

CHARTER OF THE RESPONSIBLE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

PREAMBLE

Having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights;

Having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

Whereas the Treaty establishes citizenship of the Union, which complements national citizenship of the respective Member States;

Whereas responsibility goes hand in hand with knowledge;

Whereas citizens shall be informed and possess a critical approach developed with a respect for personal liberty;

Whereas that new generations are more used to cultural diversity than older, and youth want to bring up children to be even more accustomed, in terms of tolerance, respect and acceptance;

Whereas the promotion of integration, dialogue, volunteering and civic participation are fundamental for the creation of Europe and for the promotion of a Responsible Citizenship;

Whereas 2010 is the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion and 2011 will be the European Year of Volunteering;

EUCA students propose the Charter of the Responsible European Citizenship:

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

ART. 1 Responsible Citizenship

Being a “Responsible Citizen” means to be capable of measuring actions, facts and events with a deep involvement (in terms of interest and active participation) in all social issues. “A Responsible European Citizenship” is based on an integrated concept of citizenship, which has a critical eye, is tolerant and respectful of different cultures and traditions and open to dialogue, has attention for environmental matters, is concerned and aware of the events which occur domestically and abroad, in search of peace and social cohesion development and well-being, recognizing the wisdom of preceding generations, taking care and acting in favour of the disadvantaged, not forgetting the importance of the family in the education of basic values such as liberty, democracy, solidarity, respect for human rights, for fundamental freedoms and for the role of law.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, IMMIGRATION AND SOLIDARITY

ART. 2 Mutual understanding

Societies should aspire to integrate immigrants without applying additional coercion beyond a reasonable legal framework. Migration is also contingent on the acceptance of the rule of law and prevailing institutions in the receiving country.

Immigrants should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the national cultural heritage. They may contribute in providing a great deal of supplement to the evolution of culture.

ART. 3 Rights and duties

Some minimum criteria for acquiring citizenship, such as basic knowledge of the language and the law and lack of criminal convictions, should be defined.

The promotion of language courses and the diffusion of basic information about the States institutions, laws, way of life, religion, traditions should contribute to a better participation and integration of migrants in the society.

ART. 4 Bilingual/multilingual teaching

Bilingual/multilingual teaching in university courses and in the junior and senior years of high school should be increased. Learning languages can reduce the distances between different nationalities and create an integrated Europe.

BASIC VALUES AND MEDIA

ART. 5 Principles of media

Citizens have the right to make use of fair, trustworthy and honest sources of information; it is vital for a citizen to have concrete opportunities of formation /comparison, in order to train a clear conscience.

ART. 6 Rules of good journalism

A “European code of journalism ethics” should be consolidated and promoted to define minimum common standards for good journalism within the European Union (i.e. sincerity, respectability, appropriateness and respect for basic freedoms).

ART. 7 European Interactive media

Multilingual TV channels, European newspaper, on line European and other educative programs featuring news, discussion sessions, beyond the national and local media should be increased and strengthened.

Better efficacy should be ensured to the existing common platforms for participation in the public debate and in civil society.

DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

ART. 8. Civic participation

Civic participation is a deliberate contribution and adds value to society at large. Actions must be, in one way or another, aimed at impacting society as a whole. The participation should be intentional, should have a direction, a purpose and a view to improvement of prevailing conditions.

Civic participation should see the involvement of families and educators in the institutional debate, considering their fundamental role as benchmarks, above all for youth, in the daily and in the all-life crucial decision-making, for the development of an effective participative democracy.

ART. 9. Classes on European Citizenship

Classes on European citizenship, European internships and meetings among peers, addressed to civil society and educational institutions, should be organized.

ART. 10 Model European Parliament

Given the huge success of Model United Nations, a Model European Parliament (MEP) should be promoted. This should be a dynamic and interactive platform where students can gain an understanding of the European bureaucracy and political processes. It would also serve as another venue where young people from across Europe could meet and exchange ideas.

ART. 11 European Union closer to civil society

Talks, visits, lectures, meetings in universities, associations, university halls of residence, local and national institutions about European Citizenship should be promoted. This would grow the awareness of EU policies and initiatives.

Offers of Internships and jobs concerning EU to university students and young graduates should be increased.

ART. 12 Participation in Public Life

Citizens should be better sensitized to the importance of civic participation. Citizens should adopt activities and build pressure groups that can dialogue with politics and that can bring institutions closer to them.

Public Institutions should increase the participation by using surveys, public debates or speaking directly with citizens.

VOLUNTEERING AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

ART. 13 Raise awareness on volunteering

Efficient instruments for raising awareness about the importance of and possibilities for volunteering, in particular about the European and international programs, should be set up.

Appropriate measures should be taken to grant volunteering a recognition also from the professional point of view.

Discussion and exchange of good practices about volunteering between Member States should be increased.

ART. 14 Learning together

Joint volunteering activities among young and older people should be improved as a way to bring them closer, to promote the dialogue and to facilitate the exchange of opinions between them.

Young people should help older people in learning about new skills and should teach them how to use it in order to extend their active participation in society.

Old people should share their memories and life experiences with young people, in order not to dispel the teaching of the past.