



**European Economic and Social Committee**



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# Being a responsible EU citizen

The European Economic and Social Committee is pleased to invite you to a comprehensive exhibition designed by Deyrolle pour l'Avenir, celebrating the European Year of Citizens and exploring the meaning and implications of citizenship.



## EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

The Maastricht Treaty established European Union Citizenship twenty years ago, in 1993. The European Year of Citizens 2013 is a celebration, and it is also an opportunity to highlight the importance of active citizen engagement in a community's democratic process, at all levels. Since 1993, mechanisms have been set up to foster a more participatory democracy that can give EU citizens a deeper sense of belonging to the European Union. The most remarkable of these is the European Citizens' Initiative, through which citizens can alert the European Commission to specific issues by gathering at least one million signatures from a significant number of Member States.

One feature that defines EU Citizenship is its transnational nature. It sets out to encapsulate a supranational political space and a sense of belonging among citizens, giving them a shared sense of being European.



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## A SHORT DEFINITION OF CITIZENSHIP

### What is citizenship?

Citizenship is a formal status people acquire by meeting certain requirements, and it is also a sense of belonging that connects people living in the same community. Citizenship is a badge of membership in a community. It is a community's soul, because it is a sign that people are really living and working together to advance society. It is therefore about taking an active part in society, be it locally, nationally or globally.

### Why citizenship?

Society is based on the idea of everyone doing their share to make things work. Our societies are said to be growing more and more individualistic, but citizenship proves that solidarity and involvement in the community to make it flourish are still the pillars that support the entire structure.

# THE EESC AND THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF CITIZENS 2013

The EESC welcomed the decision to make 2013 the European Year of Citizens and is committed to extending its scope by going beyond the EU's free movement rights and focusing on active and participatory citizenship.

The EESC believes that the main aim of this European Year must be active, participatory citizenship. The initiatives carried out in 2013 to promote European citizenship and its significance should encourage the informed, active and inclusive participation of citizens in European integration and political and social life. The European Year of Citizens must focus on society's many different needs and on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities, giving special attention, inter alia, to women and people with disabilities.

Citizenship is also about ensuring that everyone knows their rights and duties and is equipped, ready, able and willing to drive change proactively in order to build a better society and a better future.



EESC members will engage in a series of conferences, hearings and open space events, both in Brussels and in Member States, to tell Europeans throughout the EU about the rights and opportunities that come with being an EU citizen and to encourage them to participate in civic forums on EU policies and issues.

You can find out more about EESC's activities for the European Year of Citizens on: [www.eesc.europa.eu/citizens](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/citizens).

This exhibition is an illustration of what citizenship means. It comprises ten educational boards illustrating the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of responsible and sustainable citizenship in the European Union. There is, of course, much more to citizenship than is shown on Deyrolle's educational display. The exploration continues...

# COMPONENTS OF CITIZENSHIP



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## EXHIBITION

*Being a responsible EU citizen*

### Elements of the exhibition:

- Active and participatory citizenship
- Citizenship: unity in diversity
- Responsible habits
- Inclusive governance
- Citizens' rights
- The green economy
- Living in the community
- Being a responsible citizen
- Responsible enterprises
- Think global, act local



[www.deyrollepourlavenir.com](http://www.deyrollepourlavenir.com)

See the exhibition here:  
[www.eesc.europa.eu/citizens](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/citizens)



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