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## FROM EUROPEAN MIGRANTS TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS: AN UNFINISHED PROCESS

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**Abstract:** *The present article explores the Europeans' change of status, from economic migrants to European citizens. In the beginning, Europeans were mainly seen as economic migrants empowered by law to freely move and reside within the territory of the European Community. The subsequent advancements within the European project and the European political context have consolidated the status of European migrants and have acknowledged them as members of a political community. Whereas this process can be seen as a sign of constitutionalism emerging within the European system (Simon, 2000), we can still wonder if the European citizenship is a real issue or merely a tool used by the adepts of the political union to build their arguments (Labayle, 1992). Whatever the answer, the European citizenship has been chosen as the appropriate argument to strengthen the sense of belonging to the European Union and, at the same time, to reinforce its legitimacy.*

*The European citizenship replaces the political dimension associated with the notion of citizenship (as stated by the classical theory) with an economic dimension; this breaks the foundation of our identity, as defined by the Nation State (Deloye, 2004). If the European perspective goes beyond the traditional approach which states that identities are organized around the State, the question is what type of new identification the European Union puts in place and how could the European citizenship become a status that allows for the separation between civil belonging and other forms of social affiliation (Leca, 1996).*

*This article describes the gradual conversion of a heterogeneous community of European economic migrants into a more-or-less homogeneous community of European citizens. It claims that, despite the consecration of the concept of European citizenship, the social ties that should underpin it and transform it into a reality are slow to emerge. The paper also presents some possible approaches that could push forward the debate and, why not, lead to a bottom-up transformation carried by those European migrants who need or want to see themselves first and foremost as European citizens.*

**Keywords:** *European Union; free movement of persons; economic migration; right of residence; European citizenship*

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## 1. Introduction

The "European migrant" is recognized as an effective reality and stated as such from the very beginning of the European process. The Treaty of Rome, article 48 (now 45) guarantees the free movement of active people (employed, self-employed) and of their families within the European Community. By virtue of this article, the European Community fostered and prompted a dynamic geographical and occupational mobility in the Member States.

The new "European migrant" (the person practicing a remunerated activity in another member country) is granted three freedoms - the freedom of movement, the freedom of residence, and the free movement of services (for services providers) - and one single principle - the principle of non-discrimination (the article 48§2 EC states that the free movement of workers *shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of employment*).

*Ratione personae*, the freedom of movement is limited to the employed and self-employed persons, without any reference to their nationality. However, practice has shown that this right was recognized only to the nationals of the Member States<sup>1</sup>, who are also the beneficiaries of the freedom of residence and the free movement of services.

*Ratione materiae*, the freedom of movement is granted for economic purposes, to promote economic integration on the Internal Market. Nevertheless, the notion of freedom of movement can not be limited to its economic significance but it should be addressed from a dynamic perspective.

The Community law has this distinctive feature of conferring rights directly to individuals. Certainly, the development of international law also reinforces the place of individuals in the international arena, but the self-executing provisions are however rare in international law. The right of free movement established by the Treaty of Rome became effective quite swiftly, its provisions being implemented in November 1968.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the principle has a direct effect in all Member States. Even if the scope of these rights is confined to the economic framework, with their coming into effect, one can assert that a new generation of rights is specifically created for citizens of the Member States, influencing the rights attached to their national citizenship. The status of European migrant begins to grow beyond a simple economic status.

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<sup>1</sup> The workers from third countries, refugees and asylum seekers residing in a Member State are excluded from this right. Their status is regulated by the Regulation (ECC) 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community.

<sup>2</sup> See Regulation (ECC) 1612/68 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community and Council Directive (ECC) 68/360 on the abolition of restrictions on movement and residence within the Community for workers of Member States and their families.

## 2. The European citizenship - theoretical considerations

The European citizenship and its evolution over time are central debate topics of an abundant literature and have generated vast controversies. Examined from the viewpoints of different disciplines (for instance, political theory or constitutional law) it acquires different meanings. As a general rule of thumb, we could state that across disciplines, the evolution of the European citizenship is addressed from three main theoretical perspectives: legal, political and sociological, all of them more or less impregnated with philosophical reflections. In relation to these approaches, we will tackle thereafter some points that will support the position taken by this article

The legal perspective is essentially focused on topics such as the link between citizenship and nationality, the rights attached to the European citizenship and their scope, the access to the European citizenship or the delicate issue of a European *demos*. The legal perspective makes room for, among others, the concept of European citizenship as a still unshaped legal right, an unidentified legal object (Blachèr, 2000).

The idea of a progressive citizenship is encouraged by the European Court of Justice itself through its audacious case law in the sixties and seventies<sup>1</sup> (Chaltiel, 2008; Magnette, 1999) and the extension of the rights attached to the free movement of persons.

Afterward, despite the fact that the European citizenship introduced by the Maastricht Treaty is not dependent on the fulfilment of certain economic criteria by its beneficiaries, but granted to the all citizens of the Union (Kovar and Simon, 1993), the free movement of persons remains the main prerogative of European citizens (Chaltiel, 2008; Blachèr, 2000) and has, in European law, a constitutional significance (Blachèr, 2000). It is the European migrant who claim and exercise the rights attached to this new citizenship (Fontaine, 2001).

Furthermore, the European citizenship puts together the concepts of “nationality” and “citizenship” in an ambiguous way: one cannot speak of European citizenship without using the notion of nationality of Member states while, at the same time, one cannot link it to a specific European nationality (even virtual). This ambivalence has led to different legally grounded approaches of the European citizenship, be it the trans-national citizenship approach (Withol de Wenden, 1997) or the European citizenship based on residence approach (see later on this article).

The political approaches of the European citizenship are mainly built around the so-called “democratic deficit”, the need for a reinforced legitimacy of the European Union, and a more active participation of citizens to the decision-making process and the political life of the European community. If one can see in the creation of the European citizenship an answer to the criticism of the democratic deficit (Magnette, 1999), the European citizen is not a very committed actor on the European stage and its attitude towards Europe is not very enthusiastic. Participation in European elections

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<sup>1</sup> In the judgment of *Van Gend en Loos* of 5 February 1963, the Court states that European law not only engenders obligations for Member States, but also rights for individuals. Individuals may therefore take advantage of these rights and directly invoke European acts before national and European courts.

is declining<sup>1</sup>, the representative institution is little known, and the information of European citizens concerning their rights remains quite vague<sup>2</sup>. Even if the European citizen has the opportunity to multiply its ways of expression (see, for instance, the literature on the benefits of public consultations and debates), the European public space is not able (yet) to produce a substantial democratic debate and the identification with the European project is still weak. If the right to vote and to be elected is (should be) the most significant of the civil rights, in the European Union only 2% of the possible European (migrant) voters are concerned by this right and less than 15% of the (migrant) electors are registered: *much ado about nothing* (Strudel, 2008).

The lack of involvement of European citizens hinders the emergence of those social ties between individuals that express their support to common values, their will to live together and to adhere to a common vision of society. The forms of identification to Europe (Gosser, 1996; Duchesne and Frogner, 2002), the mobilisation of social actors for Europe (Dacheux, 1999; Weisbein, 2000, 2000a) the effects of the European citizenship on the representations and modes of action of social groups (Deloye, 1998; Saurugger, 2002; Girod, 2004) are some of the key elements in the sociological approach of this new institutionalized social reality.

Our article offers a progressive perspective across these different components (legal, political, social) of the European citizenship aiming at finding - halfway between what this citizenship is and what it could be - the changes it has brought upon the status of European migrants. At the same time, the article questions the chances that migrants could mobilize to strengthen the European citizenship as well as introduces some perspectives on a possible evolution of the reality of the concept.

### 3. From economic citizens to political citizens

At first, the European process is certainly essentially economic. The rise in the migration of EU nationals across the European Community area is mainly triggered by the introduction of the rights to work and reside freely in any member country. However, even if these new rights came into force grace to a new **common law**, it is hard to imagine that its beneficiaries perceived this new reality as a form of a new social tie. Nevertheless, despite the absence of a political project defined at European level, the discourse of some European leaders was starting to gather more and more political overtones. Europeans were portrayed as not only nationals of Members States moving from an economic territory to another, but also as members of a new community (not strictly political) characterized by specific rights, such as fundamental human rights, consumer rights or environmental protection rights (see, for instance, the *Tindemans Report*<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/rates\\_of\\_participation\\_in\\_european\\_elections\\_1979\\_2009-en-7dc3cc1c-13f3-43a6-865f-8f17cf307ef7.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/rates_of_participation_in_european_elections_1979_2009-en-7dc3cc1c-13f3-43a6-865f-8f17cf307ef7.html)

<sup>2</sup> The Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Winter 2013) shows that the respondents are most familiar with their right to free movement and their right to petition EU institutions: 88% are aware that a citizen of the Union has the right to reside in any Member State of the European Union and 89% are aware that a citizen of the Union has the right to make a complaint to the European Commission, European Parliament or European Ombudsman.

<sup>3</sup> European Union, "Report by Mr. Leo Tindemans, Prime Minister of Belgium, to the European Council", *Bulletin of the European Communities*, Supplement 1/76.

The election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, in 1979, is the event that brings upon a considerable shift into the perception of the status of European migrant. Since then, the discussion has switched from “the European as an economic migrant” to “the European as member of a new and somewhat political community”.

For the European migrant, free to move, reside and work within the Community, a new era is coming...

Once the transition from appointed assembly to elected Parliament takes place, the European political discourse toughens. Some talk more generally about European identity, democratic institutions, respect for human rights, solidarity, diversity, participation of local communities and regional authorities in the European construction, others engage into a somewhat more direct discourse using syntagms, such as the “European citizens” (see the *Spinelli Project*<sup>1</sup>) or a (very symbolic) “Europe of citizens” (see the *Conclusions of the Presidency* of the European Council meeting at Fontainebleau, in 1984). From the 90s, we can even speak about the “acceleration of the European political time”, since any serious discourse on Europe can not be carried without references to the European citizens.

The Maastricht Treaty (1993), with its will to give a new impetus to a more political Europe and, at the same time, to bring common Europe closer to its citizens, represents the climax of the consecration of the European citizenship. Its provisions will be clarified and completed by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). Both treaties represent not only key moments in the configuration of the current notion of the term “European citizenship”, but also the “rerun” of a series of ambiguities that have marked its evolution, confirming a permanent balance between real progresses and vague rhetoric. The bottom line question is: does the every-day European citizen perceive itself significantly different from the economic migrant of the 60s? Not so sure. But let's not anticipate!

Starting with the Maastricht Treaty (articles B, 8 to 8D, 138 D and 138 E of this treaty), citizens of EU member countries have become the beneficiaries of a new legal status - that of European citizens - including both new rights and mechanisms to ensure their protection.

There are four categories of specific provisions and rights attached to notion of European Union citizenship: freedom of movement and residence throughout the Union, the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections and in elections for the European Parliament in the state where he/she resides, protection by the diplomatic and consular authorities of any Member State where the State of which the person is a national is not represented in a non-member country, the right to petition the European Parliament and complain to the Ombudsman.

By its amendments to the articles 17 and 21 (ex-articles 8 and 8 D), the ambition of the Amsterdam Treaty is double: first, to clarify the links between European and national citizenship and second, to extend the rights attached to the European citizenship. Thus, the treaty states in its article that “the citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship”. At the same time, the Amsterdam Treaty has

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<sup>1</sup> Article 3 of the Spinelli Project introduces the concept of Union citizenship in parallel with national citizenship, the two being closely connected.

established a new right for the European citizens. Every citizen of the Union can now write to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions or the Ombudsman in one of the twelve languages of the Treaties and receive an answer in the same language.

Apart from the rights set out in the dedicated articles, the European citizenship is also linked to other provisions of the EU treaties (for example the article 6 CE on the non-discrimination based on nationality) and jurisprudential elements (different judgments of the Court of Justice on the free movement, non-discrimination, respect for human rights, etc.). As regards the rights that are specifically attached to the European citizenship, they are, on the one hand, rights belonging to the *acquis communautaire* (right of free movement and residence, the right to petition) and, on the other hand, new rights granted to EU nationals.

Looking at all these rights, we can easily observe that the manner in which they have been defined, the dependence of the status of European citizen to status of the national of one EU country, the absence of any obligation, the mixture between ancient rights and new rights, between specific rights (but incomplete) and non-specific rights (such as working, residing, travelling in another country) show that the European citizenship is rather fragmented and its name is more bewildering than its content.

The most important progress made by the European citizenship remains the consecration of political rights. The European migrant is no longer only an economic citizen but a citizen who has been given the opportunity to participate in the political life of a new community. This is what the new citizenship promises, at least.

The citizenship is a matter of territorial and identity belonging to a space where the community members perceive each other as such. The European citizenship rewrites the concept of citizenship and puts forward a new form of belonging, implying a status equally accessible to different categories of citizens (the European citizens first benefit from various rights recognized by domestic laws) but also rights and privileges that are no longer attached to the national territory. If the legal perspective states, *grosso modo*, that the citizenship establishes the (legal) recognition of the belonging of a person to a specific and sovereign political community, the European citizenship seems to propose other elements to legitimize this affiliation, without specifying and clarifying them.

#### **4. The European citizen between "it is" and "it could/should" be**

The legal framework of the European citizenship shapes new approaches to the very complex link between citizenship and nationality. National citizenship is considered as a prerequisite to obtain the status of European citizenship. This leads to an ambiguous positioning of the European citizen who is given the opportunity to integrate into new political and social project/community but, at the same time, cannot detach completely from the socio-political community built at national level. One of the main roles of the citizenship (at least from a classical perspective) is to act as a key resource for the development of a collective will, to live together and to build the identification mechanisms. What type of social links could the European citizenship create? What is

the specific element that could give rise to an *affectio societatis* at European level? What type of identification do we have at European level?

Most of our modern democracies have a common perception of the steps needed to create a collective identity at the European level. These steps include identifying the matrix that enables individuals to perceive themselves as belonging to the same group and building a common project. But the preoccupation for a possible or desirable European identity proves to be rather a theoretical and intellectual endeavour, instead of concrete projects.

Thus, if some authors can envision the creation of a future European political community from shared legal and political cultures in the European countries (Padoa-Schioppa, 2005), or from common moral and political values (Todorov, 2005), others prefer to speak about a new form of belonging to a trans-national community named the constitutional patriotism. This new concept has a different understanding about how a political community could be nurtured. According to it, a new political community could be formed through the appeal to common values such as the respect for human rights, instead of using subjective links that swirl around the idea of national identity (Rambour, 2006).

The constitutional patriotism allows for a universalist approach of the political participation, based on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights. Past appeals to linguistic, ethical and cultural particularities are replaced by universal appeals to democracy and human rights (Habermas, 1997). The constitutional patriotism "designates the idea that political attachment ought to center on the norms, the values and, more indirectly, the procedures of a liberal democratic constitution" (Muller, 2007).

As for the European Union, the constitutional patriotism requires a two-step process: first the dissociation between culture and political commitment and second the re-composition of an identity for a European political culture based on peaceful confrontation of national elements (Rambour, 2006).

Beyond the undeniable appeal of the concept or the criticisms brought to this theory, lays the question of how to develop a patriotic attachment to a set of intellectual principles?

The new citizen portrayed by this supra-national vision should prioritize the European universal values over its national identity in order to connect, with the other Europeans to the European democratic institutions. Detached from its national particularities, the new European citizen would be able to engage himself/herself in a democratic action as member of a new supra-national community built on a shared political culture.

From our point of view, it is not easy to gathers citizens with different national and cultural backgrounds around a same idea of solidarity or unity defined by the "philosopher" as being rightful or acceptable. If it is difficult to fall in love with an internal market (as Jacques Delors said), it is also difficult to fall in love with legal principles and procedures. If we want Europe to be the name of a real community of citizens, the European framework should not be only a neutral space for a critical and reflective production of norms and standards, but also a place where citizen's passions are turned into norms and collective actions.

At the 1st January, 2011, 33.3 million people living in the EU were non-nationals (they do not have the citizenship of their country of residence). More than a third (12.8

million people) of these non-nationals was citizens of another EU Member State (see Table 1).

Table 1

|                 | Total immigrants |         |         | Nationals, 2011 |      | Non-nationals, 2011 |      |         |      |         |      |
|-----------------|------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|------|---------------------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
|                 | 2009             | 2010    | 2011    | (1 000)         | (%)  | (1 000)             | (%)  | (1 000) | (%)  | (1 000) | (%)  |
|                 | (1 000)          | (1 000) | (1 000) | (1 000)         | (%)  | (1 000)             | (%)  | (1 000) | (%)  | (1 000) | (%)  |
| EU-27           | 1 609.2          | 1 747.8 | 1 671.5 | 18.4            | 12.7 | 125.9               | 87.0 | 61.4    | 42.4 | 64.5    | 44.6 |
| Belgium         | ..               | 131.2   | 144.7   | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Bulgaria        | ..               | ..      | ..      | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Czech Republic  | 75.6             | 48.3    | 27.1    | 8.1             | 30.0 | 19.0                | 70.0 | 10.7    | 39.5 | 8.3     | 30.5 |
| Denmark         | 51.8             | 52.2    | 52.8    | 18.3            | 34.6 | 34.6                | 65.4 | 18.1    | 34.3 | 16.4    | 31.1 |
| Germany         | 346.2            | 404.1   | 489.4   | 89.4            | 18.3 | 388.9               | 81.5 | 226.4   | 46.3 | 172.5   | 35.2 |
| Estonia         | 3.9              | 2.8     | 3.7     | 2.0             | 54.8 | 1.7                 | 45.1 | 0.1     | 1.7  | 1.6     | 43.5 |
| Ireland         | 37.4             | 39.5    | 52.3    | 19.7            | 37.6 | 32.4                | 61.9 | 20.2    | 38.6 | 12.2    | 23.2 |
| Greece          | ..               | 119.1   | 110.8   | 60.5            | 54.5 | 50.4                | 45.5 | 19.1    | 17.3 | 31.2    | 28.2 |
| Spain           | 499.0            | 485.2   | 457.6   | 42.1            | 9.2  | 415.5               | 90.8 | 142.1   | 31.0 | 273.4   | 59.7 |
| France          | ..               | 251.2   | 267.4   | 107.3           | 40.1 | 160.0               | 59.9 | 70.0    | 26.2 | 90.0    | 33.7 |
| Croatia         | ..               | ..      | 8.5     | 4.7             | 55.3 | 3.8                 | 44.6 | 1.1     | 12.3 | 2.8     | 32.3 |
| Italy           | 442.9            | 458.9   | 385.8   | 31.5            | 8.2  | 354.3               | 91.8 | 113.8   | 29.5 | 240.5   | 62.3 |
| Cyprus          | 11.7             | 20.2    | 23.0    | 2.1             | 8.9  | 21.0                | 91.0 | 13.1    | 57.0 | 7.8     | 33.9 |
| Latvia (*)      | 2.7              | 2.4     | 7.3     | 1.5             | 20.4 | 5.8                 | 79.6 | 1.1     | 15.0 | 4.7     | 64.6 |
| Lithuania       | 6.5              | 5.2     | 15.7    | 14.0            | 89.3 | 1.7                 | 10.7 | 0.5     | 3.2  | 1.2     | 7.5  |
| Luxembourg      | 15.8             | 17.0    | 20.3    | 1.2             | 5.7  | 19.1                | 94.1 | 15.0    | 73.8 | 4.1     | 20.3 |
| Hungary         | 27.9             | ..      | ..      | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Malta (*)       | 7.2              | 8.2     | 5.5     | 1.8             | 32.3 | 3.7                 | 67.7 | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Netherlands     | 128.8            | ..      | ..      | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Austria         | 73.3             | 73.9    | 104.4   | 8.1             | 7.7  | 96.1                | 92.1 | 64.5    | 61.8 | 31.6    | 30.3 |
| Poland          | ..               | ..      | ..      | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Portugal        | 32.3             | 27.6    | 19.7    | 12.5            | 63.6 | 7.2                 | 36.4 | 2.0     | 10.3 | 5.1     | 26.1 |
| Romania         | ..               | ..      | ..      | ..              | ..   | ..                  | ..   | ..      | ..   | ..      | ..   |
| Slovenia        | 30.3             | 15.4    | 14.1    | 3.3             | 23.6 | 10.8                | 76.4 | 2.0     | 14.1 | 8.8     | 62.3 |
| Slovakia (*)    | 15.6             | 13.8    | 4.8     | 1.1             | 22.3 | 3.8                 | 77.7 | 3.2     | 65.5 | 0.6     | 12.2 |
| Finland         | 25.7             | 25.6    | 29.5    | 9.1             | 30.7 | 20.1                | 68.3 | 8.4     | 28.6 | 11.7    | 39.8 |
| Sweden          | 102.3            | 98.8    | 96.5    | 20.6            | 21.4 | 75.5                | 78.3 | 25.1    | 26.0 | 50.4    | 52.3 |
| United Kingdom  | 568.5            | 591.0   | 566.0   | 78.4            | 13.9 | 487.6               | 86.1 | 174.1   | 30.8 | 313.5   | 55.4 |
| Iceland         | 3.9              | 3.9     | 4.1     | 1.9             | 45.9 | 2.2                 | 54.1 | 1.6     | 38.9 | 0.6     | 15.2 |
| Liechtenstein   | 0.6              | 0.6     | 0.7     | 0.2             | 24.9 | 0.5                 | 75.1 | 0.3     | 44.8 | 0.2     | 30.3 |
| Norway          | 56.0             | 69.2    | 70.3    | 7.6             | 10.8 | 62.7                | 89.1 | 40.0    | 56.8 | 22.7    | 32.3 |
| Switzerland (*) | 160.6            | 161.8   | 148.8   | 24.1            | 16.2 | 124.7               | 83.8 | 87.6    | 58.9 | 37.0    | 24.9 |

Source: Eurostat, 2012



These "migrant Europeans" are also, thanks to the European citizenship, European voters, at both national and European level. But, paradoxically, being a European citizen does not entitle you to have a say in the country you live in and work (and pay your taxes). In some cases you don't even have a say in your own country. The Great Britain, for example, withdraws voting rights after fifteen years of residence outside the country. Ireland does not grant an external franchise and in Italy people born abroad who inherited the Italian nationality are allowed to vote in Italian elections but not those who have kept their residence in Italy and are merely temporarily absent on election day. So a British teacher living in Germany for more than 15 years cannot participate in national elections either in Germany or in Britain. Not that simple to be a European citizen, after all.

The Treaty of Lisbon (2007), aiming at increasing the participation of European citizens in the political life of the EU, introduces the European Citizens' Initiative which allows 1 million citizens from at least one quarter of the EU Member States to invite the European Commission to bring forward proposals for legal acts in areas where the Commission has the power to do so. One of the citizens' initiatives registered quite early after the entry into force of this new right is the *Let Me Vote* initiative whose aim is to provide all European citizens with the right to vote in regional and national elections in their country of residence.

The idea of giving more weight to the right of residence to consolidate a true European citizenship is not a new one. However it is quite interesting to see that, despite the political rights attached to the European citizenship, it is the European migrant and its freedom to move to and reside in another country that could really boost-up the idea of "belonging to a European community".

A first better use of the right of residence (as implied in the affirmation of a let's build a "more European" European citizenship) would be to grant access to the European citizenship based on residence. The scope *ratione personae* of any legal system is based on two criteria: the nationality that binds an individual to a state and the residence - the territory where the individual lives. The fact that the residence has not been used as a criterion for obtaining the European citizenship has raised some criticism, drawing attention to the loss of the European dimension in the definition of this new citizenship. Garot and Staples (1999) consider that the Union should give the European citizenship its glory by founding it not on the nationality of the Member States, but on the residence on the EU territory. This idea of unlinking nationality and citizenship and of placing more emphasis on the notion of residence is also present in the American theoretical reflection: for Rosenberg (1997), resident people drive on the same highway as American citizens, pay the same taxes, breathe the same air, and send their children to the same schools. Denying them the voting rights means leaving them voiceless in public affairs that significantly affect their lives.

The realities of the everyday life as pointed out by Rosenberg led to a second European approach to the notion of residence: talk is being carried on about the need to extend the right of EU citizens to vote in regional and national elections in the country where they reside. Going back to our British teacher living in Germany for more than 15 years, for those European with democratic expectations it is pretty disappointing to

notice that some political rights have been limited in the country of residence and have been lost in the country of origin.

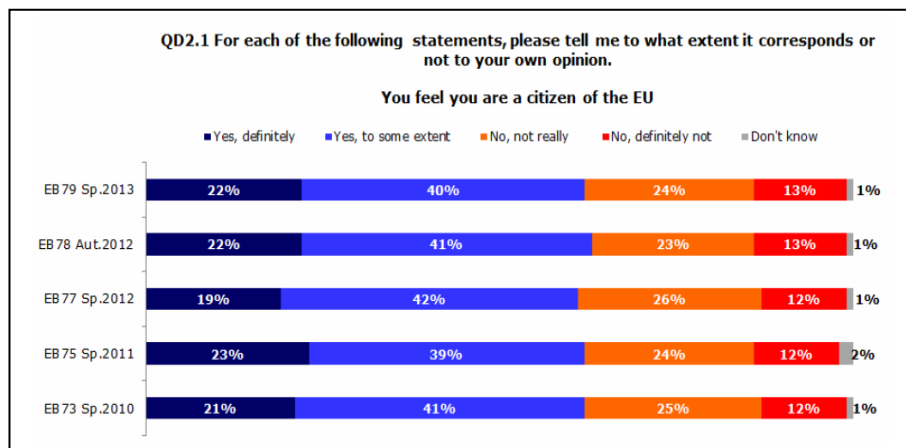
This perverse effect of the Europeanization certainly requires concrete solutions. It does not encourage the European process in general, or the European citizens to move on.

A European citizenship granted on the basis of residence would certainly present the advantage of clearly confirming the European dimension of this citizenship, and it would be a chance for the Union to start building its own citizens. However, this implies a broader and much deeper debate around both legal and political aspects such as the availability and the willingness of the Member States to break through this stage of the European process (whose political symbolism is still very strong) or the legal mechanisms to put in place. At the same time, the mere existence of voting rights cannot generate by itself the genuine ties between the electors and the political community, even if the rules of this community directly impact upon their life.

Wrapping up, the proposal to grant citizenship based on residence has had no major feedback from the European decision-makers, until now. If the *Let me Vote* initiative succeeds in collecting 1 million signatures, its first win will be to provide the European Commission, the national leaders and the civil society with a reason to open a debate on how to overcome it.

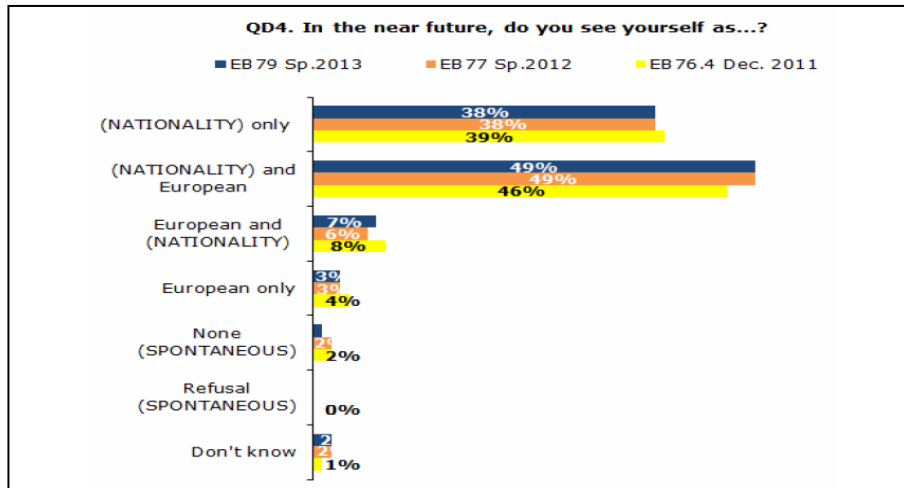
For the time being, the European citizenship remains moderately integrated in the individual system of political and civic affiliations. As shown by a recent Eurobarometer (Standard Eurobarometer 79, Spring 2013), although the notion of European citizenship has some meaning for a slight majority of Europeans (62%), just under a quarter consider that they are “definitely” a EU citizen and only 7% of respondents see themselves in the near future first as European citizens and then as nationals (see Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2**



Source: Eurobarometer (Standard Eurobarometer 79, Spring 2013)

Table 3



Source: Eurobarometer (Standard Eurobarometer 79, Spring 2013)

In our opinion, these numbers show that the European citizenship is still far from strengthening the feeling of belonging to a community that shares common values. At the same time, they bring out the gap between the ambitions of the European citizenship and its concrete outcomes.

Looking for the deep signification of the European citizenship, the European citizen continues to migrate from one territory to another.

#### 4. Conclusions

The European citizenship is a progressive concept. Its developments are far from coming to their end, and its meaning still needs clarification. At first sight, the “ride” of Europeans begins with the right to freely move and reside in the other Member States and ends with the creation of a European citizenship and the recognition and protection of the rights attached to it. The *de facto* existence of this new reality – the attachment of individual to the new political community and their active participation to its democratic life – is yet to be completed. Furthermore, a gap in the system needs to be addressed: this post-modern citizenship (Chevallier, 2004) is still very much dependent on the nationality, a status that only Member States can assign. For some authors, this maintained dependence is the proof of the willingness of Member States not to substitute a supra-national citizenship to the national one, but rather to add additional rights that promote and reinforce the free movement of people within the Union (Blachér, 2000). Certainly, the European citizens of today have more rights than the European migrants of yesterday. Nevertheless, the rights of European migrants seem to be the most significant for the European citizens too. For us, it is the proof

that the European citizenship has not exhausted its intellectual and empirical resources and the European citizen is a status under construction. This, of course, if the European citizenship is meant to be a true citizenship.

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