



We recognise multiple severe problems of current developments in Europe:

1. The social and economic divide is rising throughout Europe.¹
2. The “European experience” keeps being a privilege for a small share of citizens. In fact, 37% of EU citizens have never been in another country in the European Union.²
3. School education is currently still not sufficiently fostering social literacy.³
4. Huge differences in the perception of civil society persist; the interest in European public affairs is significantly lower than for local or national affairs.⁴
5. Nearly one third (31.3 %) of young adults in Europe are in risk of poverty or social exclusion.⁵
6. Schools, universities, parents, businesses - many actors of society exert increasingly enormous pressure on young people.⁶

Our solution: Uniting Europe by uniting people! As the youth is the future (and the present) of this continent, we want to institutionalise bridge-building among Europeans until being a truly European citizen becomes a matter of course. This is why we suggest the implementation of a service applying to all young European citizens, which is to be performed after the completion of secondary education for the duration of 6 months – 1 year in a non-profit branch benefitting the (civil) society.

The performance of such a service will tackle the above-mentioned problems as follows:

1. Performing an activity which is primarily detached from corporate or academic interests allows a change of perspective and the widening of one’s world view. This leads to increased mutual understanding and a more cohesive and peaceful society.
2. Everyone is able to live in another country without any pre-conditions.
3. Encountering other social contexts and widening the perspective on society becomes an integral component of mandatory education.
4. A European identity is built; the importance of European democratic institutions becomes apparent through the experience of shared rules and regulations.
5. Young people learn to live on their own in a safe environment with sufficient money for rent and food.
6. There is a distinct timeframe for reflection on personal interests and the development of personality as a process bridging general education and individual lives. develop an understanding of their own goals, aspirations and motivations in life.

For more information, visit our website

<http://ourcivilservice.eu>

For any inquires, contact

contact@ourcivilservice.eu

¹ Nolan, B. (Ed.). (2014). Changing inequalities and societal impacts in rich countries : Thirty countries' experiences (First edition. ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² Ferrari, L. (2018, June 21). *190 million Europeans have never been abroad*. Retrieved from

<https://www.europeandatajournalism.eu/eng/News/Data-news/190-million-Europeans-have-never-been-abroad>

³ cf. Arthur, J., & Davison, J. (2000). Social literacy and citizenship education in the school curriculum. *Curriculum Journal*, *11*(1), 9-23. doi:10.1080/095851700361366;

Nugent, R. (2006). Civic, social and political education: Active learning, participation and engagement? *Irish Educational Studies*, *25*(2), 207-229.

⁴ Kerr, D., Sturman, L., Schulz, W., & Burge, B. (2010). ICCS 2009 European report: Civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement among lower secondary students in 24 European countries.

⁵ European Union (2018). Living conditions in Europe — 2018 edition. doi:10.2785/39876

⁶ European Union (2015). Being young in Europe today — 2015 edition. doi: 10.2785/59267