

Environmental citizenship research and the European Network for Environmental Citizenship

Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis, Pedro Reis, Demetra Hadjichambi tell us about the research emphasis of the European Network on Environmental Citizenship

By way of an introduction to environmental citizenship, it is a very important concept for the protection of the environment and the success of any environmental policies being pursued. This relatively new term comes mainly from the political science arena but has soon entered with claims in other different fields, such as the economy, social sciences and, more recently, education. Therefore, research on environmental citizenship finds applications in all these areas of science and society. Environmental citizenship is related to the pro-environmental behaviour of citizens, which should include both individual and collective actions. Until now, there have been many different attempts to define environmental citizenship, resulting in the creation of several definitions focusing and emphasising different dimensions and priorities of environmental citizenship.

For the first time at European level, with collective efforts of more than 120 experts from 37 countries, an agreement was reached regarding the definitions of environmental citizen, environmental citizenship and education for environmental citizenship. This great effort has been achieved within the framework of the European Network for Environmental Citizenship, which is a European network coordinated by the [Cyprus Center for Envi-](#)

[ronmental Research and Education \(CYCERE\)](#), involving more than 85 universities, research centres and organisations.

So, when we refer to environmental citizenship, we mean 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 ones, achieving sustainability as well as developing a healthy relationship with nature.

“Environmental citizenship” includes the exercise of environmental rights and duties, as well as the identification of the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation and problems, the development of the willingness and the competencies 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 (ENEC 2018).

Environmental citizenship research

Research on environmental citizenship is a multidimensional field with appli-

cations in many research areas. From the field of the economy, an example of research is related to how enterprises can improve their public image, marketing and develop within the framework of social responsibility. From the field of education, examples of research dimensions are the possible pedagogical approaches that can lead to the development of an environmental citizen capable of actively participating in society and contributing to solving contemporary environmental problems. From the field of social sciences research, could be a focus on beliefs, attitudes and practices of social environmental citizenship movements.

The European Network for Environmental Citizenship

The European Network for Environmental Citizenship is a Cost Action (CA16229), funded by the Cost Association under Horizon 2020, and aims to strengthen networking and promote the coordination of different research attempts taking place at different European levels. The purpose is to maximise research impact through the development of common definitions and research tools, as well as joint publications. ENEC also seeks to promote European partnerships and train young researchers to achieve a critical mass of researchers capable of enhancing European research efforts in environment citizenship field. It is



important to mention that the Network has a global dimension, including researchers from countries outside Europe – U.S., Australia and Israel.

GAIA Repository Database for Environmental Citizenship

A very important infrastructure has been developed within this European network, which we believe will facilitate networking and communication efforts: the [GAIA Repository Database on the Environmental Citizenship of ENEC](#). This database allows everybody to register and search for information on environmental citizenship, functioning as a platform for knowledge exchange and expertise mapping. GAIA promotes also the diffusion of scientific knowledge and collaboration in new research activities. In GAIA, one can enter and find information on the following: (a) BEST PRACTICES for educational interventions, learning materials, programmes, scientific measures; (b) STAKEHOLDERS, such as public authorities, NGOs, educational institutions, such as universities and schools, and (C) USERS, such as experts, researchers and scholars, policymakers, teachers and others.

iREEC 2019 International Conference

An international conference dedicated to Education for Environmental Citi-

zenship is being organised, for the first time, at the global level. The iREEC 2019 International Conference will take place at the University of Malaga, Spain. In the conference, research papers, theoretical papers and reports from all around the world that relate to education for environmental citizenship can be presented at all levels (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, tertiary education) and in all forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal education). The aim of iREEC 2019 is to enhance the understanding of environmental and sustainability education through the focus on research work that examines and promotes environmental citizenship through education. Multidisciplinary research and approaches combining environmental education, sustainability education, science education, and citizenship education can also be accepted. More information can be found on [the conference's website](#).

The iREEC 2019 Conference aims to: a) present research on scientific and educational activities that exemplify developments toward achieving environmental citizenship; b) emphasise educational research which focuses on empowering citizens to exercise their environmental rights and duties,

to identify the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation, as well as to develop the competencies for critical and active civic participation; c) conduct scientific dialogue on educational challenges deriving from the theoretical foundations of environmental citizenship (as a field that integrates knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies) and demonstrate how these are addressed in formal and non-formal education; d) promote and support best practices that cultivate the type of values, attitudes, skills and competencies that an environmental citizen should be equipped with in order to act and participate in society as an agent of change. The deadline for proposal submission is on the 15th of April 2019.



Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union



Andreas Hadjichambis

European Network for Environmental Citizenship
a.chadjihambi@cytanet.com.cy
<http://enec-cost.eu/>
www.twitter.com/enec_eu