

Citizenship Education in Multicultural Societies

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Citizenship has been a favourite topic among European politicians in recent years in the context of worried discussions about multiculturalism and social or national cohesion. Often one senses that citizenship education in these circumstances is actually about reinforcing, or reinventing, concepts of nationhood and inculcating them in the next generation – or even about educating loyalty to a nation state. What this is missing is a discussion about the nature of society and the individual's place in it. Certainly the question of the individual's contribution to society, initially in the form of mutual respect and cooperation with family and neighbours, is a core one. But it is also a matter of understanding the citizens' individual and collective entitlements from society and from the state. Citizenship education thus necessitates a dialogue between the citizens and society and state working with concepts of active citizenship.