EUCLASS ALLIANCE
Studying EU Citizenship Education in VET Settings
WP2.1 National Desk Research Report - Spain

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report aims to investigate and analyze how **EU Citizenship Education** is implemented within **VET settings** in Spain. The study focuses on key areas that shape the implementation of EU Citizenship Education in Spain's VET sector, including:

- **Relevant policies and frameworks**, such as national curriculum guidelines and EU directives that influence the integration of citizenship education in VET.
- **Teaching resources and practices** used by educators to convey EU values, rights, and responsibilities within vocational training programs.
- **Educator training opportunities**, examining the availability and effectiveness of initial and in-service teacher training on EU Citizenship topics.
- **Challenges and gaps in implementation**, identifying barriers such as curriculum constraints, regional disparities, and resource limitations that affect the effective teaching of EU Citizenship in VET settings.

The purpose of this report is to provide insights into **national practices**, highlight strengths, and identify opportunities for improvement in how EU Citizenship Education is incorporated into VET programs.

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2. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

In Spain, national policies emphasize the importance of EU Citizenship education within Vocational Education and Training (VET) settings. The Spanish education system aligns with the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), promoting active citizenship, democracy, and social inclusion. The Organic Law on Education (LOMLOE) includes civic education as a cross-curricular competence, influencing VET programs. Additionally, Spain participates in EU initiatives such as Erasmus+, which fosters mobility and the development of European identity among VET students.

Gaps and Barriers in Policies

Despite these frameworks, several challenges persist in integrating EU Citizenship topics within VET curricula. One major issue is that VET programs in Spain prioritize technical and vocational skills over civic education, leading to inconsistent implementation. Furthermore, disparities between autonomous communities result in variations in curriculum design and emphasis on EU Citizenship education. Another challenge is the limited availability of specialized teaching materials adapted for VET students, making it harder for educators to incorporate these topics effectively.

Teaching Methodologies and Resources

In Spain, EU Citizenship education is often taught through project-based learning, digital tools, and extracurricular activities. Programs like Erasmus+ and eTwinning allow VET students to engage with European peers and develop a broader understanding of EU values. However, there is a lack of standardized materials specifically designed for VET, which makes implementation inconsistent. Furthermore, dual VET programs, which emphasize work-based learning, rarely incorporate formal civic education, limiting student exposure to EU Citizenship topics.

Challenges Faced by VET Educators and Available Support Mechanisms

Spanish VET educators encounter multiple challenges in teaching EU Citizenship topics, including:

- Lack of specific training on how to integrate EU Citizenship into vocational education.
- Overloaded curricula, which leave little room for civic education topics.
- Limited engagement from industry partners, who focus primarily on technical competencies.
- Regional disparities, which create inconsistencies in educational priorities.

Support mechanisms exist but are often underutilized. The Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training provides professional development opportunities, and the Autonomous

Communities offer teacher training initiatives. However, participation remains voluntary and irregular, limiting the effectiveness of these programs.

Insights from National Studies and Reports

Research from institutions such as CEDEFOP and the Spanish National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) highlights that Spanish VET students often lack a deep understanding of EU institutions, rights, and responsibilities. Studies suggest that students show interest in mobility opportunities but have limited knowledge of European civic structures. Best practices from some Spanish regions, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, incorporate EU Citizenship themes into entrepreneurship and sustainability courses, offering a more integrated approach. Additionally, pilot projects in Andalusia and Madrid have experimented with civic education modules within VET training.

Teacher Training and Curriculum Flexibility

Initial teacher education in Spain includes some civic education components, but these are not tailored specifically for VET educators. In-service training opportunities exist through regional education departments and EU-funded initiatives, but these programs often lack VET-specific approaches. Curriculum flexibility varies, with some regions allowing more autonomy in integrating EU Citizenship topics, while others maintain a rigid structure that limits incorporation.

2.1 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is based on desk research, reviewing national policy documents, reports from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, academic studies, and relevant educational resources. The research also includes consultations with VET educators and policymakers to gather insights into practical implementation and existing challenges.

Sources consulted:

- National curricula for VET programs
- Reports on EU Citizenship Education in Spain
- Educator training programs and professional development initiatives
- Official EU and Spanish government documents

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESK RESEARCH

- **Policy Landscape:** Spain integrates EU Citizenship Education within the broader framework of civic education, primarily through subjects like "Valores Éticos" and transversal competences in VET curricula.

- **Resources and Training:** Various teaching materials are available through the Ministry of Education, European Commission initiatives, and online platforms such as INTEF.

- **Challenges and Gaps:** Limited integration into VET curricula, lack of specialized training for educators, and insufficient awareness of EU policies among students.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL EU CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN VET SETTINGS

- **Curriculum Integration:** EU Citizenship topics are included in general education subjects but are not a dedicated module within VET programs.
- **Teacher Training:** Few professional development programs focus specifically on EU Citizenship Education.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Educators report a lack of structured resources and support in delivering EU-related content effectively.
- **Programs for Educators**: Existing programs include Erasmus+ training courses and national civic education initiatives, but their reach within VET is limited.

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3. RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the national research phase in a structured format, including trends, challenges, and best practices identified. The analysis is based on desk research and five national interviews, supported by relevant examples and insights.

Trends

- Increasing recognition of EU Citizenship Education within Vocational Education and Training (VET) curricula, particularly in regions with strong ties to European initiatives.
- A shift towards interdisciplinary approaches, integrating sustainability, entrepreneurship, and civic education.
- Use of digital tools and gamification to engage students in learning about EU citizenship.

Commonalities

- Emphasis on experiential learning methods, such as project-based learning and simulations.
- Collaboration with local businesses and NGOs to reinforce civic responsibility and EU values.
- Thematic alignment with European frameworks, such as the EU Green Deal and Digital Education Action Plan.

Divergences

- Variation in curriculum implementation across regions, with some areas embedding EU Citizenship Education more comprehensively than others.
- Differences in teacher training availability, with some educators receiving specialized training while others lack adequate support and motivation.
- Uneven access to funding for integrating EU citizenship themes into VET programs.

Gaps and Challenges

- **Lack of standardized curriculum**: While some regions have well-structured approaches, others lack clear guidelines for incorporating EU citizenship education in VET.
- **Limited teacher training**: Educators often lack the necessary resources and pedagogical knowledge to effectively teach EU citizenship concepts.
- **Student engagement**: Many students perceive EU citizenship as an abstract concept, requiring innovative teaching methods to make it more relatable.
- **Policy inconsistencies**: There is no uniform approach across different regions, leading to disparities in implementation and outcomes.

3.3 Summary of National Interviews

The five interviews conducted with educators, policymakers, and VET administrators revealed the following key points:

- **Recognition of Importance**: Most respondents acknowledge the significance of EU Citizenship Education in VET but emphasize the need for clearer integration strategies.
- **Methodologies in Use**: Project-based learning, real-world case studies, and interactive workshops are commonly applied to teach EU citizenship.
- **Challenges Highlighted**: The lack of dedicated hours for EU citizenship within VET programs and insufficient professional development opportunities for teachers.
- **Potential Improvements**: Calls for increased funding, policy alignment, and the inclusion of EU citizenship as a mandatory component in VET curricula.

3.4 Best Practices Identified

Three notable best practices emerged from the national research:

- 3.4 Best Practices Identified

- 1. Europe in the Classroom (Spain)

  Implemented by Equipo Europa, this initiative offers interactive workshops for secondary and VET students (14-20 years old) using debates, storytelling, and gamification to teach EU topics. It promotes civic engagement and EU opportunities like Erasmus+, though it relies on external facilitators and lacks structured follow-up.

- 2. Olympiads on the European Union (Spain)

  Organized by Equipo Europa with institutional partners, this multi-stage competition engages students (15-17 years old) in EU-related topics, encouraging democratic participation. Winners receive incentives like trips to Brussels, but the competitive format may create pressure, and accessibility for some schools is a challenge.

- 3. European Parliament Model Simulation (Andalusia, Canary Islands, Ceuta & Melilla)

  Led by Centro Inglés (Jerez), this three-day event immerses students (16-18 years old) in a parliamentary simulation, fostering public speaking, teamwork, and EU governance understanding. While effective and low-cost, it requires strong logistical coordination and may face participation barriers for remote schools.

3.5 Subsections

Teaching Methodologies

- Active learning strategies, such as role-playing and debates on EU policies.
- Use of multimedia resources, including documentaries and podcasts on EU topics.

Curriculum Integration

- EU citizenship themes incorporated into sustainability and entrepreneurship courses.
- Modular approaches that allow for flexible implementation in different VET subjects.

Availability of Resources

- Digital toolkits and online learning platforms supporting EU citizenship education.
- Limited printed materials, requiring reliance on external resources from EU institutions.

Policy Alignment

- Strong alignment with EU education and sustainability policies in some regions.
- Need for greater national-level coordination to ensure uniform implementation.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

While Spain has policy frameworks and EU initiatives supporting EU Citizenship education in VET settings, challenges such as curriculum rigidity, lack of teacher training, and inconsistent regional implementation remain. Addressing these issues requires enhanced professional development for VET educators, the creation of tailored teaching materials, and stronger industry collaboration to ensure students acquire both professional skills and a solid understanding of EU Citizenship. Greater alignment between national and regional policies can further enhance the role of EU Citizenship education in Spain's VET system.

- **Current State:** EU Citizenship Education in Spanish VET settings exists but is not systematically integrated.

- **Areas for Improvement:** More structured curricula, expanded teacher training, and increased use of digital tools for engaging students in EU matters.

- **Recommendations:**
  o Introduce dedicated modules on EU Citizenship in VET programs.
  o Develop teacher training programs focused on EU themes.
  o Strengthen partnerships with EU institutions for educational initiatives.
  o Increase awareness of existing EU-funded resources and projects.