

# “CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY”

Programme for Non – Governmental  
Organisations

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The European Resource Centre  
on Education for Intercultural  
Understanding, Human Rights  
and Democratic Citizenship

# Democracy Index 2012 ( The Economist)

by regime type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	25	15.0	11.3
Flawed democracies	54	32.3	37.2
Hybrid regimes	37	22.2	14.4
Authoritarian regimes	51	30.5	37.1

«... A political malaise in east-central Europe has led to disappointment and questioning of the strength of the region's democratic transition...»

## Poland

- Very high score on electoral process (9.58 out of 10) and civic liberties (9.12)
- **Political participation: 6.11 out of 10**
- **Political culture: 4.38**
- Overall 7.12, ranking 44 out of 167

- Significant «erosion of democracy in Western Europe»  
Eurosat figures\*:
  - 1/5 of EU citizens leaving school by 20: voting in national elections is «ineffective»
  - 18% Britons trust in politicians, while 21% trust in bankers, 24 % in estate agents
- Eastern Europe “...although democratic forms are in place in the region, much of the substance of democracy, including a political culture based on trust, is absent...”
- Subsantive democracy vs. shell of democracy

Crisis of trust → crisis of values

Education: central role in building a deeply rooted **culture of democracy**

\*»Europeans engagement in participatory democracy» report, March 2013

## Norway:

Democracy Index 2012 → rank 1

**DEMBRA Project** (Democratic Readiness to fight against Racism, Discrimination and Anti-Semitism in schools, supported by MoE)

Sept. 2013 survey in participating schools:

Very high scores: democratic participation, democratic environment.

BUT:        9%    very difficult to be different  
              31%    difficult to be different

There is a rise of the xenophobic attitudes and movements all over Europe in both incarnations - the extreme right and the mainstream version

## “Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report” (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung)

Report: major determinants and possible causes of group-focused enmity in eight European countries (*France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal*).

- “**Group-focused enmity**” describes the syndrome of interlinked negative attitudes and prejudices towards groups identified as “other”, “different” or “abnormal” and assigned inferior social status. These take the form of anti-immigrant attitudes, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim attitudes, sexism and homophobia as well as prejudices against other identified groups.

Central findings:

- Group-focused enmity is widespread in Europe**, weakest in The Netherlands, strongest in Poland and Hungary.
- About 50% believe there are too many immigrants in their country.
- Between 17% in the Netherlands and 70% in Poland believe that Jews seek to benefit from their forebears’ suffering during the Nazi era.
- About 30% believe there is a natural hierarchy of ethnicity.
- A majority in Europe also subscribe to sexist attitudes rooted in traditional gender.
- The proportion opposing equal rights for homosexuals ranges between 17 percent in the Netherlands and 88 percent in Poland (marriages and parenthood).
- Prejudices are interconnected. Those who denigrate one group are very likely to target other groups too. Although prejudices sometimes appear to be isolated they are in fact closely interconnected.
- Group-focused enmity increases with age and decreases with education.

# The role of NGOs in EDC:

Flash Eurobarometer 2013 (EC):

- there is a high-level of trust towards civil society among Europeans
- civil society organisations are regarded as more likely to influence at local and national level
- There is a general sense that NGOs represent «our values and points of view»

NGOs have **legitimacy**

## The challenge of Education for Democratic Citizenship in modern life:

- Is the growing deficit of participation an inevitable element of XXI century democracy?
  - How can today real power be given to the people?
  - Do small and local communities still have the potential for true citizenship?
  - And last but not least - can schools become labs for citizenship?
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- **ACT:** « Priority → initiatives offering children and young people practical opportunities to act »

CoE Charter on EDC/HRE → an emphasis on the outcome of such education being not simply knowledge but **empowerment**, leading to appropriate **action**

Active citizenship  
is experienced through  
learning by doing!

## Schools as labs for citizenship:

### Regional Academy Democracy at School 2012 ( Sulejowek):

MoEducation-Poland, ORE, Council of Europe-EWC

#### Local projects:

- Parents' involvement/ Democratic School Governance (Lutsk-Ukraine)
- Active Learning and Students Engagement ( Tbilisi, Georgia)
- Citizenship and Participation ( Yerevan, Armenia)
- Participation, Peace and Violence ( Ryazan, Russia)

*“...I came here with an idea, and I leave with a plan...”*

2012 South East Europe Regional Academy, Montenegro.