

CONNECTING CULTURES: EMPOWERING CITIZENS

A Conference on European cultural, political and citizenship education

30 August - 1 September 2023, Europäische Akademie Berlin

Co-produced by EAB, EHfC, FMCC

Event Overview:

An event with insightful discussions and collaborative initiatives aimed at empowering citizens across Europe. A dynamic conference fostering dialogue on the intersection of culture, politics and citizen education.

DAY 1: 30 August 2023

Welcome Address by STEVE AUSTEN

The implicit role of arts & heritage, citizenship education developments, community building aspects.

Embracing the implicit role of arts and heritage, this opening session delves into the importance of cooperation and investment in cultural and academic associations throughout Europe. Drawing from the Gothenburg Communication of November 2017, Austen emphasizes the significance of strengthening European identity through education and culture, setting the stage for collaborative efforts ahead.

That this Gothenburg Communication is more than a slogan is shown by the fact that the EC increased the budget for Horizon by 30% to EUR 95.5 billion.

Austen introduced the partners of the Horizon Europe application (2024) in which academic and cultural institutions will work together in a research project.

Keynote Address 1 by CLAARTJE RASTERHOFF

DEMCULT: Horizon Europe as a necessary innovation of cooperation in science and presentation practices in arts and heritage.

How does the artist, the cultural institution and the interaction with the academic world contribute to citizenship education, the building of communities and the formation of social spaces?

The conditions:

1. **Political role of arts/heritage organisations** → *relation model* between institution and communities (responsibility and dialogue), *culture and climate* where we are not always part of the solution but of the problem and the artist makes us open our eyes on this.
2. **(Art/heritage) institutional transitions** → that brings the question of what kind of change must be brought on? The answer can be found in the use of non-toxic and sustainable materials shown towards art, moreover institutions must be transformed to be responsive and resilient.
3. **Transdisciplinary research: art-science collaborations** → The gap between research and practice has increased during the last years. The model to follow is in three steps: OUTPUTS-UNITS-FUNDERS, with this we must intervene on democracy, cultural heritage, social and economic transformations.

Explore the necessity of innovation in cooperation between science and the arts, as Rasterhoff delves into the transformative potential of art-science collaborations for citizenship education and community-building. From redefining institutional roles to fostering transdisciplinary research, this keynote sets a compelling tone for the conference's thematic discussions.

Panel Discussion 1: Cultural Literacy and Active Citizenship

ANNELIES VAN RIJEN (MODERATION), WERONICA CZYZEWSKA-PONCYLJUSZ, DYLAN AHERN, PAUL SPIES

Led by Annelies van Rijen, this panel explores how artistic, cultural, and social knowledge can enrich citizenship education, fostering diverse perspectives and equipping individuals to navigate our interconnected world. Through engaging dialogue, panelists tackle pressing issues such as the role of cultural institutions in climate change and strategies for promoting inclusivity and diversity.

Impulse Presentation: How European is Berlin? by PAUL SPIES

Uncover Berlin's unique cultural landscape and its significance in shaping European identity, as Spies delves into the city's historical context and its evolving role in the European Union. From its vibrant arts scene to its complex history, Berlin serves as a compelling lens through which to examine broader questions of European identity and community.

Reflections: From Cultural Networks to Artistic & Scientific Nets: New Perspectives:

EMIKO GEJIC & STEVE AUSTEN

In this session led by Steve Austen, Emiko Gejic and the participants reflected on the evolving landscape of cultural and entrepreneurial activity in Berlin, exploring the intersection of civil society, European citizenship, and cultural practice.

Formal top-down membership organisations, in which the members have no say, are getting old-fashioned and should give way to informal grassroots initiatives. EU needs to subsidize grassroots cultural organisations. The cultural scene is losing spaces, nowadays it is difficult to rent. Artists brought all the value to Berlin, but creatives are pushed out of the city.

Clubs and Electronic music are considered serious culture, not entertainment, in 2021: change in legal space, eligible to receive funding from public institutions; they provide safe spaces for LGBTQ+. But without funding or commercialised concept no cultural life is possible.

Impulse reflection: JOSEPH SASSOON SEMAH, introduction LINDA BOUWS

The missing ingredient in European Modern Art Exhibition & Education: 'the empty page'. Shaping a more inclusive practice. The Western post-war Art History has been predominantly manifested by iconic works of art often related to traditional Christianity. Joseph Sassoon Semah introduces an alternative reading of art history and the collection of museums. He introduces critical reflections on the myths and stereotypes about modernist art created after WWII,. Art is the point of focus, but offers perspectives on identity and considering others. A plea for a multi-voiced, inclusive society and art institutions

DAY 2: 31 August 2023

Impulse presentation: The cultural centre as distributor of European values by creating (new) local communities - WERONIKA CZYŻEWSKA – PONCYLJUSZ (Borderland Foundation)

Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz sheds light on the transformative potential of cultural centers as Borderland in fostering inclusive communities and promoting European values at the local level. From borderland initiatives to deepening organic cultural connections, this session explores innovative approaches to community-building and dialogue.

Borderland embraces the diverse communities - Polish-Lithuanian borderland.

- Collecting family stories (performances)
- The Klezmer Orchestra

- Film collection of fairy tales
- Collection of oral stories (animations)
- Centre of documentation of Borderland cultures
- Publishing house

Keynote Address 2 by CHRISTIAN JOHANN: Fortifying European identity, shaping a more inclusive Europe

Shaping a more inclusive Europe; fortifying European identity, viewing otherness as an enriching force. Can Germany be seen as a leading advocate for cultural and citizenship education in Europe and abroad?

Johann delves into the imperative of fortifying European identity and shaping a more inclusive Europe, urging policymakers and educators to embrace collaborative solutions that embed European citizenship education at the core of educational systems.

Panel Discussion 2: Inclusive Education for All & Policy Implications and Collaborative Solutions: STEVE AUSTEN (moderation), EMIKO GEJIC, WERONIKA CZYŻEWSKA-PONCYLJUSZ, GABRIELÉ ŽAIDYT, LEVAN KHETAGURI, IURI MGEBRISHVILI

Addressing the urgent need to develop inclusive pedagogical approaches that embrace diversity, ensure equal opportunities, and empower marginalized communities, fostering social cohesion by exploring tested platforms outside the usual for civic education. Led by Steve Austen, this panel tackles pressing questions surrounding inclusive pedagogy, policy implications, and collaborative initiatives aimed at fostering social cohesion and embedding European citizenship education in educational systems across Europe. Governments should start to understand how the digital world works, because that's where many young people learn (even about things that may not be true). Information must be sent in different channels to reach people outside of the own bubble. The current information crisis is strongly connected to social media.

Keynote Address 3 by CHRISTIAN JOHANN

Developments in teaching methods

Johann introduced a selection of EAB projects/cooperations:

- Skrynya (Ukrainian Pop-Up-Market)
- Europäischer Wettbewerb (competition in schools)
- Special Olympic World Games
- Next Level: Mitmachen (ways to participate in society)
- Café Kyiv (Renaming Café Moscow and organising events)
- Europe is Female (tell famous European women's stories)

Panel Discussion 3: Arts, Culture, and Social Spaces:

DYLAN AHERN (moderation), OEDS WESTERHOF, WERONIKA CZYZEWSKA-PONCYLJUSZ, DEJAN UBOVIC, IZABELLA AGÁRDI, LEVAN KHETAGURI, ANNELIES VAN RIJEN

Analysing the transformative power of art and culture in shaping social spaces, strengthening community bonds, and promoting intercultural dialogue, while nurturing a sense of belonging and pride in European heritage including (local) community building.

Sometimes you have to give the communities what they need to be together (e.g. places to socialize, where people feel safe and can fight for their rights). A space where people don't think in nationalities. You must not pigeonhole people. Empathy is important. Next to having empathy, you also need to evaluate the past. Give places where you can share values and traditions (mostly to the younger

generation). Individuals must bring their own free spaces with them, to create new free spaces. In the future, this can be any space.

Panel Discussion 4: Innovative Teaching Methods:

ANNELIES VAN RIJEN (moderation), DYLAN AHERN, OLEKSANDR BUTSENKO, GABRIELĖ ŽAIDYTĖ

Showcasing groundbreaking approaches, technologies, and methodologies that integrate artistic and cultural perspectives into citizenship education, ensuring engaging and relevant learning experiences for students as well as lifelong learning practices for adults.

Only few of the 4.5 million Ukrainian children will go to school in the near future (with nearby shelters), the remaining will do online schooling. Metro stations turned into creative spaces. New identity → resistance identity. New Ukrainian schools are forming along with the identity: Teaching European values and methods. Besides that, children need to feel safe (mines everywhere) → changes on many levels. Lithuania has had similar identity challenges as Ukraine faces now. It's obvious that the war increased the awareness of values. The experience in Lithuania and Ukraine emphasizes the need for citizenship education. For many young Europeans who grew up without borders, the scenario of war is new. The values of democracy are important (but 48 % of young people does not care, it should be given more attention to fake news, ignorance of the interconnectedness of European countries). Most important is the creation of (student) networks in theory and practice, networks are diminishing right now and we should focus more on non-academic and migrant people as well as those with a lower economic background → lack of trust in political institutions, euro-scepticism. Collaborations are needed to reach other target groups.

Impulse presentation: Why am I a European?: Live interview of LEVAN KHETAGURI by LINDA BOUWS

As a Georgian Levan Khetaguri grew up feeling occupied, but also as being European. Russia tried to swipe out his identity, but he always felt European. To join the EU doesn't only mean to live better, but also to have responsibilities/duties to the community → trying to explain both to Georgian citizens. Recently Levan Khetaguri has purchased land in the Eastern part of Georgia of 4000 square meters, famous for its wine and wine making. It will be a place for meeting and debates, with a focus on the future of next generations, their enlightenment, and to support strong local communities and rural environment.

DAY 3: 1 September 2023

Keynote Address 4 by AKUDO MCGEE: The role of the arts and its implications on civil society, democracy & and the rule of law in Europe, particularly in Poland

McGee sheds light on the role of the arts in shaping civil society, democracy, and the rule of law, with a focus on Poland's evolving socio-political landscape. From addressing challenges to reproductive rights to harnessing the transformative power of art for social change, this keynote offers critical insights into contemporary European dynamics.

The role of art in Poland

- Art can communicate details, open movements, it is an easy way to identify something, it can lead to emotion → against violence/oppression/loss of rights → through exposure of figures or movements online
- It's important to bring remote concepts to the people. People have no connection with judges, only get negative information on the news ('judges are communists'), so:
- Personalising Judges' Struggle → putting a face to the name; films documenting struggles
- Even music can become a 'weapon' to protest and used for protest footage.

- Holding events where everyone can go to discover rights and laws, since there is no possibility of knowing from the justice itself (example Rock Festival: wider public, integrating legal education in a non-formal context)
- Konstytucja movement: about judicial independence, threatening of media independence, everybody's fight
- Flash-symbol: about abortion, reproductive rights, homage to older women's movements
- Catholic church: strong political actor in Poland, nevertheless LGBTQ+-friendly movement within Catholics (Virgin Mary with rainbow halo)
- Reaction to declaration as LGBTQ+-free provinces: Town signs from Bart Staszewski to raise awareness.

Panel Discussion 5: Policy Implications and Collaborative Solutions:

CHRISTIAN JOHANN (moderation): WERONICA CZYZEWSKA-PONCYLJUSZ, IZABELLA AGÁRDI, LEVAN KHETAGURI, GABRIELÉ ŽAIDYTĚ

Encouraging dialogue between policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to forge effective policies and collaborative initiatives that embed European citizenship education at the core of European educational systems sharing a responsibility with cultural practices.

- Educational system

Politics with organizations is very present in the country. Students and students are limited in their mobility to learn new things in other countries. Hungary's largest university is still neutral in the political world. Central European University went to Vienna, including its archives, but most of its staff stayed in Hungary. Instead of just spouting their knowledge, teachers should take their students outside and facilitate interaction with the community.

Universities are divided into "neutral" and government. There are disadvantages and advantages to this situation, where it can become a problem for students. The government wanted the history of the Soviet Union to be translated as a disease. (Lithuania)

The academic world should go deeper into the history of the various countries, to better understand the facts of the present (Georgia).

We must work together, but we must understand how to contribute (Poland).

Panel Discussion 6: Arts, Culture, and Social Spaces & International Best Practices:

OEDS WESTERHOF (moderation), EMIKO GEJIC, WERONIKA CZYZEWSKA-PONCYLJUSZ, DEJAN UBOVIC

Drawing inspiration from successful models and initiatives worldwide, exploring best practices that enhance European citizenship education and promote global citizenship, paving the way for a more interconnected and harmonious world.

Our problems like the climate crisis, war in Europe, lack of resources are threatening peace on a global scale. What can we do from that small scale that we are on?

Not only organizations, but also peaceful protests can unite the community. But there is a dissonance between the need to travel to meet other people and the need for more sustainability. We all find common ground, because we fight for the same reason, this is even easier, when there is a common threat.

Most ideas come from those who go to their common spaces (meaning their organization). Every day, there are different programs where we include various languages and cultures (Language Café, different food, music/clubbing, exhibitions). Every day is unexpected.

Wrap-Up: STEVE AUSTEN

- Funding is key for free research

- Many here want to join Horizon Europe Application 2024
- Different experiences, cultures and backgrounds came together
- A line up of European knowledge
- Try to find out what is our responsibility
- Glocalism: Local inventions with global effects
- Ambassadors for civilisations as artists
- Have to fill the European citizenship concept with so-called European values which are part of the European jurisdiction
- Christian Johann offers possibilities for a yearly gathering.

As the conference draws to a close, participants are invited to reflect on key themes and takeaways, emphasizing the importance of funding for research, collaboration, and the cultivation of European values. Through glocal conversations and shared experiences, attendees are empowered to embrace their role as ambassadors for a more inclusive and interconnected Europe.