

With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

Project no. 177316-LLP-1-2010-DE-ERASMUS-ENWA

LISBOAN

Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network

Report from the Workshop “European Citizenship: Concept and Reality”

Brendan Donnelly, Federal Trust for Education and Research, London

Deliverable No. 22b

1 March 2012, Project month 18

Dissemination level: Public

Funding Disclaimer: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Report on conference on “European Citizenship: Concept and Reality”, Mary Sumner House, London 1st March, 2012

As part of the activities of Work Package 1, which is devoted to the Union's institutions, the Federal Trust held a workshop in London on 1st March, 2012 to discuss the philosophical and practical basis of the concept of “European Citizenship.” Although all participants agreed that the Treaty of Lisbon contained a number of elements serving to define and reinforce this concept, there was debate about the scope of these elements, their likely application in practice and whether the new elements of European citizenship taken together comprised, or could comprise a rounded and comprehensive conception of European citizenship.

The presentations and following discussions fell naturally into three main segments, philosophical, practical and parliamentary. In the first session, Julian Plottka of IPE Berlin described the new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty bearing on European citizenship, such as the European Citizens Initiative, new powers for the European and national Parliaments and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. He argued that all these provisions contained a solid basis, particularly if vigorously applied, for the practical and political emergence of a European citizenship, existing in addition to, but not replacing national citizenship. While welcoming these new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, Dr. Edward Best of EIPA, Maastricht, questioned the possibility of a European citizenship that existed essentially in parallel to national citizenship. On such matters as free movement and the defence of human rights, it was very difficult to disentangle the European components of these policies from their national components. In other important areas of traditional governmental activity, such as external policy, there was anyway very little in the way of a specifically European component to be disentangled by the interested citizen. European citizenship should perhaps not be thought of as simply the exercise on the European level of rights comparable to those arising from national citizenship.

In the second session of the conference, Nina Miller of Edinburgh University and Professor Stuart Weir, formerly of Essex University, considered the practical impact of rights arising from European citizenship for individuals. Nina Miller highlighted the right of free movement as often producing consequences which national governments had not expected and did not welcome. A number of recent cases in the European Court of Justice had seemed to cut across national

immigration policies, not least in the United Kingdom. The reluctance of national authorities speedily and thoroughly to implement ECJ decisions was a source of confusion and frustration for European citizens. Professor Weir drew attention to the continuing central role of national governments in protecting, or sometimes not protecting the rights of their citizens. He welcomed the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a source of new rights for citizens, but suspected it was too broadly drawn to be enforceable in the way he might wish. National governments were in any case unlikely to be energetic in implementing any aspects of the Charter which they found inconvenient. Professor Weir doubted the will and capacity of the European institutions to conduct other than occasional skirmishes with national governments over human rights.

In the final session, Professor Christiansen of Maastricht University and Brendan Donnelly of the Federal Trust discussed the parliamentary component of European citizenship. Professor Christiansen argued that the reinforcement of the position of national parliaments in the European legislative procedure had a positive symbolic importance, which should serve to reassure citizens concerned about the apparent remoteness of the European institutions. The current Eurozone crisis was posing new and threatening challenges to parliamentary accountability at both European and national levels and these challenges should not be ignored. Professor Christiansen did however accept that the image sometimes presented of national parliaments as defenders against the encroachment of European institutions was not one helpful to a balanced understanding of the European legislative process. Brendan Donnelly argued that it was misleading to believe that parliamentary accountability could ever be exercised within the European Union at anything other than the European level. The European Union's critics were not wrong to claim that the European Parliament was currently incapable of carrying out this role. But they were wrong to deny that the Parliament's democratic credentials could be fostered by such innovations as the direct linking of the European Elections to the election of the Commission President and Commissioners or allowing the European Parliament to take more of its decisions by a simple majority. Both these changes would greatly increase the saliency and legitimacy of the European Elections as definable political choices made by European citizens.

PROGRAMME**FEDERAL TRUST LISBOAN WORKSHOP****1 March 2012, Mary Sumner House, London SW1****Programme**

1100-1130 :	Registration
1130-1145:	Welcome
1145-1300:	What it means to be an EU citizen Dr Julian Plottka, IEP, Berlin Professor Edward Best, EIPA
1300-1400:	Lunch
1400-1515:	Economic and social aspects of EU citizenship Dr. Nina Miller, Edinburgh University Professor Stuart Weir, University of Essex, founder of Democratic Audit
1515-1530:	Tea
1530-1645:	Political representation for the EU citizen Professor Thomas Christiansen, University of Maastricht Brendan Donnelly, Federal Trust
1645-1700:	Concluding remarks
1700-18.00:	Reception.