CALOHEE working paper for Civic, Social and Cultural Engagement

Introduction

Anno 2017, the world is in turmoil. The banking and mortgage crisis in the USA starting a decade ago and the related growing setback of globalization and neo-liberal policies has developed into a rather disturbing cocktail. Resulting high unemployment in many countries - in particular among the average and lower income groups as well as youth in general - has had a considerable negative effect on trust and confidence in the political and economic elite. In the perception of large segments of society – rightly or wrongly – the incomes gap between the very rich – lacking obvious self-constraint - and the relatively poor has widened. Health care systems – resulting the aging population – and the traditional European welfare system has come under pressure. Tenured employment contracts have partly given way to flex-contracts. The number of self-employed has grown. Hedge funds, large investment organisation and international companies seem sometimes more powerful - in the opinion of the typical citizen - than governments in making politics and steering policies. As an example: a company as Apple has at present a cash flow of 250 billion dollars. Global companies have also built a reputation in tax-avoiding. Companies have closed down and have moved to low(er) salary countries to allow for more profit to please shareholders and to stay competitive. Solidarity has been challenged as a result.

Growing unease with these developments combined with bloody conflicts in parts of North- and West-Africa, the Middle East and South-Asia has resulted in a refugee crisis which has given (further) rise to populism. At the same time, integration of earlier groups of (political and economic) migrants in Europe has only partly succeeded and for many has failed, making the multi-cultural society a highly debated issue. Resulting terrorism, inspired by developments elsewhere, has led to growing concern, even outspoken fear among large segments of society. Tolerance regarding other cultures, religions and even well-defined opinions has been put under (severe) pressure.

It can be noticed that the self-confidence of many societal groups has been gradually undermined. There is an obvious tendency to look for safety and security by retreating to the own local community by taking distance from 'the other'. This process results in voting for local political parties, and local representatives, which can be interpreted as symbolic protests again the traditional nationally organized parties. It is reflected in nationalistic rhetoric, which seems also to be embraced by the old parties. It also has resulted in the wish for closing borders to protect economic self-interest, e.g. employability and the traditional values of society. The reproach that the established political parties lack (a) understanding of the needs of society and lack (b) a well-defined and convincing political programme which allows for tackling the problems felt and (c) that their politicians seems often to be more interest in their personal welfare than that of society as a whole, has implicitly undercut the

democratic process. It has resulted in asking / opting for strong personal leadership by large groups in society. This - as a result - seems to effect freedom of speech and expression; in a number of countries journalism is under growing pressure which leads to repression and to (self-) censure-ship. The fact that autocratic leaders base some of their policies on the creation of hostile images of the other and make constructions of the past and present which fits them best, is reason for serious concern; in particular, when it involves the blackening of groups of citizens with a different cultural and/or religious background. It even leads to territorial claims, which endangers world peace.

Populist politicians play on the group of 'angry citizens' and fear by making promises which cannot been upheld in reality. They are communicating directly with their followers, through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Followers are not organised in regular political parties, but in so-called movements. In many cases social media - which make automatic selections of news according to the expectations of the users - and the yellow press are often their only source of information. Through social media so-called misinformation and fake news has been introduced and widely distributed, having also a clear commercial dimension. This type of news but also misleading information resulting from 'quoting politicians' by traditional news media has undermined the reliability of news reports. In a very short time, 'fact checking' has become a profession in itself. Part of the same discourse is the denial of the value of experts' opinion in policy making and decision making processes in general, with clear examples in the underpinning of economic policies and the dangers of climate change. The introduction in the public dialogue of so-called 'alternative facts' is symbolic in this respect. In practice it means that the significance of science for running and organizing our societies is subverted and in general its credibility is undermined. It has also implications regarding the importance of upholding ethical principles and values as well as professional standards, for keeping these societies sustainable.

Another remarkable phenomenon is the grown interest for 'the self' which finds it expression in making selfies, but also in blogs and in particular flogs. These are not only forms of self-expression which should be perceived as positive, but also as exhibitionism. In more negative terms this has been an inspiration / has culminated in 'me first' behaviour with consequences for behaviour and ethical commitment. Self-enrichment and optimising individual profit fit in this picture. For obvious reasons this is related to neo-liberalism, but also as an outcome to the widening the gap of the haves (those who manage well) and haves not (the victims of neo-liberalism and globalisation). Civic, social and cultural engagement have suffered as a consequence, which has put the welfare state and the sustainable (multi-cultural) society under severe pressure.

Should these reflections be a concern for Higher Education (HE) institutions and their degree programmes? According to the role of HE in society as it is perceived by CALOHEE it should. The traditionally empowerment to new generations of societal norms and values, and basic principles of cooperation and tolerance has for long been seen as a responsibility of both parents and primary and secondary education. Although, it has been promoted that HE has an obvious role in preparing students for active citizenship, in practice it is not part of (most) existing curricula, at least not made explicit in the outcomes of the formal learning programmes. Given the developments described above, which can and should be

understood as current and future challenges, there seems to be an obvious responsibility for HE. Because HE prepares the next generation of societal leaders, it influences – at least partly – their future behaviour and therefore society.

Existing Frameworks
The call for giving attention to active citizenship or in CALOHEE terms 'civic, social and cultural engagement' is not new. Already in 2001 it was defined as an integral part of the Tuning approach. Also the European Commission highlighted its relevance in its European Reference Framework identifying 8 key competences for Lifelong Learning.[1] One of these competences is 'social and civic competences', another one is 'cultural awareness and expression'. These were published in December 2006 as a formal EU recommendation and in particular meant for secondary education. However, they are very relevant for HE as well. Competences are defined in this framework as 'a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context'. They are those 'which all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment'. According to the framework social and civic competences 'include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation'. It is an important document in the context of CALOHEE and therefore deserves substantial coverage, in particular because it relates to many of the issues and concerns mentioned in the introduction to this paper, but also because it addresses civic, social and cultural topics explicitly.

In the EU framework social competence is linked to personal and social well-being and successful interpersonal and social participation in society making the argument that 'it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments (e.g. at work). It is equally important to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture'. It is also thought essential to understand 'the multi-cultural and socio-economic dimensions of European societies and how national cultural identity interacts with the European identity'. As the core skills of this competence 'include the ability to communicate constructively in different environments, to show tolerance, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create confidence, and to feel empathy'. It is also mentioned that 'individuals should be capable of coping with stress and frustration and expressing them in a constructive way and should also distinguish between the personal and professional spheres'. It therefore requires 'an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Individuals should have an interest in socio-economic developments and intercultural communication and should value diversity and respect others, and be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise'.

---

[1] Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)

According to the framework civic competence requires 'knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and how they are applied by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels'. It also stipulates 'knowledge of contemporary events, as well as the main events and trends in national, European and world history', as well as the development of awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements. Finally, it expects that EU citizens have 'knowledge of European integration and of the EU's structures, main objectives and values, as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe.

In the framework text it is stated that 'skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. This involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community or neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels, from local to national and European level, in particular through voting'. It asks for full respect and a positive attitude 'for human rights including equality as a basis for democracy, appreciation and understanding of differences between value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations'. This implies 'displaying both a sense of belonging to one's locality, country, the EU and Europe in general and to the world, and a willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels. It also includes demonstrating a sense of responsibility, as well as showing understanding of and respect for the shared values that are necessary to ensure community cohesion, such as respect for democratic principles. Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others'.

As part of the key competence 'Cultural awareness and expression' it is thought essential to understand the cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe and other regions of the world, the need to preserve it. This requires 'a solid understanding of one's own culture and a sense of identity' as 'the basis for an open attitude towards and respect for diversity of cultural expression'.

The Key Competences Framework celebrating its 10th birthday, motivated the European Commission to organize an extensive review of the Framework which was launched mid-2016 and reached recently the level of a public consultation implemented from February to May 2017[2]. In June 2017 a closing conference is scheduled. It should offer input for making informed changes in the present framework and the process should enhance ownership felt, offering a range of stakeholder groups. It is made explicit in the defined Consultation Strategy paper that it aims to tackle a number of issues. Besides referring to the skills mismatch, it also mentions the Paris Declaration of March 2015 and the ET Joint Report of November 2015 in which the role of education is stressed, to 'ensure that pupils acquire solid social, civic and intercultural competences by promoting democratic values and

---

[2] European Commission, DG EAC, *Review of the 2006 Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Consultation Strategy*. Brussels, 2017. See also European Commission, DG EAC, *Education and Training 2020 Work programme. Thematic Working Group "Assessment of Key Competences'. Literature review, glossary and examples*. Brussels, November 2012.

fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discriminating, as well as active citizenship'. Both documents also call 'for enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particular in the use of Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to of discrimination and indoctrination'. It is noticed that the European Key Competences Framework needs updating 'to reflect political, social, economic, ecological and technological developments since 2006, such as migration, globalisation, digital communication, the increased importance of STEM skills and social networks, and sustainable development issues'.

In terms of its topics the EU approach covers a wider set of topics than for example the Australian Civics & Citizenship Professional Learning Package[3] intended for secondary education pupils as well, making the distinction between three types 'in the class room' learning, 'beyond the class room' learning and 'participation in the community' learning for which modules have been developed. In EU terms this can be defined as formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts, being the scope of the Key Competences Framework. The Australian learning package offers three modules to foster 'civics and citizenship', respectively 'in the class room', 'beyond the class room' and 'participation in the community' and intends to 'educate' knowledge, skills and dispositions (which can be explained as an artificial habit, a preparation, a state of readiness, or a tendency to act in a specified way that may be learned). Actually the modules can be read as the EQF for LLL categories: knowledge, skills and (wider competences), the last expecting an active role. Key items digested from the learning outcomes (which have been defined for these modules) are: democracy and social cohesion, values and principles, rights and responsibilities, social and political issues, fair processes for participation and decision making, awareness of self-held beliefs and values. Interesting is also that many of the competences that have been formulated for upper secondary education can easily be applied to HE, because clear level indicators are lacking. Blooms' verbs model does not help us here. What to make of: engaging, developing, defining and exercising, recognising and understanding, identifying, applying, creating, fostering, raising, having and building?

In March 2016 the Council of Europe published, *Competences for Democratic Culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*[4], which offers a conceptual model of 20 generic competences clustered in four groups: values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding. By values is meant human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity, valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law. The label attitudes encompass openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices as well as civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy and tolerance of ambiguity. As skills have been identified autonomous learning, analytical and critical thinking, listening and observing, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, co-operation, conflict-resolution and linguistic, communicative and plurilingual abilities. The knowledge category lists knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and understanding of language and communication as well as the world, in terms of politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment and sustainability. The list of 20 generic competences chosen by the Council of Europe is based on a longer list of 55 identified in 101 competences schemes. Each of the 20 competences is

---

[3] Australian Government, Civics & Citizenship Education Professional Learning Package (2010): http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/verve/_resources/DEEWR_CCE_PLP.pdf
[4] Full report: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Source/competences/CDC_en.pdf

clarified in the document and supported by a number of pre-assumptions, ranging from 3 to 12, which can be read as learning outcomes statements. This leads to a total number of 162. In total, they offer clarity about what is expected of a citizen in a democratic culture.

Finally, an ETS research group also has studied the issue. Its report published in 2015 by Judith Torney Puta, at al., *Assessing civic competency and engagement. Research background, Frameworks, and Directions for Next-Generation Assessment. Research Report*[5] stipulates that civic learning is increasingly recognized as being important by both the Higher Education sector and workforce communities. It offers a review of the outcomes of some 30 projects covering 'existing frameworks, definitions and assessments of civic related-constructs'. Already this number shows how hot the issue is in particular the USA. The number of civic competency and engagement frameworks identified outside the USA is limited. The ETS group identifies a total of 31 competences ranging from civic literacy, civic engagement, civic identity, political knowledge, civic knowledge and skills, ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, civic-mindedness and civic responsibility to political and civic participation. It also addresses the term 'civic learning' in terms of learning outcomes in the Lumina US Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) both at associate level (level 5 of the EQF) and at bachelor level.[6] The ETS study offers a table of 'existing assessments measuring civic competency and engagement' and comes up with its own framework, distinguishing between the civic competency domain (covering civic knowledge, analytical skills, participatory and involvement skills) and the civic engagement domain (covering motivations, attitudes and efficacy, democratic norms and values and participation and activities). These competences are defined and completed with measurable topics / learning outcomes (table 3). The report concludes with examples of so-called 'test item formats' (tasks types) to assess civic competency and engagement.

CALOHEE framework
The documents mentioned above, supplemented with some other sources, offer a rich range of the items that can be covered in HE giving substance to 'civic, social and cultural engagement'. To make these items applicable in the context of CALOHEE these have to be ordered. Taking the current developments as described in the introduction as a basis, four dimensions have been identified, which together should make the CALOHEE framework of general descriptors for Civic, social and cultural engagement. These four are perceived as the minimum to be covered in all HE programmes. As in the case of the domain/ subject area frameworks each dimension includes a knowledge descriptor, a skills descriptor and a (wider) competence descriptor. The general framework should be turned into an Assessment Framework by breaking down the general descriptors into sub-descriptors. These sub-descriptors should allow for variation in the actual inclusion in a degree programme. The relevance of each sub-descriptor will differ from academic field to academic field as well as per individual degree programme. It might also be required to accommodate these per academic field to do justice to the (role of the) discipline in society.

The four dimensions that have been identified for the CALOHEE framework model that should offer input to the category/parameter civic, social and cultural engagement are:

[5] http://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/publications/report/2015/jvdz
[6] https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/dqp.pdf

1. Societies and Cultures: Interculturalism;
2. Processes of information and communication;
3. Processes of governance and decision making;
4. Ethics, norms, values and professional standards.

Together, they cover very many of the items as included the European key competences framework, the Australian learning package, the ETS framework for civic competencies and engagement as well as a number of documents related to ethics and professional standards[7] as well as the scholarly paper *A new definition and conceptualisation of ethical competence* (2013)[8] and the publication of the DARE+ project coordinated by the University of Granada[9]. Reflection on these documents has resulted in the following provisional framework, which is open for further revision:

CALOHEE framework for Civic, social and cultural engagement

	Knowledge	Skills	Wider competences
1.	Demonstrate critical understanding of **communalities and differences in and between *societies and cultures***	Identify, describe and analyse issues in and between societies and cultures	Demonstrate engagement by developing scenarios and alternatives and/or identifying best practices of interaction between societies and cultures and - if required - interventions in case of tensions and/or conflicts
2.	Demonstrate critical understanding of the **processes of *information and communication***	Review and judge (mis)use of sources, data, evidence, qualities, intentions and transparency and expert opinions	Active contribution to societal debates using reliable data and information sources and informed judgements
3.	Demonstrate critical understanding of the **processes of *governance and decision making***	Apply and support agreed governing principles, norms and values regarding fairness, transparency, accountability, democracy and relevance in policy making processes	Active contribution to and with local and (inter)national communities, community groups, (political) organisations and pressure groups respecting agreed principles, norms and values
4.	Demonstrate critical understanding of general **ethical principles, norms and values and professional standards**	Understand and apply the processes of decision making and the consequences of actions taking into account principles, norms, values and standards both from a personal and a professional standpoint.	Active contribution to upholding, promoting and defending general ethical principles, norms, values and professional standards in governance, communication and cultural interaction.

The descriptors included in this framework have not been related to a particular level yet, that is a first or second cycle (BA or MA), neither have these been broken-down to sub-descriptors and defined as measurable learning outcomes statements. Because it might be

---

[7] CFA Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct; NSPE Code of Ethics for Engineers; Code of Professional Ethics for Compliance and Ethics Professionals.

[8] Annelies De Schrijver, Jeroen Maesschalk (2013), A new definition and conceptualization of ethical competence. In Menzel,D & Cooper,T. (Eds.), Achieving ethical competence for public service leadership. Armonk (NY); M.E. Scharp, 29-51: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263424837_A_new_definition_and_conceptualization_of_ethical_competence ?enrichId=rgreq-e91c3596703196efd22e56417c65ff71-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI2MzQyNDgzNztBUzoxNTQyNjMzODA1NjYwMTdAMTQxMzc5MDY2NDA2Ng%3D%3D &el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf

[9] Maria Yarosh, Anna Serbati and Aidan Seery (eds.), Developing Generic Competences Outside the University Classroom. Granada, 2017.

expected that every first cycle graduate should be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and wider competences identified in this table, it seems obvious to link the table to level 6 of the EQF for LLL, that is the first cycle of the QF for the EHEA.

The framework is presented here as a stand-alone one and could as such be added to any subject area conceptual framework as four additional (general) dimensions. However, from the CALOHEE perspective it is highly preferable to integrate the items identified here in the subject area frameworks. This can be done by accommodating the descriptors that have been defined already and/or by inserting sub-dimensions as part of the already identified dimensions and their descriptors for knowledge, skills and wider competences.

The sub-dimensions to be defined should ideally cover many of the items highlighted in the introduction and the frameworks / learning package described above. The number should however be limited to a maximum of five per dimension to keep the framework feasible and applicable. Although, we have a large number of learning outcomes descriptors available these have not been organised according to the structure of the EQF for LLL yet. This seems to be conditional for success. Furthermore, to allow for serious reflecting the model of an Assessment Framework, it is also thought necessary to add examples of good practice to assess, learn and teach these learning outcomes statements according to the model of constructive alignment.

Both the precise definitions of the sub-dimensions formulated as measurable outcomes will be formulated after the members of the project have reached agreement about the (general) dimensions and the sets of general descriptors. When defining the sub-dimensions and the linking of the TLA approaches to these the model will be applied as outlined in the working paper on the design of Assessment Frameworks based on Sectoral and Subject Area Qualifications Frameworks. As a first step the sets of sub-dimension per (general) dimension has to be completed, followed by the identification of TLA. An example of the table to be used is offered below.

Dimension/descriptor/ sub-dimensions	Knowledge descriptor	Skills descriptor	(Wider) Competences descriptor
Dimension 1: Societies and Cultures: Interculturalism and conflict management	*Demonstrate critical understanding of differences in and between societies and cultures (frames)*	*Identify, describe and analyse issues in and between societies and cultures*	*Demonstrate engagement by developing scenarios and alternatives for identifying best practices and interventions in the case of tensions and conflicts*
Sub-dimension 1			
Sub-dimension 2			
Sub-dimension 3			
Sub-dimension 4			
Sub-dimension 5			

Next steps
All five subject area groups are asked to study the framework for Civic, Social and Cultural Engagement. They are invited to see how these general descriptors can be integrated in their own conceptual frameworks and which enhancements are thought necessary. To

obtain full commitment and ownership they are also asked to do suggestions for the definition of core sub-descriptors which do justice to their own subject area. This does not have to be a complete set. Use can be made of the documents distributed earlier as part of the previous working paper on Subject area based Assessment Frameworks also covered in this paper. On the basis of the available literature and the feedback of the groups the framework will be completed. After completion, it will be send again to the five subject area groups for consultation and reflection. This information will be used to finalise the framework before the summer which can accordingly be used as final input for the Subject Area Based Assessment Frameworks.

Groningen, 8 May 2017.