PRESS RELEASE
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LAUNCH OF THE GUIDE TO DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OF THE DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Vienna, 03-11-2021/ The Students as Digital Civic Engagers consortium is glad to announce the publication of the Guide to Digital Civic Engagement and of the Digital Civic Engagement Toolkit.

The **Guide to Digital Civic Engagement** aims to respond to the question: *What is digital civic engagement (DCE) and how can it be integrated on different levels of higher education (policy, teaching, and learning)?* It is a research-based resource, addressed to teachers, trainers, and researchers interested in implementing digital civic engagement education and explores how this can be integrated at different levels of higher education institutions (HEIs). Its ultimate objective is to make a clear case for introducing DCE into the work with students.

The Guide is organised as follows:

1. The first chapter provides a theoretical understanding of DCE.
2. The second chapter presents an overview of the current state of research on student DCE and relates student DCE to the DigComp 2.1. (the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens)
3. The third chapter includes a policy analysis showing how DCE is represented in national and institutional policy documents in the project partner countries.
4. The fourth chapter focuses on case studies about student DCE activities and provides empirical findings about participants' perspectives by drawing on interview data.
5. The last chapter includes innovative pedagogic strategies that facilitate the teaching of DCE at HEIs.

The Guide is available as an online and open source in English, German, Portuguese, and Estonian. It can be downloaded on the project website from the resources section.

The **Digital Civic Engagement Toolki**t is the second output of the project and provides practical guidance and tools for HEI educators wishing to incorporate digital civic engagement activities into their curricula or teaching strategies, with a particular focus on increasing their confidence in using digital tools. It identifies *24 highly usable tools* that can be used across all devices, explaining their pedagogic relevance, and allowing educators to learn how to use each tool in no more than 30 minutes, getting ready to implement them with students. The selected tools fall under six categories: *Presentation Tools, Crowdsourcing Tools, Collaboration Tools, Civic Good Tools, Digital Creation Tools.* The Toolkit clearly supports HEI educators to address common societal problems in an innovative way, helping to overcome resistance to technology and to understand the role of digital tools in enabling learning and teaching.

As an innovative open resource, the Toolkit is downloadable in English for free at this link and is also available in German, Portuguese, and Estonian.

The *Students as Digital Civic Engagers* partners invite all interested higher education institutions and actors to take advantage of the first two resources developed by the project partners and to get in contact with the consortium for any further information or support.

More details on the project and its future outputs are available on the project website.

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STUDENTS
AS DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGERS

ACTIVE STUDENTS FORM THE BACKBONE OF STRONG AND DEMOCRATIC UNIVERSITIES, CONTRIBUTE TO **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH** AND **AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) encourage civic engagement either as an optional activity (extra-curricular activities) or as part of their study programmes (earning credits) offering engagement methods such as volunteering in a student union, in mentoring, or engaging in service-learning. However, against the background of the COVID19 pandemic and resulting European solidarity movement, there are strong arguments in favour of **awarding civic engagement a larger role**, not as a "Third Mission" activity but intrinsically linked to the quality of teaching and learning across all disciplines.

Researchers have found a consistent and statistically significant relationship between civic engagement and academic engagement. **Students who engage in civic issues engage in academic praxis**, linking theory to action; they strengthen key competences of critical thinking, communication and collaboration; and they develop emotional intelligence and conscientious empathy as part of a community. Digital tools widen opportunities for civic engagement. The creative use of digital technology not only broadens the field of student engagement and solves problems in society, but it is also potentially transformative, supporting students in civic activities by offering digital services.

OBJECTIVES

More needs to be done to innovate in civic education across HEIs. In response, our objective is clear: to empower students to become confident civic engagers making the most of available digital technologies. To achieve this, we will work with HE managers and academic staff to introduce a flexible digital civic engagement toolkit and syllabus that work across subjects and disciplines.

OUR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ARE:

Increase awareness & commitment in HEIs regarding the benefits of teaching digital civic engagement.

Train 30 teaching staff & reach 180 more to enhance their digital pedagogic skills and align civic engagement with their academic programmes of study.

Maximise the number of students learning & participating in digital civic engagement through self-led online learning complementary to their academic study.

MAIN RESULTS

PARTICIPANTS

STUDENTS
will not only enhance their civic and digital skills, but more notably, will develop the necessary competences to be active citizens and capable of initiating civic change in their communities
.
TEACHERS
will update their knowledge both on digital tools for engagement, but more importantly, on the new pedagogic approaches that are required to use them effectively.

THE PROJECT WILL HOST NATIONAL EVENTS IN 2022 PRESENTING THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT.

IO1: **GUIDE TO DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.** A Guide which makes a clear case for the relevance of digital civic engagement, how it relates to policy, teaching and learning, illustrating the potential of digital civic engagement with case studies in both institutional and self-organised digital student initiatives.

IO2: **DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT.** The Toolkit will provide practical guidance and tools for HEI educators wishing to incorporate digital civic engagement activities into their curricula or teaching strategies, with a particular focus on increasing their confidence in using digital tools.

IO3: **DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SYLLABUS & OERs.** Including a syllabus, learning objectives, lesson plans, assessment guides, and access to a variety of original teaching content & pedagogies, these resources will provide academic staff with a complete guide for introducing civic theory, engaging students in real-life examples that are relevant to their topic of study.

IO4: **DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MOOC.** Based on the OERs, this open online learning course provides students & staff with an additional space in which to develop their digital civic engagement skills in a user-friendly format.

The project will contribute to the development of digital civic engagement competences as new types of competences so that students are better equipped to prosper in uncertain times and in the digital era in higher education.