European SWOT Analysis on Education for Environmental Citizenship

Edited by
Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis, Pedro Reis & Demetra Paraskeva-Hadjichambi

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ENEC Cost Action Report

European SWOT Analysis on Education for Environmental Citizenship

Edited by
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Table of Contents

page

PART I: European Synthesis of SWOT Analysis 1

Chapter 1: European Synthesis of SWOT Analysis for Education for Environmental Citizenship 3
Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis & Demetra Paraskeva-Hadjichambi

PART II: European Countries' Reports 23

Chapter 2: Short Country Report AUSTRIA 25
Katharina Lapin & Florian Leregger

Chapter 3: Country Report BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 35
Mirjana Zabic & Gekic Haris

Chapter 4: Education for Environmental Citizenship: An opportunity for Flanders BELGIUM? Results of the Flemish SWOT analysis for ENEC 51
Jelle Boeve-de Pauw

Chapter 5: Short Country Report for BULGARIA on the SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship 59
Boris Manov & Dilyana Keranova

Chapter 6: Education for Environmental Citizenship in CROATIA 73
Slaven Gasparovic & Ivan Sulc

Chapter 7: Education for Environmental Citizenship in CYPRUS: A SWOT Analysis 83
Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis & Demetra Paraskeva-Hadjichambi

Chapter 8: ENEC Country Report: DENMARK 95
Danielle Wilde, Bjørn Bedsted, Lucas Larsen & Susanne Dau

Chapter 9: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Country Report: GREECE 111
George Farangitakis & Themistoklis Sbarounis

Chapter 10: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short HUNGARIAN report 121
Adrienne Csizmady, Imre Kovách & Boldizsár Megyesi

Chapter 11: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short ISRAELI Report 133
Daphne Goldman

Chapter 12: ITALY: Short Country Report 145
Daniela Conti & Luca Baglivo

Chapter 13: SWOT Analysis of Environmental Citizenship Education in LITHUANIA 155
Mykolas S. Poskus, Audra Balunde & Lina Jovarauskaite

Chapter 14: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short LATVIA Report 165
Maris Klavins

Chapter 15: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short Report for THE NETHERLANDS 171
Frans van Dam & Marie-Christine Knippels

Chapter 16: Education for Environmental Citizenship in NORWAY 181
Finn Arne Jørgensen, Lihong Huang & Eli Melby

Chapter 17: Education for Environmental Citizenship in PORTUGAL – A SWOT Analysis 189
Pedro Reis

Chapter 18: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship in ROMANIA 201
Rareș Hălbac-Cotoară-Zamfir & Cristina Hălbac-Cotoară-Zamfir

Chapter 19: Short Country Report SERBIA 207
Mirjana Lenhrdt, Marija Smederevac-Lalić & Vesela Radović

Chapter 20: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short Country Report SLOVAKIA 219
Vladislav Kaputa & Hubert Paluš

Chapter 21: SPANISH SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship 227
Marta Romero Ariza

Chapter 22: SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship – Short SWEDISH Report 245
Per Sund & Niklas Gericke

Chapter 23: Short Country Report Switzerland ENEC COST Action CA16229 Country Report SWITZERLAND 249
Ralph Hansmann, Jérôme Duberry & Nicole Bauer

Chapter 24: Short Country Report UNITED KINGDOM 267
Andri Christodoulou & Ralph Levinson

List of Main Abbreviations

CE: Citizenship Education
CoP: Community of Practise
DSP: Dominant Social Paradigm
EA: Environmental Attitudes
EB: Environmental Behaviour
EC: Environmental Citizenship
ECn: Environmental Citizen
EE: Environmental Education
EEC: Education for Environmental Citizenship
EfS: Education for Sustainability
ESD: Education for Sustainable Development
FCN: Frequency of Contact with Nature
NC: National Curriculum
NEP: New Environmental Paradigm Scale
PSAs: Public Service Announcements
SE: Science Education
SSIBL: Socio-Scientific Inquiry-Based Learning
STEM: Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics
TPB: Theory of Planned Behaviour
TPD: Teacher Professional Development
VBN: Values Beliefs Norms

Foreword

Environmental citizenship is crucial for the success of any environmental policy. Sustainable development, a circular economy, a low-carbon economy, and a bio-economy require an effective citizen engagement. Citizens are called upon to adopt environmental attitudes and behaviours, make green choices, increase civic participation, and to be aware of and apply their environmental rights and duties. The contemporary environmental crisis with climate change, biodiversity loss, air pollution and all other local and global environmental problems demand an education that is capable of empowering environmental citizens. Education plays a key role in shaping future environmental citizens; nobody is born environmental citizen but anybody can become so by education.

This report presents a SWOT Analysis of an integrated and holistic type of education in Europe "Education for Environmental Citizenship". The SWOT anlaysis is presented in two levels. In Part A a synthesis of the results of 157 experts from 28 European countries are presented. In Part B the reader can exlore the 23 European country reports.

It is important to clarify that this reseach regarding SWOT analysis was undertaken before any development on the concept of Education for Environmental Citizenship such as common definition and the pedagogical approach. In this fact it illustrates the experts' opinion in the different contexts through out Europe.

We hope that European stakeholders will find it useful.

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European Network for
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24. Short Country Report United Kingdom

European Network for Environmental Citizenship

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Abstract: Education for Environmental Citizenship is a concept not used or discussed within the formal educational system in England, although some of the competencies, including knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with pro-environmental action and behaviours within the private and public sphere of young people are addressed through other means such as Science, Citizenship and Geography Education, as well as through informal cross-curricular learning opportunities. This chapter presents a short review of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of Education for Environmental Citizenship, as this applies in the UK context, based on the views of five UK experts. Key findings include the recognition of Education for Environmental Citizenship as a concept that has the potential to promote young people's active participation and engagement in decision-making processes about the environment and sustainable development, and to allow them to take action on issues within their communities and social contexts. At the same time, our experts point out to the need to clarify and exemplify the uniqueness of Education for Environmental Citizenship compared to other similar approaches, whilst taking advantage of the existing research and good practices that have been developed for such approaches such as science education, citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Acknowledgments: This chapter is based on work from Cost Action ENEC – European Network for Environmental Citizenship (CA16229) supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). We would like to thank the experts who took time out of their busy schedules to complete our survey.

24.1 Introduction

Education for Environmental Citizenship is a composite concept, which aims to address issues related to established approaches such as Environmental Education

(EE), Citizenship Education (CE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), by explicitly focusing on promoting the competences required for Environmental Citizenship. For the purposes of the European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) project and the task of conducting a SWOT analysis, Education for Environmental Citizenship was defined as the type of education that promotes Environmental Citizenship. Based on Dobson's (2010, p. 6) work, Environmental Citizenship was defined as a "pro-environmental behaviour, in public and private, driven by a belief in fairness of the distribution of environmental goods, participation, and co-creation of sustainability policy. It is about the active participation of citizens in moving towards sustainability". Based on this definition, five experts from the UK have responded to our request to complete an online survey and share their views on Education for Environmental Citizenship so as to construct a SWOT analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship, as applies within the UK context. Table 24.1 presents a summary of the background information of the five participating experts. All five experts were male.

Table 24.1 Background information of UK participants

Participant No.	Expertise	Education Level
Expert 1	Researcher – Academic	PhD
Expert 2	Decision Maker in National NGO	PhD
Expert 3	Researcher – Academic	PhD
Expert 4	Educator – Teacher in Secondary Education	PhD
Expert 5	Researcher – Academic	PhD

In this report, we first briefly discuss aspects of the concept of Education for Environmental Citizenship that are or are not present in formal education in the UK, before presenting the SWOT analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship as it applies within the UK context based on the findings of the online survey. Formal education is the main focus in this report because this is what experts mainly referred to in their responses.

In England, EE is a subject not explicitly addressed through the National Curriculum. EE is to some extent a component of Science Education (SE) both at the primary and secondary school levels (Department for Education, 2015). For instance, at the primary school level students learn about materials and make links to environmentally-friendly attitudes and behaviours (e.g. through the Re-use/Reduce/Recycle model). At the secondary school level, students learn about global warming through studying the science of atmosphere and are asked to consider within such a unit, the implications of climate change to their everyday lives. Since 2014, when the latest iteration of the National Curriculum for England was intro-

duced for primary and secondary education, greater emphasis is placed on declarative knowledge, which leaves little time for science teachers to engage with their students on topics that are not directly linked to the NC specifications. This in itself is a challenge for Education for Environmental Citizenship since its components are 'hidden' and 'invisible' dimensions of science education in official curricula.

Conversely, dimensions of Education for Environmental Citizenship are more explicitly addressed within the programmes of study for Citizenship and Geography (Department for Education, 2013a, 2013b). Citizenship Education emphasises the need to "prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens" and mainly focuses on the development of knowledge and skills on a socio-political level without any mention of environmental issues, although the active involvement and consideration of communities is considered explicitly. For instance, students at Key Stage 4 (15-16 years old) should learn about "the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity" (Department for Education, 2013a). Similarly, the Geography specification for Key Stage 3 states that pupils should "understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the climate; and how human activity relies on the effective functioning of natural systems" (Department for Education, 2013b).

24.2 Strengths of Education for Environmental Citizenship in the United Kingdom

Three main themes were identified in the experts' responses as advantages of Education for Environmental Citizenship. These are: (a) the fact that Education for Environmental Citizenship allows young people to explore the complex nature of environmental issues, (b) the potential that Education for Environmental Citizenship holds for promoting young people's active participation and taking action by engaging them in decision-making about the environment and sustainable development, and (c) the affordances that Education for Environmental Citizenship holds for considering issues related to the environment within their communities and social contexts, and thus making it relevant for them personally. The three themes identified reflect Dobson's (2010) definition of Environmental Citizenship, which was provided to the experts as part of the SWOT survey on Education for Environmental Citizenship. It is important to note that these three themes were interlinked within the experts' responses to the survey questions about the advantages of Education for Environmental Citizenship, its unique nature compared to other similar forms of Education (e.g. Environmental Education, Science Education), and its contribution to the field of Education.

The active participation of young people in decision-making and the potential for taking action to offset issues affecting the environment, was expressed as an

advantage by most experts, which saw "active participation" and "taking action" as two aspects that go hand-in-hand. For instance, Expert 2 noted that Education for Environmental Citizenship "provides knowledge, skills and understanding to support informed personal decision-making leading to practical action". Expert 5 considered Environmental Citizenship as a subset of citizenship and therefore argued that "active participation rather than passive engagement" would be a key strength of Education for Environmental Citizenship. In order to be able to participate actively and make decisions on environmental issues, it is also important to be able to deal with the complexity of environmental issues as "many of which may have no obvious solutions" (Expert 2). Such environmental issues are often cross-disciplinary and 'wicked problems' (Brown, Harris & Russell, 2010) as there is no obvious solution to them; Education for Environmental Citizenship can allow students to consider scientific issues within their wider context and at the same time can stimulate young people's interest in such issues and the scientific ideas that underpin them (Expert 4). What is more, Expert 4 argues that through Education for Environmental Citizenship young people may "see themselves as part of a complex web, understanding that their personal actions have wider effects" and thus allowing them to realise the responsibility they have as citizens in relation to the environment, both at a personal and at a societal level.

Education for Environmental Citizenship provides affordances for young people to consider issues of environmental relevance, and associated knowledge (e.g. scientific knowledge on ecology) within a societal context and within their communities. The community dimension of citizenship within Education for Environmental Citizenship was emphasised by most experts, in relation to decision-making and taking socio-political action, as noted previously. Expert 2 acknowledged that these actions need to be "positive", "environmentally-focused" and "sensitive to community needs", and should be taken both "at an individual and community level". The importance of considering the social context and dimensions of environmental issues is also pointed out by Expert 3, who notes a key strength of Education for Environmental Citizenship is that it can address and hopefully ameliorate "the assumption that Environmental issues have limited social dimensions" Education for Environmental Citizenship was also discussed as a construct that brings together different stakeholders in a way that overcomes the potential issues and problems created by addressing pro-environmental behaviour and action within a multidisciplinary field, as shown below.

> EEC offsets impediments between human, economic, social, political and environmental sciences by augmenting knowledge exchange, community-led research and experimentation of different stakeholders (eco-schools, researchers, scholars, teachers, practitioners, policy makers) related in Environmental Citizenship (Expert 1).

Finally, the experts' responses considered Education for Environmental Citizenship unique in having a positive approach to issues related to the environment; that is, it can create and promote "positive environmentally-focused actions by individuals which are sensitive to community needs" (Expert 2), taking advantage of established "theory, pedagogy and practice" (Expert 3) from citizenship education as

well as environmental education, both of which are well established research fields within education.

24.3 Weaknesses of Education for Environmental Citizenship in the United Kingdom

The weaknesses of Education for Environmental Citizenship discussed by the five UK experts can be summarised in the following three themes: (a) the place of Education for Environmental Citizenship within formal education, (b) young people's (negative) perceptions of Environmental Citizenship as a topic of investigation with formal education, and (c) the nature of Education for Environmental Citizenship as a distinct discipline compared with other similar approaches such as EE, SE, and ESD. These will be discussed in more detail below.

Experts E1, E2 and E3 commented on the place of Education for Environmental Citizenship within formal education, which based on their comments, could be characterised as peripheral to formal education. For instance, Expert 2 noted that Education for Environmental Citizenship "is still peripheral to most formal education thinking and organisation. There is no Environmental Citizenship 'curriculum' in schools and teachers don't understand it, and (at secondary school level) won't find time to engage with it." Comments from Expert 3 further support the idea that in the UK context, Education for Environmental Citizenship is not addressed as part of formal education:

> Simply the phrase [EEC] is unfamiliar to most UK-based practitioners. By extension, the underpinning rationale will be also. As will experience with, and confidence in, promoting theory and pedagogy related to issues of political decision making, participation (particularly 'participatory democracy'), social justice (and related concepts such as 'environmental racism') etc. (Expert 3)

Another issue raised by experts was the fact that there were no materials available for teachers to use within formal education settings for addressing Environmental Citizenship, which in combination with a lack of subject matter knowledge on the issues involved, and knowledge of appropriate pedagogies for Education for Environmental Citizenship by teachers, made the tasks onerous for addressing Education for Environmental Citizenship via formal education. Expert 1 notes that "teaching approaches that are more theoretical and non-sensory" instead of learning Education for Environmental Citizenship by "doing and experimenting with live projects" is a possible weakness of Education for Environmental Citizenship within formal education. However, it should be acknowledged that the experiential learning that Expert 1 argues for is part of the way that some subjects related to Environmental Citizenship are taught, for instance within science and environmental education. The issue of the assessment requirements of formal education was raised by

Expert 4. Within formal education in the UK there is great pressure on delivering the curriculum and preparing students for their exams, the results of which can determine whether they progress to post-16 education and higher education. This means that there is little flexibility for teachers to address topics and themes that go beyond the curriculum or that are interdisciplinary as this would require more time for preparation and delivery.

The issue of high-stakes assessment is also related to the second theme identified in the experts' responses on the weaknesses of Education for Environmental Citizenship. In particular, it was noted that young people's perceptions of Environmental Citizenship as a topic of investigation with formal education might be negative, as often students in the latter years of secondary education "like knowing 'is this on the examination'– they need convincing that Education for Environmental Citizenship approach helps understand the material for the examination (maybe better than other methods) and is interesting and helps them prepare for adult life" (Expert 4). Expert 2 also pointed out that students and teachers might "expect a focus on environmental science topics more purely, and would not expect/enjoy/appreciate a more 'human-politico-cultural' dimension".

The final and possibly the most important weakness of Education for Environmental Citizenship identified by UK experts is its nature as a distinct discipline compared to other similar approaches such as EE, SE, and ESD. This is an important concern and needs to be considered carefully in order to realise the potential that Education for Environmental Citizenship has for promoting pro-environmental action and behaviour by citizens within formal and informal educational settings. Expert 5 pointed out that Education for Environmental Citizenship "is weak in appearing like a 'repackaging' of previous forms of ESD and CE" as well as in "not considering social and economic aspects as much as environmental ones". Additionally, all experts agreed that more is known and taught about ESD and EE in the UK compared with Environmental Citizenship, and more teaching materials are available for these approaches, which puts Education for Environmental Citizenship to a disadvantage compared with other educational approaches that are similar to Education for Environmental Citizenship. In conclusion, the UK experts agree that the construct of Education for Environmental Citizenship is "confusing" (E2), at least as it applies in the UK context, which points out the importance of clarifying the unique and distinct features and added value of Education for Environmental Citizenship if students, teachers and the wider public are going to be convinced that such an approach is worth adopting and engaging with.

24.4 Opportunities of Education for Environmental Citizenship in the United Kingdom

There were two main themes identified in the experts' responses as opportunities of Education for Environmental Citizenship. These were (a) the common ground

shared with other educational approaches (SE, EE, CE, ESD), and (b) the potential that Education for Environmental Citizenship holds for promoting young people's active participation and taking action by engaging them in decision-making about the environment and sustainable development (which was also identified as a strength).

According to the experts' responses, commonalities between Education for Environmental Citizenship and other similar approaches such as EE and ESD could be an opportunity for Education for Environmental Citizenship since it could use established practices as a starting point to build on, and to strengthen the message about the need to prioritise and take action on environmental issues. For instance, Expert 2 gave an example of such a similar approach within the Welsh context that could be used as a starting point for developing Education for Environmental Citizenship, by referring to the 'Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship' initiative. This initiative adopts a whole school approach to educating young people about issues such as climate change, poverty and waste and consumption issues and enabling them to take action on these issues (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2008). EE and Environmental Citizenship were also noted as good starting points for developing and implementing Education for Environmental Citizenship by Expert 5, as he considered them to be "more established" fields compared with Education for Environmental Citizenship. It is interesting to note that both Expert 2 and Expert 4 considered SE as a less appropriate route to developing and implementing Education for Environmental Citizenship "because it tends to be too introspective and wary of sharing ideas and approaches with other subjects" (Expert 2), and because "sometimes the science is hard enough let alone when set in the context of a problem" (Expert 4).

The potential that Education for Environmental Citizenship holds for promoting young people's active participation and taking action by engaging them in decision-making about the environment and sustainable development was another opportunity identified for Education for Environmental Citizenship. Active participation and taking action were noted in relation to promoting citizen science, social innovation, political decision-making, people's pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour, and social justice within a participatory democracy (Expert 1, Expert 3, and Expert 5).

24.5 Threats to Education for Environmental Citizenship in the United Kingdom

The threats to Education for Environmental Citizenship that the five UK experts have identified can be summarised under the following three themes: (a) lack of political will and consideration of Environmental Citizenship at policy level, (b) awareness (or lack of) of and implementation of appropriate pedagogies for Envi-

ronmental Citizenship, and (c) students', teachers', parents' and citizens' perceptions of Environmental Citizenship and Education for Environmental Citizenship, their utility and added value. These are discussed in more detail below.

The first threat identified in our analysis of the experts' responses is a lack of political will and consideration of Environmental Citizenship at policy level, which might threaten the way in which it is viewed by the wider public and makes it difficult to justify why Education for Environmental Citizenship is necessary. As Expert 2 commented, "an ageing population in many developed countries such as the UK [is a threat for Education for Environmental Citizenship]. They are the voters who sway government decisions and, historically, will be focused on health, wealth and personal (and immediate family) security – not the environment".

The second theme identified as a threat to Education for Environmental Citizenship is the extent to which educators are aware of Environmental Citizenship and of appropriate pedagogies for it that would enable educators in both formal and informal educational settings to implement Education for Environmental Citizenship. As Expert 1 argues "Education for Environmental Citizenship should stimulate haptic experiences involving DIY and hands-on activities outside the classroom/lab". Appropriate pedagogical approaches such as experiential and hands-on learning are important in order to address the core issues of Environmental Citizenship and not to alienate individuals. Expert 3 further argued this point by commenting that within Education for Environmental Citizenship controversial issues would have to be addressed, "however, sensitivity would be needed and considerations of level of maturity of the learners, and capacity to take action versus dangers of becoming disempowered, disillusioned and overwhelmed (considerations of e.g. developmental readiness etc.)". At the same time it is important to be cautious not to recreate or 'repackage' what has been achieved and produced as a result of other similar educational approaches such as EE, SE, CE, and ESD. This is pointed out by Expert 5 who noted that Education for Environmental Citizenship "should avoid replicating what's already being done well in ESD and CE programmes under a different banner, as this will just cause confusion and unnecessary competition between groups already doing a good job". As noted in the Opportunities section, it is important to work together with scholars and practitioners within other similar approaches to Environmental Citizenship in order to ensure coherency and further development of the concept of Environmental Citizenship and Education for Environmental Citizenship rather than place it in opposition to other similar approaches.

Finally, students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of the importance and necessity of Education for Environmental Citizenship need to be considered as these might become an obstacle in successfully addressing Environmental Citizenship. For instance, our experts noted that curriculum time is limited within formal education in the UK; therefore, for Education for Environmental Citizenship to be considered more seriously by teachers, students and schools, this needs to addressed at policy level (as noted in the first threat discussed in this section, and it also needs to be addressed) for instance by making environmental education and citizenship education a priority in school curricula (Expert 5). Our experts' comments on the issue are pessimistic about the realities of formal education and a high-stakes examination

system in the UK. Expert 4 commented that “I’m afraid that in the UK, GCSE and A level assessment is so prescribed now that Education for Environmental Citizenship will only be effective if it links very closely to assessment outcomes”. This was also clear in Expert 2’s comments who said that “the curriculum, examinations and assessment are vital in formal education in secondary schools. If Environmental Citizenship is not linked to any of these it will be irrelevant to most teachers, and therefore also the students”.

24.6 Conclusions

Table 24.2 presents a summary of the SWOT analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship from UK experts, based on the themes identified in their responses.

Table 24.2 A summary of the SWOT analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship in the UK.

	Main themes identified in SWOT analysis		
Strengths	(a) EEC allows young people to explore the complex nature of environmental issues	(b) promoting young people's active participation and taking action by engaging them in decision-making about the environment and sustainable development	(c) considering issues related to the environment within communities and social contexts, and personal relevance
Weaknesses	(a) the place of EEC within formal education	(b) young people's (negative) perceptions of EC as a topic of investigation with formal education	(c) the distinguishing characteristics and unique nature of EEC compared to other similar approaches such as EE, SE, and ESD
Opportunities	(a) the common ground shared with other educational approaches (SE, EE, CE, ESD)	(b) the potential that EEC holds for promoting young people's active participation and taking action by engaging them in decision-making about the environment and sustainable development	
Threats	(a) Lack of political will and consideration of EC at policy level	(b) Awareness (or lack of) and implementation of appropriate pedagogies for EC	(c) Students', teachers', parents' and citizens' perceptions of EC and EEC, their utility and added value

Overall, the five participating experts acknowledged that Education for Environmental Citizenship addresses important issues within the UK context, and should therefore be considered within formal and informal educational settings. At the same time, they also acknowledged the challenges that the UK educational systems would pose on attempts to promote Education for Environmental Citizenship within formal education, especially at the secondary school level. A way to address this challenge would be to clarify and exemplify the uniqueness of Education for Environmental Citizenship compared to other similar approaches, whilst taking advantage of the existing research and good practices that have been developed for such approaches such as science education, citizenship education and education for sustainable development and enhance these in order to develop Education for Environmental Citizenship.

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The European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) – funded as a COST Action (CA16229-Horizon 2020) – brings together more than 120 experts from 37 countries with the objective to improve the understanding, the practice and the assessment of Environmental Citizenship in Europe and the participating countries.

Environmental Citizenship has been an influential concept in many different arenas such as economy, policy, philosophy, organizational and corporation management and marketing and could be better exploited and established furthermore in the field of education as well.

This report examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Europe. In the first part of the report, the need for Education for Environmental Citizenship, is examined along with the methodology and results of an extensive research from more than 157 experts in 28 European countries and Israel. In the second part of the report, the country chapters for the 23 European countries and Israel emphasise the similarities, differences and special features of these case studies.

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