

Preface

This book, *Moving Beyond Barriers: Prospects for EU Citizenship*, is the final synthesizing book in the book series ‘Interdisciplinary Perspectives on EU Citizenship’ of the multidisciplinary bEUcitizen research programme. The bEUcitizen programme set out to identify and analyse what EU citizenship actually implicates, which impediments hinder European citizens from realizing their rights, and how. A research grant by the European Commission enabled a consortium, comprising 26 universities and institutes from 19 countries in and outside Europe, to study this question during a four-year period (2013 to 2017).

This book presents the research findings of our project by providing a classification and comparative analysis of various barriers to EU citizenship. It addresses the question of whether and how such barriers can be overcome and discusses the future opportunities and challenges the EU and its Member States face to further develop the idea of EU citizenship. A mutual understanding between Member States is still missing among Member States: what will EU citizenship be or become: a fully fledged democratic and social citizenship or a market-citizenship, bundling certain rights implied by the internal market freedoms? This undecided question is at the core of the debate on EU citizenship. What EU citizenship is or shall become is dependent on the kind of political, legal, social and economic entity the EU is or shall become. Consequently different, sometimes competing, narratives are elaborated in this book, which take as point of departure the multi-layered character of the European Union, and which include a plurality of models of citizenship.

The bEUcitizen research was carried out against the background of growing challenges for the EU, such as the economic and financial crisis, widening inequality, the rise of populism, widespread contestation of the European project and Euro-scepticism, challenges to open borders and mobility, and the Brexit referendum. Although the situation that the EU has arrived at is serious, it may not necessarily be desperate. The ‘end of the growth of European integration’ may, paraphrasing the words of T.S. Eliot, also be the beginning, that is, the beginning of new forms of integration, as, for instance, set out in the Commission’s ‘White Paper on the Future of Europe’ (2017), or the beginning of the

development of a more mature concept of citizenship, or of alternative forms of EU citizenship.

These developments make this book on European citizenship even more relevant. The book is structured along the lines of the bEUcitizen research programme in four parts. In the first part the authors elaborate the central rivalries that are assumed to constitute barriers to EU citizenship from a conceptual perspective. The second part of the book addresses four dimensions of rivalling and complementing citizenship rights (economic, social, political and civil rights) and examines at what political level these rights are installed, implemented and substantiated, and how these rights and their implementation contribute to equalizing different categories of citizens (gender and generations/old and young/insiders and outsiders).

The third part of the book focuses on socio-economic and cultural barriers and reflects to what extent the diversity of European societies is considered to be a resource or a barrier: it addresses the identity-dimension of EU citizenship by analysing the multilingual character of the EU and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. The final part of the book synthesizes the overall findings of the book, outlines (competing) narratives about the future of European citizenship and discusses how to move beyond barriers.

Without the help and support of several people this book and the book series on *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on EU Citizenship* would not have become a reality. The bEUcitizen project was generously supported by the European Commission under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration, for which we would like to express our gratitude. We are also very grateful to all those who contributed to this book and the bEUcitizen research, without whose enduring commitment the project could not have been concluded successfully. As ever, Edward Elgar Publishing have offered an exemplary service.

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