

EU Citizenship Three Decades on: Rights, Challenges and Digital Innovation

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Abstract:

Established in 1992 by the Maastricht Treaty, the substantive legal framework of EU citizenship has remained stable, while its modalities of exercise have evolved. Set as a complementary status to national citizenship, core rights include free movement, political participation at the local and European levels, diplomatic and consular protection and participatory mechanisms such as petitions, appeals and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). Today, digital technologies are at the center of how these rights are exercised. They facilitate access to information and engagement with European institutions, strengthen inclusivity and transparency, and expand opportunities for participatory democracy. At the same time, they pose challenges linked to persistent digital divides, algorithmic governance, and uneven access across Member States. This study examines how digital technologies are reshaping EU citizenship and how Education plays a central role in fostering legal literacy, critical media awareness, and digital competences essential for active EU citizenship. Building on an interdisciplinary approach it argues that while the legal framework of EU citizenship has remained stable, digitalisation is reshaping its exercise, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the future.

Keywords:

EU citizenship, digital innovation, participatory rights, democratic participation, education.