

CLAIM YOUR CITIZENSHIP! APPEAL TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS

Now is the time for you as a European citizen not only to stand up for your rights but also to take responsibility for developing your own citizenship. Since it was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty a generation ago, Union citizenship has been a top-down institutional status, with significant legal and political potential, but lacking popular support. At the [2017 Summer University](#) organised by the ECIT Foundation, activists and researchers concluded that it would be wrong to continue to rely on the EU Institutions alone to develop Union citizenship. Our appeal to European citizens is to do no less than **CLAIM** their own Union citizenship.

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cherish EU citizenship - don't take it for granted

Citizenship of the Union is not just about rights but also about participation and belonging. By bringing together pieces of this citizenship which are scattered across the EU Treaties and programmes, the [ECIT guidelines](#) show that it is more substantial than generally thought (especially if the 12 proposals for its further development are considered). It is also more deeply rooted historically and legally and more widely practiced than official statistics suggest. It is worth defending.

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learn about European citizenship

Textbooks only tell our children that the EU is a set of distant institutions, largely neglecting to mention their rights to have a say and become active European citizens. The European Commission cannot interfere with civic education but it is responsible for EU citizenship and can recommend how it could be taught and practiced out of school. Unless there is a critical mass of educated young European citizens, EU reforms will not register and be taken up by enough people to make a difference.

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act locally as a European citizen and across borders

Beginning with the marches for Europe during the celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, more and more people are coming forward to protest against borders and assert their European citizenship. This is only the tip of the iceberg – across Europe this transnational citizenship is becoming more rooted in local action, creating resistance to the extreme right wing discourse against migration, and encouraging people to break the mould and introduce change themselves. This is the new frontier for European citizenship showing it to be directly relevant to local communities.

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initiate reforms of the EU Institutions

The EU Institutions are surrounded by over 30, 000 lobbyists, leaving citizens' interests out in the cold. After years of campaigning by civil society organisations, the Commission has accepted the need to reform and simplify the regulation for citizens' initiatives, given that only four out of 60 attempts have reached the target of over 1 million signatures. This provides an opportunity to reform and simplify all other ways for citizens to voice concerns: requests for documents, complaints, public consultations and genuinely European elections to the European Parliament.

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make the EU listen

We recognize that it is easier to persuade people to support a demand to ban a particular pesticide or other single issue campaigns – but much harder to convince them to support the cause of transnational citizenship, which is everyone's and no one's responsibility. Never before have there been so many citizens' initiatives and petitions open for signature on EU rights and citizenship. We urge you to sign [here](#) as many as possible. This is a test of how much support can be gathered to claim a new European citizenship which does not exclude long-term residence.

And don't stop here:

Union Citizenship needs symbols and new ideas: a free movement solidarity fund, a citizens' card (to make it easier to claim European rights and sign appeals to the EU), full political rights (that allow citizens living in another EU Member State to vote in all national elections and referenda), a European citizens' house in every region to serve as an open space for information, advice and debate.

The thing that's going to make a real difference: a conscious commitment by millions of EU citizens

to CLAIM their citizenship status!