

Citizen Science is an expression of shared identities and spirit in Europe

Europe is much bigger and much deeper than just the European Union. Shared values, such as an appreciation of science, form the common foundations of European culture, and science is also deeply embedded in our everyday lives. Citizen Science uniquely engages with everyday citizens to jointly undertake research that benefits both our objective knowledge of the world and the needs of our communities, thus upholding the European ideal of democracy, which relies on the informed decisions of its citizens and the joint understanding of science.

Citizen Science is both a global movement, as visible through growing international networks such as ECSCA, CSA, ACSA, and the Chinese Citizen Science Network, and a pan European one: encompassing the South, East, North, and West. Citizen Science frames our shared ideas about responsible citizenship and responsible research both locally and globally.

If the EU is only seen as a bureaucratic and financial construct then the most important spirit of Europe is lost – the spirit of peace, cooperation, inclusion, and sustainability. We therefore wish to emphasize, that even though we are European in name, we fully embrace collaboration with all of our partners around the world, in the name of that spirit.

The first strategic aim of ECSCA is to promote sustainability through Citizen Science, the second is to build a think tank for Citizen Science, and the third is to develop participatory methods for cooperation, empowerment, and impact – across all borders. Our vision for ECSCA is thus as an integrative power, together developing tools and finding resources that include and integrate marginalized groups. During this period of political uncertainty in Europe, we reach out to all with this message of inclusion and collaboration, especially our colleagues and partners in the UK.

ECSCA is involved in a number of Horizon 2020 projects, where there are a number of opportunities for different communities and groups to participate across a range of formats – and this is reflected in the partnerships that have been formed. Especially the DITOs project – *Do-it-together-science*, led by UCL London, links together with vivid communities such as FabLab members, Hackathon attendees and DIYBio practitioners. EU-UK consultations about the future may or may not change their institutional relationship. What we do know is that, thus far, this has been a waste of energy and a distraction for many of our partner institutions when there are much greater challenges that universally inform our daily lives. Examples include climate change, loss of biodiversity, depletion of resources, and an increasing gap between rich and poor. No matter how EU-UK consultations conclude, ECSCA will support strong relationships between all of our partners, and work to maximize the administrative opportunities for maintaining and enhancing European projects (including through work permits, research permits, mobility opportunities, etc).

Let us concentrate on the essentials, and employ Citizen Science as a mean for transnational integration - working together for a peaceful tomorrow in Europe and beyond.

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