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### Connecting Europe: Virtual and Digital Citizenship in Education

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| Person in charge | Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz  |
| Time frame       | 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023   |
| Capacity         | 10 persons   |
| Description      | <p>This working group is to support staff in universities and colleges in their teaching about virtual and digital citizenship. The development of new technology blurs the line between reality and the virtual world. Young people learn to participate in social life by using modern technology for daily activities, such as work, building interpersonal relations, and daily communication (Mossberger et al., 2008; Collin, 2015; Dobson and Bell, 2005). Becoming disenchanted with liberal democracy, they avoid politics in real life and are politically socialized in a new environment developing alternative approaches to political engagement (Loader, 2007). The virtual world creates a new space for citizenship that is devoid of territory, social structure, location or roots. Young people are increasingly weary of political life, and social life of Generation Z takes place on the Internet. As a result, modern technology has revolutionized the conventional concept of citizenship, namely the relationship between the state and daily activities, by transforming it into a non-territorial phenomenon.</p>  |
| Specialisation   | pedagogy, psychology, sociology  |
| Methodology      | literature review, survey, qualitative method (e.g. case studies)  |
| Tasks            | <p>The extent to which this process influences citizenship should be investigated. The tasks of this working group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ TASK 1 – investigate the current methods of virtual and digital citizenship and existing educational solutions</li><li>○ TASK 2 – identify how members of Generation Z conceptualize the phenomena of citizenship and virtual citizenship in the context of citizenship education,</li><li>○ TASK 3 – explore how members of Generation Z act as citizens in the virtual world</li><li>○ TASK 4 – prepare education materials that can support members of Generation Z's citizenship activity with respect for European values</li></ul> <p>The WG's object of interest is Generation Z aged 14 – 25 years old in three developmental stages included in three educational levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. early adolescents – lower secondary (14 – 16)</li><li>2. late adolescents – higher secondary (17 – 19)</li><li>3. early adults – university (20 – 25)</li></ol> <p>The working group will meet the Executive and other WGs in February 2021 for a briefing and then regularly at the annual working seminar and conference to share their findings and proposals and be inspired by other working group findings. A report on possible networks of networks will be made provisional at the May 2023 conference, and in print in October 2023.</p> |
| Work plan        | The WG work plan will be collectively created by its members after the group is established.   |
| Outputs          | <p>Two publications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Young people's concept of virtual citizenship and their citizenship activity in the virtual world – as a result of tasks: 1, 2, 3.</li></ol> <p>An article published in a recognized journal about young people's concept of citizenship and action in the virtual world. The focus of this outcome will be on the differences between age groups and education levels in relation to different socioeconomic backgrounds.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(2) Virtual and digital citizenship education in secondary school and at university – as a result of tasks 1, 4</li></ol> <p>Educational materials – Casebook, Handbook and Guidelines for Teachers - to support staff in secondary schools and HE in their teaching about Digital and Virtual Citizenship in European values contexts. Good practice and materials and elements that can be used directly with students.</p>  |

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#### Rationale

The project assumes that the WG will be focused on the topic of young citizens' challenges in general and in their respective countries. New technologies accompany young people in changing their socialisation including social engagement, participation and citizenship. It is not only about using digital devices for citizenship purposes but also the different understanding of the concept of citizenship especially in relation to European values.

The JM Project assumes to report on the challenges to European values from populism, religious fundamentalism, anti-immigration sentiment and other forms of discrimination, showing how these can impact particular groups of children and young people in different national contexts. The Internet is the place where young people are exposed to fake news and populist ideas that were mentioned, and it can build an alternative version of citizenship engagement (anti-immigration activities as a defense of national values, religious fundamentalism as a defense of religious values).

The JM Project assumes creating and disseminating new knowledge about young Europeans that can enlighten new teachers working with children and young people and new researchers in EU studies. It will support educators in understanding how young people build their citizenship understanding and action in the virtual world using digital tools, which brings important added values. Moreover, preparation materials that can support teachers in digital/virtual citizenship education with respect to European values will be important practical support.

#### NOTES & REMARKS

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Citizenship Education in the  
Context of European Values