NEW THINKING IN ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP
Impact Objectives

- Enable scientific developments in the field of Environmental Citizenship leading to new conceptualisations and new products
- Contribute to strengthening European research and innovation capacities in the field

New thinking in environmental citizenship

The European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) is changing the way we think about how citizens behave in respect to the environment. The Network’s efforts is helping to forge a more sustainable future based on environmental citizenship.

Across the world communities and governments are coming to realise the importance of ‘environmental citizenship’ in the pathway to resolving many of our environmental problems. The recently formed European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) is a Cost Action funded by Horizon 2020, which aims to improve the understanding and assessment of environmental citizenship in European societies and participating countries.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Dr Andreas Hadjichambis, Chair of the Action, says that environmental citizenship can be defined by different ways and approaches especially in the arena of political theory but that there has not previously been a common European level definition of this term. “In our approach ‘Environmental Citizenship’ is defined as the responsible pro-environmental behaviour of citizens. ‘In our approach “Environmental Citizenship” is defined as the responsible pro-environmental behaviour of citizens, who act and participate in society as agents of change in the private and public sphere, on a local, national and global scale, through individual and collective actions, in the direction of solving contemporary environmental problems, preventing the creation of new environmental problems, in achieving sustainability as well as developing pro-environmental behaviour of citizens.”

Dr Andreas Hadjichambis

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Breaking down barriers

PR: There are two main challenges with fostering Environmental Citizenship within Europe (and within the World). The first one is connected with the novelty of the concept and the fact that it is still poorly defined between schools and teacher education institutions. Education for Environmental Citizenship implementation requires a better and shared understanding of the concept by all teachers – independently of their subject background – and the development of knowledge in implementing this approach. So, without a clear concept definition and training programs, teachers can misunderstand the concept – identifying it as a synonymous of other concepts – and begin implementing superficial and limited approaches to environmental problems not in line with the contextualised, student-centred, interdisciplinary, systemic, inquiry-based and action-based approach of Education for Environmental Citizenship (EEC). The second main challenge is related with the fact that EEC requires an interdisciplinary, collaborative and systemic approach difficult to materialise in schools strongly organised or divided around subjects: this way, it is very hard to find the common spaces and times needed to develop synergies among different knowledge and perspectives. Therefore, our Network can help by trying to establish a better and shared concept of EEC, integrating a diversity of perspectives from many experts, countries and specific cultures, and also by identify the scientific and the pedagogical knowledge required for EEC.

A key goal of ENEC is to develop new theory and practice on EEC. Can you explain what this looks like?

AH: It was recognised that we need a new theory and practice which will concentrate on EEC. We are all part of the same ecosystem, and so it is important to empower citizens to exercise citizenship in their daily life. EEN aims to help by trying to establish a better and shared concept of EEC, integrating a diversity of perspectives from many experts, countries and specific cultures, and also by identify the scientific and the pedagogical knowledge required for EEC.

Education for Environmental Citizenship

Dr Andreas Hadjichambis and Professor Pedro Reis discuss the work of the European Network for Environmental Citizenship and share some of the successes they have seen during the early months of the network's activities.
We want our ideas to be disseminated in a global scale, our action on environmental citizenship aims to be global.