

# Active Citizens Days

## Civic education – thematic meeting

September 10-11, 2019

Draft program

For the purpose of the meeting we define civic education as encompassing the definitions of both education for democratic citizenship and human rights education as outlined in Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education<sup>1</sup>.

As the charter rightly identifies, education plays an essential role in the promotion of core values such as democracy, human rights and rule of law as well as in prevention of human rights violations. Education is also increasingly seen as a defense tool against the rise of violence, extremism, populism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

Through a first Active Citizens Days meeting in Oslo we would like to give the opportunity to organizations from across the beneficiary countries and Norway, working on civic education to come together and discuss the most challenging and pressing issues that they have in their work.

Strategies adopted in introducing civic education in the various EEA and EU countries vary, as well as the level for formal and informal education measures that exist. With many successes and good examples of educational tools and programs, some questions still remain:

- How can civic education contribute to strengthen the respect for rule of law in a country?
- How can civic education instill the principles of tolerance and inclusiveness in communities?
- How can we use civic education to create more engagement?
- How can civic education be an antidote to populism?

The purpose of the meeting is to exchange experiences and discuss concrete cases and initiatives rather than share ideas at a more abstract level about the role and importance of civic education. Participating organizations are versed organizations with solid experience from the field of civic education and the meeting is meant to give space for these experiences to converge for mutual learning and inspiration.

Outcomes of the meeting

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<sup>1</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/16803034e5>

- Common platform for discussions, sharing of experiences and lessons learned in the field of civic education;
- Enhanced collaboration between entities in Norway and beneficiary countries;
- Raised awareness about different strategies applicable in different countries for implementation of civic education among the participants;
- Contacts and network for possible partnerships and cooperation;
- Mentorship. Will participating organizations be mutually available for consultations and guidance for each other?

The event comprises of a compact day of discussions and experience exchanges aimed at setting a concrete framework for lessons learnt and possible further steps to be taken to strengthen civic education and its role across the borders. The second day of the event will give possibility for interested representatives of the participating organizations to meet without the constraints of a formal program either at the headquarters of participating Norwegian organizations (if they are Oslo-based), at the premises of the NHC (which we will make available for this purpose) or at any other location of choice.

### **Arrival – September 9, 2019**

Draft program – September 10, 2019

Venue: Pakkhuset, Nedre Slottsgate 2C

09.00 – 09.30 – Registration

09.30 – 09.45 – Opening and key note addresses;

- *Active Citizens Fund and the Active Citizens Days* – NHC
- *Why Civic Education Today?* - (Speaker tba)

09.45 – 11.15 – Discussion groups:

1. *Civic education and rule of law.* Can civic education contribute to awareness raising about accountability and transparency? What are the societal prerequisites in terms of education in order to instill the principles of rule of law?
2. *Civic education and inclusive societies.* What are the principles of integration in a cohesive society? How can civic education instill the principles of tolerance and inclusiveness in communities?
3. *Civic education and engagement.* What are the civic education best practices for engagement and how can we work with them in different circumstances/different countries?
4. *Civic education and populism.* What are the most effective ways for civic education to counteract populism and contribute to a stronger community of values around fundamental human rights principles?

11.15 – 11.45 – coffee break

11.45 – 12.45 – Reporting back from discussion groups

12.45 – 14.00 – Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 – Regrouping for strategic talks: What can we do? What are the next steps that we, individually or in cooperation with one or two (or more) organizations here can do in order to:

1. Enhance the role of civic education to strengthen the rule of law.
2. Enhance tolerance and inclusiveness through civic education.
3. Increase engagement and participation through civic education.
4. Strategies to counteract populism through civic education.

15.30 – 16.00 – Coffee break

16.00 – 16.45 – Sum up and concluding remarks. Documentation

18.30 – Get together - dinner and mingling for all participants

### **Debate evening**

Open event 19.00 – 20.30 (same venue)

*Do we still need a civil society?*

With the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EEA agreement we take a look back at the previous programming periods and ask whether we still need a civil society in Europe today. Guests are (TBC):

- Vera Mora, head of Ökotárs, Hungary
- Tina Divjak, program director, CNVOS, Slovenia
- Oslo pride, Norway
- Ine Marie Eriksen Sjøreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway

Daft program – September 11, 2019

Open meetings between participating organization or other relevant stakeholders.

Meetings between participating organizations are voluntary and are to be set up by representatives interested in further discussions/cooperation/initiatives related to the ACF meeting's main theme.

Meetings with other relevant stakeholders for the ACF meeting's main theme will have to be agreed upon in advance with the NHC in order to give the NHC the possibility to contact the stakeholders and agree upon a schedule.

Departure