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THE JEAN MONNET PROGRAMME AS AN INSTRUMENT OF EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

PROGRAM JEAN MONNET JAKO INSTRUMENT EDUKACJI DLA DEMOKRACJI

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Abstract: The Maastricht Treaty introduced the concept of European Union citizenship, providing additional rights for European citizens. The EU has given its citizens the opportunity to participate and engage in politics, as well as the additional right to vote, but has not focused on investing in citizenship education that would give citizens the knowledge and skills necessary to exercise these newly acquired rights. So far, EU education policy has focused mainly on employability and access to the labor market. The discussion on citizenship education at European level has been quite lively. According to the documents examined, the evaluation of education for democracy in the European Union is low, but the evaluation of the Erasmus+ program in civic education is positive. This article is the result of research on the use of European Union programs, in particular the Jean Monnet Programme in education for democracy.

Keywords: democracy, education for democracy, civic education, Jean Monnet Programme, Erasmus Programme

Streszczenie: Traktat z Maastricht wprowadził koncepcję obywatelstwa UE, zapewniając obywatelom europejskim dodatkowe prawa. UE zapewniła swoim obywatelom możliwość uczestniczenia i angażowania się w politykę, a także dodatkowe prawo do głosowania, ale nie skupiła się na inwestowaniu w edukację obywatelską, która zapewniłaby obywatelom wiedzę i umiejętności niezbędne do korzystania z nowo nabytych praw. Dotychczas polityka edukacyjna UE skupiała się głównie na zatrudnialności i dostępie do rynku pracy. Dyskusja na temat edukacji obywatelskiej na szczeblu europejskim jest dość ożywiona. Z analizy dokumentów wynika, że ocena edukacji dla demokracji w Unii Europejskiej jest niska, natomiast ocena programu Erasmus+ w edukacji obywatelskiej jest pozytywna. Artykuł ten jest efektem badań nad wykorzystaniem programów Unii Europejskiej, w szczególności Programu Jean Monnet, w edukacji dla demokracji.

Słowa kluczowe: demokracja, edukacja dla demokracji, edukacja obywatelska, Program Jean Monnet, Program Erasmus+

Introduction

Democracy is one of the elements of the axiology of the European Union and other international organizations to which Poland belongs, including the Council of Europe. Currently, a discussion is taking place on the forum of these organizations on how to conduct education for democracy so that subsequent generations strive for the durability and development of democracy in Europe. Education for democracy, often also called civic education, is one of the elements of public policy for young people.

The Maastricht Treaty introduced the concept of EU citizenship, providing additional rights for European citizens. These include “the right to vote and stand as a candidate in European Parliament and local elections, the right to good administration, the right of access to documents, the European Ombudsman, the right to submit petitions, freedom of movement and residence, diplomatic and consular protection” (The Treaty on European Union, 1992). The EU has given its citizens the opportunity to participate and engage in politics, as well as the additional right to vote, but has not focused on investing in citizenship education that would give citizens the knowledge and skills necessary to exercise these newly acquired rights. So far, EU education policy has focused mainly on employability and access to the labor market. Some researchers claim that the European Union has neglected civic education (Porschlegel, Zels, 2020). This means that young people do not have the conditions to develop their personality, which could be called a democratic personality.

As K. Mudyń claims, in the search for a democratic personality structure, we can assume that people who have such a personality are able to manage themselves and make decisions independently, and not only behave in a habitual way or submit to external orders or commands. The researcher claims that, unlike a personality adapted to a totalitarian system by subordination to authority, rebellion, passivity or withdrawal from social life, having a democratic personality structure promotes subjective correlates of the quality as a sense of meaning, satisfaction, positive life balance, etc. (Mudyń, 2002).

Recently, the discussion on citizenship education at European level has been quite lively. In 2022, the European Parliament will also address this topic. The relevant report (Report on the implementation of citizenship education actions) was submitted for discussion by the European Parliament’s Education and Culture Committee. After reviewing the report in question, on April 6, 2022, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the implementation of activities of citizenship education actions (European Parliament Resolution of 6 April 2022).

The Commission’s report highlights the fact that European Union member states are failing to meet their obligations in implementing citizenship education. In 1983 in Stuttgart, in the Solemn Declaration on the European Union, signed by the European Council, the Heads of State or Government committed themselves to “increasing knowledge of other Member States of the Community and information on European history and culture in order to promote European awareness (the Solemn Declaration, 1983). Since then, all institutions have made increasing declarations and political commitments emphasizing the need to further promote citizenship education, including in the field of European citizenship. However, when comparing the constantly declared commitments and political goals in the field of citizenship education with the actual implementation, we may note a huge gap. This is a gap between policy and practice, but also between overall policy goals and actual plans to achieve them.

However, the report indicates that certain activities are being carried out at the European Union level which can be assessed as very helpful and effective in developing civic education. These include EU Programs, especially those relating to youth. However, the effects of civic education conducted through programs at the European Union level are not satisfactory. The potential of these programs has not been used. Hope for their greater effectiveness may be given by the fact that changes have been introduced to the programs for 2021-2027 to achieve better results in the field of civic education. It should be emphasized that the greatest benefits result from the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme.

On April 6, 2022, the European Parliament, after reviewing the report in question, adopted a Resolution on the implementation of activities in the field of civic education. The resolution in question mainly

presents recommendations according to which Member States should review and modernize education systems, as well as all EU-related forms and content included in curricula at all levels of education and teaching. The European Parliament also called for the recognition and validation of citizenship competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning, including youth work and volunteering, and for strengthening the links between formal, informal and non-formal learning in citizenship education.

In its resolution, the European Parliament repeatedly called on the European Commission to implement more effective actions to develop citizenship education, including to promote it more actively and to take it into account in the relevant funding programs and working groups.

As mentioned, there is currently an ongoing discussion at the European Union level on how to strengthen education for democracy i.e. civic education. Its improvement can be seen in the fuller use of existing instruments, and some groups also call for the creation of new instruments.

Review of the literature

Researchers of the problem point out that education for democracy involves shaping certain behaviors of people and competences that are conducive to living in a social community.

According to L. Kohlberg, the basic competence of participating in democracy means the ability to make decisions and build judgments that are of a moral nature, i.e. based on internal principles, and to act in accordance with these decisions and judgments (Kohlberg, 1964, p. 425). Democratic personality, according to G. Lin, is a configuration of unrelated tendencies, attributes and character traits. This type of personality is characterized by such features as: rational-discursive reconstruction of one's own and others' feelings or intuitions, the ability to take responsibility, cooperative abilities, and the ability to represent other people. e.g. electors (Lin, 1985). E. Nowak also emphasizes that it is important to open the individual mind to others, in their otherness, which is so constitutive of democratic pluralism. This is only possible if the competence of moral judgment is developed, because judgment takes place in the medium of discourse (Nowak, 2013). When talking about shaping democratic attitudes, we should mention K. Koszalińska's statement that civic education, also understood as education for democracy, is one of the most important challenges of today. Ambiguously defined, multiply interpreted, entangled in various ideological contexts, it is still the only way to build a civil society (Koszalińska, 2013).

Generally, the instruments used by the European Union are assessed positively, or it is pointed out that their potential is not being used, but there are also many negative assessments in publications devoted to building democratic competences at the EU level.

S. Pornschlegel, and S. Zels from not-for-profit think tank – the European Policy Center (EPC) claim that European Union politics does not recognize the importance of EU citizens as guardians of democratic values, even though the EU single market is largely based on stable and democratic political systems. Investing in democratic competences would not only enable all EU citizens to participate equally in democratic life, but would also allow them to more actively discuss and shape the values of the European Union. To adapt European values to future social changes, the EU should provide all its citizens with the means to participate in the political sphere. Researchers also suggest that it would be desirable to create new instruments, for example the European Agency for Citizenship Education: they think that the aim of the European Agency for Citizenship Education would be to improve the quality of and access to citizenship education in all EU Member States and to support the development of the European dimension of citizenship education. The agency would promote a comprehensive approach to citizenship education, targeting all ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds and covering all locations. Needs-oriented, the Agency would focus on those areas and entities that require the most support. In addition, it would support innovative and digital learning methods, which have become particularly important in the face of the new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency would provide funding, teaching materials, digital infrastructure and capacity-building opportunities for teachers. It would operate in a decentralized way and in close cooperation with local regional actors,

while remaining impartial and independent of governments and the political agenda of the EU institutions (Pornschlegel, Zels, 2020).

We should agree with the position of the European Policy Center that to protect democracy, the EU should focus on what holds our democracies together: citizens. Providing citizens with the knowledge and skills to defend their interests and the common good will enable them to survive the erosion of democracy. A more ambitious EU agenda for citizenship education would also improve contacts between politicians and citizens. One of the EU's main goals should be to bridge the growing gaps between EU citizens and their decision-makers, and EACE could play a key role in this endeavour.

Methodology and theoretical foundations

This article is the result of research on the use of European Union programs, in particular the Jean Monnet Programme for civic education. During the research, the document analysis method was used, which covered EU legal acts, soft law documents as well as literature on the development of civic competences, in particular among young people.

Results and discussion

According to the documents examined, the evaluation of education for democracy in the European Union is low, but the evaluation of the Erasmus+ program is positive. This is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It has an estimated budget of €26.2 billion. This is nearly double the funding compared to its predecessor programme (2014-2020). The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life. It supports priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda. The programme also

- supports the European Pillar of Social Rights,
- implements the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027,
- develops the European dimension in sport.

The programme entered into force on January 1, 2014 and replaced the previous programs: "Lifelong Learning" (with the sectoral programs "Erasmus", "Leonardo da Vinci", „Comenius" and "Grundtvig"), "Jean Monnet", "Youth in Action" and five others, including "Erasmus Mundus" and "Tempus" programs. It also supports sports-related initiatives. "Erasmus+" enables financial support for institutions and organizations operating in the field of education and training, youth and sport in Europe. The program enables its participants to develop skills and increases their chances of employment. It is also intended to influence the modernization of education, training and support systems for young people. The programme gives priority to formal and non-formal education, which is intended to develop the skills of students, teachers and employees and improve their situation on the labor market.

In practice, the "Erasmus+" programme creates opportunities for pupils, students, education staff and youth workers to participate in foreign mobility – such as educational trips as part of studies, internships, training and volunteering – and supports the establishment of partnerships between universities, schools, enterprises and non-profit organizations to strengthen innovation and expand knowledge (Dybowska, 2022). These activities that are implemented under the program support the development of civic competences of their participants, and therefore contribute to the development of civic education.

In 2018, the National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme in Poland presented a report on the benefits that participants derive from participating in mobilities. Respondents rated their language skills as well as soft and professional skills very highly. Another important result of the Erasmus+ programme, which shapes civic attitudes, was also the development of the ability to cooperate with people of different nationalities, useful for example when working in a multicultural environment, as well as the ability to learn new things (Dąbrowska-Resiak, 2018).

Erasmus+ already in the program guide it is presented as an EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2021-2027. Education, training, youth and sport are key areas that support citizens in their personal and professional development. High quality, inclusive education and training, as well as informal and non-formal learning, ultimately equip young people and participants of all ages with the qualifications and skills needed for their meaningful participation in democratic society, intercultural understanding and successful transition in the labour market (Erasmus Programme Guide, 2022).

This programme serves the informal education of young people and, in particular, supports international youth exchanges. It should be said that international youth exchange is very conducive to making young people more tolerant towards each other, but also to feel more strongly that they belong to the community of Europeans.

The most important aspect of such meetings is joint implementation of the project. Thanks to the exchange, young people have the opportunity to develop their interests and acquire new skills, such as working in an international team. There are similar benefits to volunteering in another country. The implementation of this standard of European public policy for youth is made possible by the “European Solidarity Corps” program, which finances volunteer internships for young people throughout Europe (Dybowska, 2022).

A special module of the Erasmus+ program is the Jean Monnet Programme. The programme was named in honour of Jean Monnet, a French politician and economist who lived at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the founder of European communities. Jean Monnet actions must contribute to spreading knowledge about how these policies can benefit the daily lives of citizens in the EU and/or abroad, and/or how these can influence the policymaking system in similar fields, either at the Member State level or abroad at a national, regional or global level

The Jean Monnet actions offer opportunities in the field of higher education and in other fields of education and training. The Jean Monnet actions contribute to spread knowledge about European Union integrational matters. The following actions are supported:

- Jean Monnet Actions in the field of higher education,
- Jean Monnet Actions in other fields of education and training,
- Jean Monnet policy debate (higher education and other fields of education and training).

Since 1989, the Jean Monnet Program has created a global network, which is shown in the chart below.



Chart 1 (2023)

Since its inception, the Jean Monnet Program has resulted in the following projects.

- Around 6537 Jean Monnet Actions in the field of European studies,
- Around 100 countries worldwide; more than 1000 universities offering Jean Monnet courses,

- 9000 university teachers per year,
- A very clear link between the subject of the proposal and the EU policy and/or EU topic that it refers to should be displayed.

This is done by learning about common European values and strengthening the sense of European citizenship. A very important element of the projects implemented under this program is cooperation with the university community. So high school students, non-governmental organizations, local governments and various institutions can participate in activities that teach and promote democracy in Europe.

In the years 2014-2020, i.e. during the now completed financial perspective, Jean Monnet activities supported the following actions:

- Modules (teaching and research) – short educational programs in EU studies of a mono- or interdisciplinary nature. Each module is 40 teaching hours in one academic year.
- Chairs (teaching and research) – a grant for individual professors specializing in EU studies, financing 90 teaching hours per academic year.
- Centers of Excellence (teaching and research) – a place that brings together highly qualified experts in the field of EU studies, disseminating their knowledge to society.
- Support for institutions and associations specializing in teaching about the European Union and European integration. Associations should be interdisciplinary and open to all interested professors, teachers and researchers specializing in European Union issues in a given country or region. They represented the academic community in European Union studies at regional, national and transnational levels.
- Jean Monnet networks – international consortiums composed of higher education institutions, research centers, associations, etc. operating in the field of European Union studies. They supported the gathering of information, the exchange of practices, the development of knowledge and the promotion of the process of European integration around the world.
- “Jean Monnet” projects – projects supporting innovation, mutual inspiration and dissemination of content regarding the European Union. These projects – even though other partners could participate in the proposed activities – were based on applications submitted by one institution.

In the years 2014-2020, a total of 1,960 projects were approved for co-financing under the Jean Monnet Action, broken down by:

- 674 Jean Monnet modules,
- 402 Jean Monnet chairs,
- 180 Jean Monnet Centers of Excellence,
- 204 Jean Monnet networks,
- 426 projects by Jean Monnet,
- 65 Jean Monnet grants to associations,
- 9 grants for Jean Monnet institutions.

Polish entities appear in 46 approved applications:

- 16 Jean Monnet modules,
- 6 Jean Monnet chairs,
- 4 Jean Monnet Centers of Excellence,
- 15 Jean Monnet networks.

Considering that the financial perspective lasted for 7 years, 46 projects is not a large number, especially since this interest in other countries has been growing significantly over the years increasing over the years as shown in the chart below.

Jean Monnet (2014-2020)

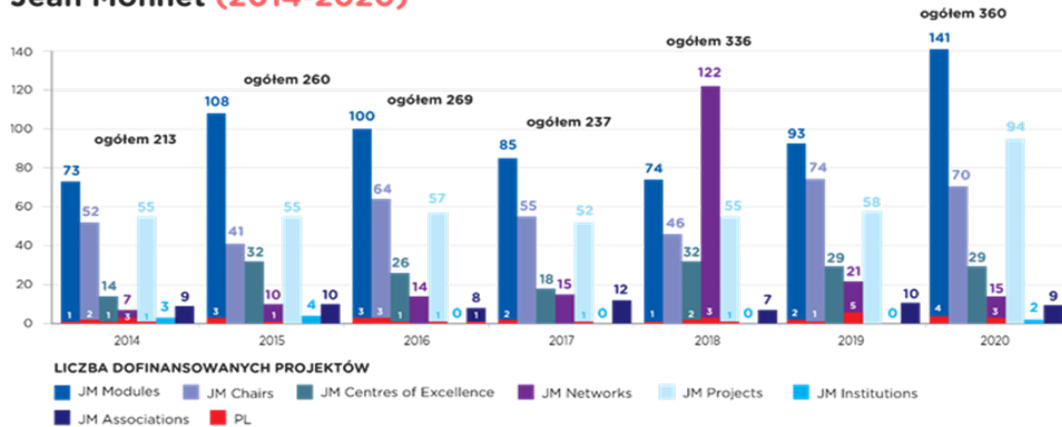


Chart 2. Summary of the participation of Polish institutions in the actions of the Erasmus+ program 2014-2020

Among Polish universities, the Warsaw School of Economics participated in 10 approved projects, the Jagiellonian University in 7, and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the University of Warsaw participated in 5 projects. It is hoped that in the current financial perspective, the Jean Monnet program will become more popular among Polish universities.

For example, the University of Siedlce successfully applied for the 2023 competition. The Institute of Political and Administrative Sciences implements the project entitled “Human rights in a democratic society” During the implementation of the project, it is planned to conduct such activities as:

- open lectures for all students of the university and secondary school an academic debate,
- webinars for employees of the local government and representatives of non-governmental organizations,
- an international conference,
- participation of representatives of the Institute in international human rights events.

As a result of the project, two publications will be published – popularizing knowledge about human rights in Polish and a scientific publication in English.

Conclusions

Civic competences are essential to promote active and engaged citizenship in modern society. People acquire the values, knowledge and skills needed to engage in democratic processes, solve social problems and make significant contributions to their communities. These competencies enable people to engage in active social change, cooperate with others, defend their rights and the rights of others, and critically analyze various situations that occur in communities. By developing civic competences, we enable people to become aware of their rights and take action on issues that are important to them.

Civic competences are not a monument carved forever in stone: they evolve with social, economic and political changes and therefore need to be constantly understood and practiced by citizens to remain relevant and that is why continuous civic education is needed.

This education should be provided through a system of formal, informal and non-formal education. In the case of the latter, excellent instruments that help in this endeavor are programs from European funds, especially those focused on education. This applies in particular to the Erasmus+ programme. Each of the modules in this program enables this education. Each of them assumes the implementation of projects, and as we know, projects are special, unique activities carried out in an atmosphere of certain uncertainty and risk. Thanks to participation in the project, young people have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and at the same time develop their civic competences needed to work in a team. This is the first step to being able to function in smaller and larger communities, including local, national and European communities.

In the case of the Jean Monnet programme, the values resulting from the implementation of the project have an additional advantage. Carrying out activities disseminates knowledge about European integration. Students have the opportunity to learn about its details and common European values, such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Moreover, the project implemented under this program is also a research project, so by implementing it, researchers enrich the knowledge of the community for which the project is implemented, but also of the scientific community.

Thanks to these advantages, the Jean Monnet programme can be considered a particularly valuable instrument for education for democracy.

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