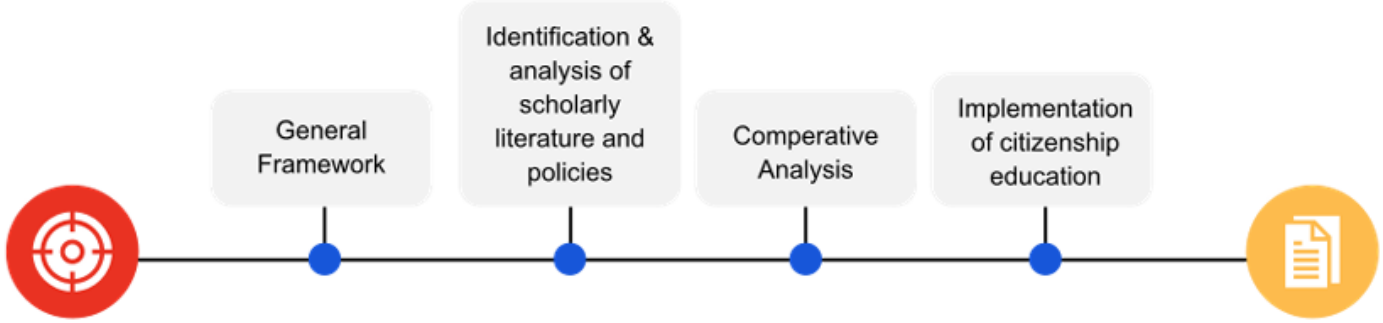
CHAPTER B



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COUNTRY-LEVEL ANALYSES OF POLICY AND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS?

"[The country-level analysis of policy and curriculum frameworks] aims to produce a systematic, comparable, and critically interpretive mapping of how democratic citizenship, youth participation, inclusion, and the European dimension are formally articulated within current education legislation and curricular frameworks in ten European countries." (p.9)

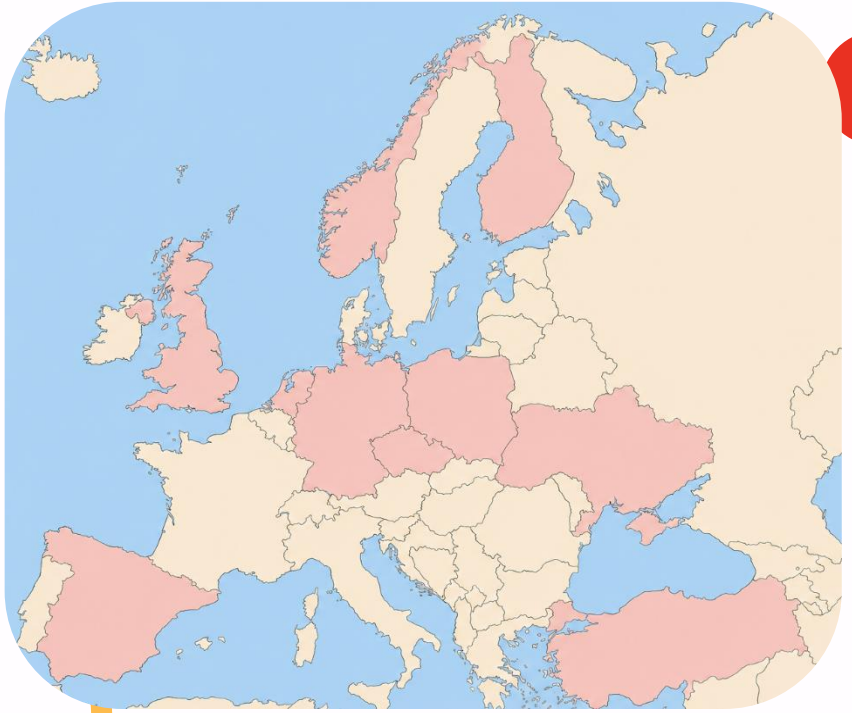


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THE CORPUS

- International and European bodies (including the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UNESCO)

- *National frameworks, such as education laws, national curricula, ministerial regulations, and associated official documents from: Türkiye, Poland, United Kingdom, Norway, Spain, Ukraine, Finland, Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands*



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C12: HERE I AM.

Mark your position on the map and fill in the blanks.

I am currently at/in:

_____

I feel most at home at/in:

_____

If I had to describe my school system with 3 words, it would be:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These are the guiding questions behind the country-level analysis. Just skim them to see what was studied, no need to work out an answer yourself.

- How is citizenship and citizenship education formally defined and positioned within national education legislation and official curricula across the ten countries analysed?
- To what extent and in what terms are democratic participation, human rights, and European values embedded in national regulatory frameworks governing education?
- How is youth participation, particularly the participation of underrepresented groups, conceptualized and operationalized within formal educational frameworks?

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THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

? What structural similarities, differences, and recurring gaps or silences can be identified across national frameworks regarding the institutional conditions for citizenship education?

? In what ways do formal frameworks align with, diverge from, or remain silent on the normative commitments articulated in European reference frameworks, including the EU Council Recommendation on Common Values (2018) and the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture?

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C13: HERE WE ARE

Take a position. If you are alone, mark your position on the questions on the scale below. If you are in a group, stand up and position yourself alongside a scale you put up on the floor.

- How democratic is my school/ university?
- How much do I know about democracy?
- How much do I know about Europe?
- How much can I participate?
- How connected is my school/ university to the EU?



COMPARISON OF FRAMEWORKS ACROSS DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Take it one point at a time. Explore the differences on:

1. Broader political and constitutional contexts

2. Legal status and curricular configurations of citizenship education

3. Treatment of the European dimension

4. Promotion of predominant models of citizenship

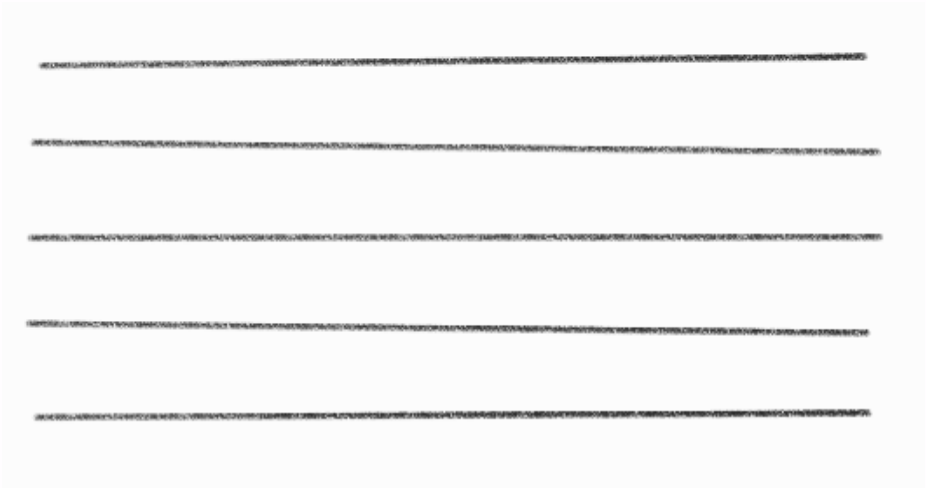
Country	Political and legal framework/minorities	Legal framework and curricular status of citizenship education	European dimension of citizenship education	Citizenship model promoted
Turkey	Presidential republic; minorities (Kurdish, Arab, Circassian, Armenian, Greek, Assyrian, Jewish)	Constitution; National Education Basic Law No. 1739; Article 11 (democracy education); 'Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli' 2024–25	No explicit European dimension; participation in Erasmus+	Emphasis on national consciousness and moral values; digital citizenship; migration and climate challenges
Poland	Unitary parliamentary republic; German, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Silesian and Kashubian minorities	Constitution 1997; Education Law 2016; ministerial regulations 2025 (378, 382, 1035); compulsory civic education in secondary education	Explicit and implicit European dimension (EU institutions, processes and shared values)	Multi-level (local–national–European); participation, critical thinking and media literacy
United Kingdom	Constitutional parliamentary monarchy; Citizens with African and/or African-Caribbean ancestry, Indian Britons	Devolved education systems (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland); in England, citizenship education compulsory at secondary level (Education Act 2011; KS3–4); differentiated models across territories	European dimension present mainly through shared values; reduced European cooperation post-Brexit	Multi-level (local–national–global); Agenda 2030 and international cooperation
Norway	Constitutional parliamentary monarchy; Kven, Jewish, Forest Finn, Roma and Romani/Tater minorities; Indigenous Sámi people	Constitution and Education Act; citizenship education not a standalone subject; compulsory cross-curricular theme 'Democracy and Citizenship' (LK20)	No explicit EU dimension (non-EU country); European values embedded; strong global citizenship focus (SDGs)	Multi-level (local–national–global); democratic participation, human rights and social responsibility
Spain	Parliamentary monarchy; decentralised territorial organisation; minorities (particularly Roma communities)	Constitution 1978; LOMLOE 2020; Royal Decrees 2022; VET reform 2022; higher education reform 2023; specific compulsory subject	European values embedded across curricula (no formal definition of European citizenship)	Multi-level (local–national–global); human rights, equality, democratic coexistence, sustainability and critical thinking
Ukraine	Parliamentary–presidential republic; Russian, Belarusian, Crimean Tatar, Hungarian, Romanian and Romani minorities	Constitution 1996; Education Law 2017; Concept of Civic Education and Education for Democracy (2018); standards 2018/2020	Strong pro-European orientation embedded (European values and human rights instruments); Erasmus+, eTwinning	Multi-level (national–European–global); democracy, rule of law and active particip…

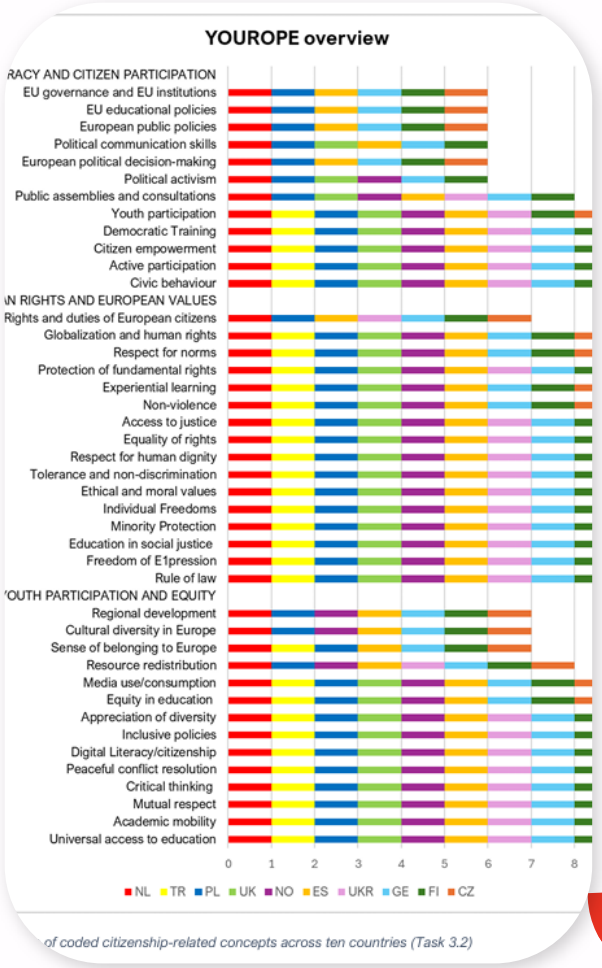
C14: FRAMEWORKS.

Find an overview of the comparison of different frameworks across countries in the full report on pages 26–28.

No need to cover everything – just pick what stands out to you. Write down:

- One thing that surprised me:
- One thing that I would have totally expected:
- One thing that is still unclear:
- One thing that is missing:
- One thing that I want to know more about:





CODES? (Figure 9, p.29)

Researchers from UNIR used codes to check if a concept can be found in the framework of the 10 listed countries.

For example: The code “EU educational policies“ was found in documents of the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Germany, Finland and the Czech Republic, but not in those of Turkey, Ukraine and the UK.

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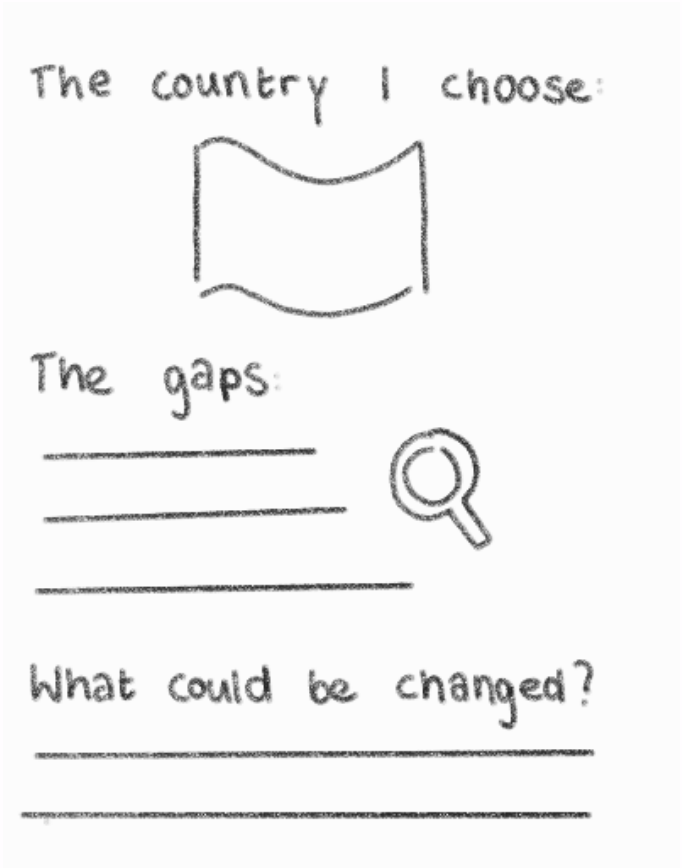
C15: CODE

Check out the complete table on page 29 in the full report.

Choose one of the countries and identify gaps in its framework!

Look out for this table!





ANALYSIS (Figure 10, p.52)

Key findings

1. Citizenship education is widely recognised in national policy frameworks, but it is predominantly conceived as a normative and pedagogical field, with little explicit reference to its political dimension.

2. There is a persistent gap between the formal recognition of citizenship education and its actual weight in education systems, stemming from its weak curricular status and the absence of specific assessment.

3. Implementation conditions are one of the main blind spots in national frameworks, with undefined teacher profiles, limited specialised training and dependence on the initiative of schools and teachers.

4. Student participation is promoted as an educational objective, but with limited scope in terms of power and influence, with consultative and pedagogical mechanisms predominating.

5. Inclusion occupies a central place in normative discourse, but its operational development in citizenship education is limited, with little attention paid to structural and intersectional inequalities.

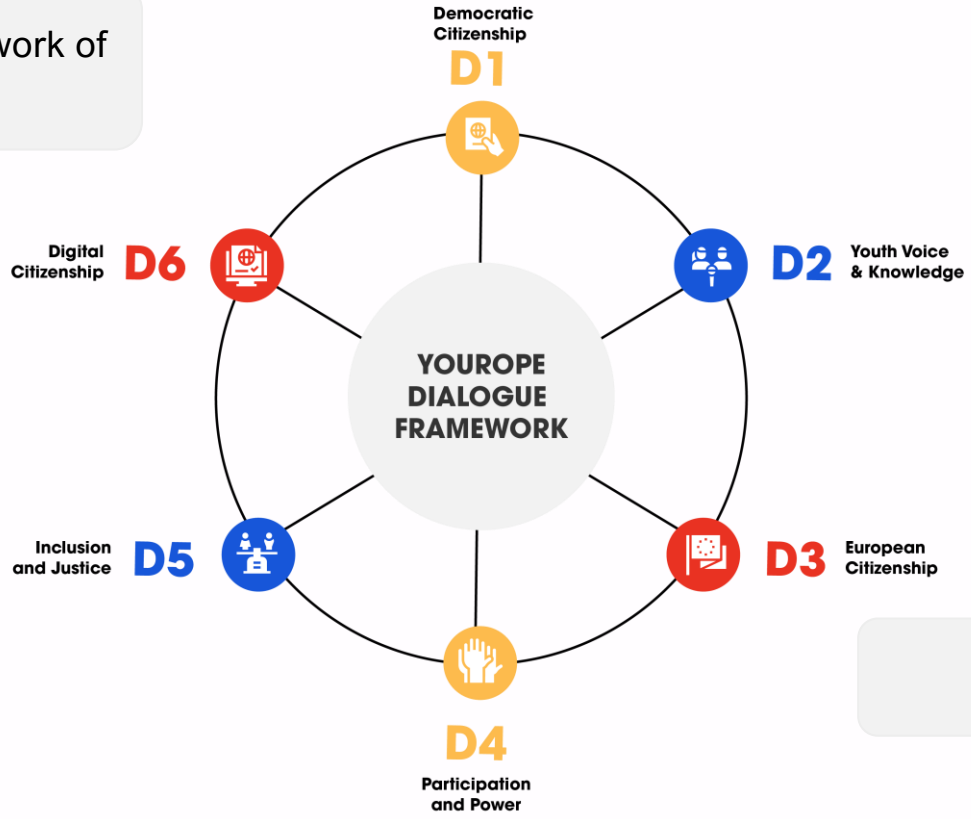
6. The European dimension of citizenship appears to be weakly articulated as a political space, especially in relation to young people, who are mostly conceived as citizens in the making.

C16: A WHOLE LOT OF WORDS

View the table on the previous slide. Note words or expressions that you do not know.

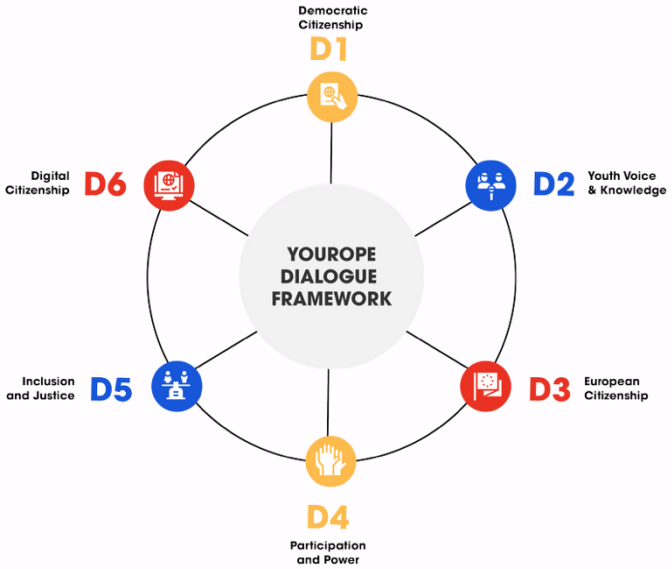
Put the findings into your own words: What are the 6 key findings of the Country-level analyses of policy and curriculum frameworks?

Towards a new framework of ECD?



Time to discuss!

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Interested?

Find discussion questions on our YOUROPE website!

Your perspective

We prepared some questions for you.

By participating, you help us co-create a new, youth-inclusive framework for European democracy and citizenship.

Your perspectives will contribute to YOUROPE's recommendations for a more inclusive and participatory Europe.

yourope-project.eu/youth-survey/



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