

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

All 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 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, achieving sustainability as well as developing a healthy relationship with nature,' explains Hadjichambis. In addition, Environmental Citizenship includes the exercise of environmental rights and duties, as well as the identification of the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation and environmental problems, the development of the willingness and the competences for critical and active engagement and civic

participation to address those structural causes, acting individually and collectively within democratic means, and taking into account inter- and intra-generational justice.

Europe 2020, the EU's growth strategy, has Environmental Citizenship as a key factor, as well as in the vision for Sustainable Development, Green and Circular economy and the EU-roadmap 2050 for a low-carbon society. 'ENEC is focused on diminishing the barriers between human, economic, social, political and environmental sciences multiplying the knowledge, expertise, research and insights of different stakeholders (researchers, scholars, teachers, practitioners, policy officials, NGOs, etc.) related to Environmental Citizenship,' observes Hadjichambis. This is being achieved through the development of the first ever common understanding and definition of Environmental Citizenship by conceptualising and framing Environmental Citizenship. 'We are also working to develop new research paradigms and metrics for assessing Environmental Citizenship, identify research gaps and future research needs, priorities and perspectives in Environmental Citizenship and to propose policy measures and recommendations needed for the promotion of Environmental Citizenship,' he explains.

A GLOBAL NETWORK

There are 37 countries and over 120 experts participating in ENEC and as well as European universities and institutions, there are participants in Israel, Australia and USA. Hadjichambis points out that the number of the participating countries

is increasing and even more countries and experts are interested to participate in this Network in Europe and internationally. Professor Pedro Reis, Vice Chair of the Action, says that ENEC has already received application letters from many countries outside Europe who are all welcome to become involved. 'Following the spirit of the Cost Action programme, we are bridging with other research communities in order to have access to more projects, experiences and perspectives.'

Whilst it is a challenge to coordinate such a big network the diversity gained from being so open to members from all walks of life is important. Hadjichambis says that to achieve breakthroughs in Environmental Citizenship where they are able to bridging separate fields of science through multi-national and multi-disciplinary research the Network needs to be not just a stakeholder platform for knowledge exchange and mapping expertise but more importantly as 'an opportunity for involving specific target groups such as Early Career Investigators (ECI) and research teams from COST Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC).' With European and international coordination and transnational collaborations he says that they can identify research gaps and future research needs, priorities and perspectives in Environmental Citizenship. Reis points out that the community they have developed is open to more researchers and scholars, regardless of where they come from, research field, their gender, or stage in career. 'We want our ideas to be disseminated in a global scale: our action on environmental citizenship aims to be global.' ●

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



Dr Andreas
Hadjichambis



Professor Pedro Reis

From your perspective, what are some of the big challenges with fostering environmental citizenship within Europe? How will the Network help to address these?

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 practise on EEC. Can you explain what this looks like?

AH: It was recognised that we need a new theory and practise which will concentrate and focus on Environmental Citizenship. Of course this approach will be based upon other existing relevant approaches such as Environmental Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Science Education and Citizenship Education. EEC beyond the common grounds with those previous approaches has its own niche has its own identical characteristics. According to ENEC the term EEC is defined as the type of education which cultivates a coherent and adequate body of knowledge as well as the necessary skills, values, attitudes and

competences that an environmental citizen should be equipped with in order to be able to act and participate in society as an agent 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 a healthy relationship with nature. EEC is important to empower citizens to exercise their environmental rights and duties, as well as to identify the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation and environmental problems, develop the willingness and the competences for critical and active engagement and civic participation to address those structural causes, acting individually and collectively within democratic means and taking into account the inter- and intra-generational justice.

You have split the ENEC Working Groups by formal and non-formal education and by primary and secondary. Why did you choose this approach, and what benefits do you believe this will deliver?

PR: This splitting of the Working Groups by formal and non-formal education and by primary and secondary has a double intention. First of all, we want to discuss and to study possible differences in the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of EEC between these different types and levels of education. We believe that an effective approach to EEC must take in account ►

‘We are all part of the genesis of the EEC’



“We want our ideas to be disseminated in a global scale, our action on environmental citizenship aims to be global”

possible particularities and potentialities of each context, for instance in terms of flexibility, participants' involvement, moral development impact, methodologies, etc. The second intention is practical, aiming at facilitating the Network's organisation and functioning.

One of the main deliverables is an interactive platform for communication and exchange of information. How will such a platform build upon existing websites or connect with other organisations involved in a similar field?

PR: Accordingly to a SWOT analysis developed by our Network, which was completed with the participation of experts in the area of education for the environment from all the partner countries, the availability of resources represents a threat to the implementation of this approach. In spite of existing several learning materials and programs of EEC, proposed by different organisations, these resources are dispersed through a multitude of journals, books and websites. So, with the interactive platform for communication and information exchange we intend to concentrate relevant information in one specific and dedicated space. Ultimately, we envisage this will become the major forum of discussion and dissemination regarding EEC.

ENEC has been running now for over one year. Can you share some of the successes you have seen in this time?

AH: The first year was absolutely successful. We achieved the expansion of the network in European and International level, the

establishment and activation of the 4 Working Groups, the development of the ENEC's website and informative brochure and the SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship in the participating countries. We had also the 1st European Joint Meeting of ENEC in Lemesos, Cyprus in March 2018. However, the most important success is the common definitions of “Environmental Citizenship”, “Education for Environmental Citizenship” and “Environmental Citizen” for the first time in European Level. With all the partners we realised that we are all part of the genesis of the EEC and we are excited about more successes in the coming years.

What kind of outreach activities have you been focusing on this past year?

AH: This year we have organised the 2nd European Joint Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal where representatives from all the participating countries took part in Management Committee Meeting, in Working Group and Trans Working Group Meetings as well as in Research Workshops. The key focus of the event was the main characteristics of EEC. In addition, we organised a Training School for PhD Students and Early Career Investigators examining the Pedagogical Approaches on Education for Environmental Citizenship. The different stakeholders were involved through the 2nd Interactive Stakeholder Seminar in Portugal and also through the three European Cafés Scientific organised in three different countries: Austria, Portugal and Cyprus. The 1st European Café Scientific of ENEC was organised in Lemesos, Cyprus last April. ●

Project Insights

FUNDING

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BIOS

Dr Andreas Hadjichambis is the Chair of the ENEC. He is Biology Advisor in the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and Scientific Director of the Cyprus Centre for Environmental Research and Education. Hadjichambis is the Coordinator of the Cyprus Biology Curriculum and a Researcher at the Cyprus University of Technology. He has been teaching Science Education (Biology) and Environmental Education for over 20 years from the primary education until the university level, including in-service teachers and has participated with success in a series of competitive European research projects. Hadjichambis' work has received many awards.

Professor Pedro Reis is the Vice-Chair of the European Network for Environmental Citizenship. He is an Associate Professor in Science Education at the Institute of Education, University of Lisbon, where he coordinates the PhD programme in Science Education. Reis has been involved in research, teacher training and curriculum development projects in Portugal, other European countries, Africa and Latin America (supported by the European Commission, the World Bank, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and several governments). He works as an invited professor at several universities in Spain and South America.



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