



## CHAPTER 1:

# General overview

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) investigates the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens in a range of countries. ICCS 2016, a continuation of the study initiated in 2009, served as a response to the emerging challenges of educating young people in a world where contexts of democracy and civic participation continue to change (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2016). ICCS 2016 reported on student achievement using a test of conceptual knowledge and understanding of aspects of civics and citizenship. The study accordingly collected and analyzed data on students' values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and behavioral intentions related to civics and citizenship.

The European student questionnaire aimed to assess aspects of civic and citizenship education that have relevance to the European context and to the social and political situations that countries in this region consider have region-specific importance. Various political and social events over recent years have raised concerns about the future viability of cooperation and integration across European countries. Among the most pressing issues confronting Europe in 2016/2017 were those linked to migration and refugees, the economy (unemployment, public finances, inflation), and foreign and security policy (World Economic Forum, 2016).

The European student questionnaire consequently sought to gather information that would allow exploration of students' attitudes toward these processes, and of students' sense of European identity. The questionnaire also contained questions enabling investigation of issues such as migration from outside Europe to Europe, and freedom of movement across European borders. We recommend that this report be read in conjunction with the international report on ICCS 2016 (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, Agrusti, & Friedman, 2018) and with reference to the ICCS 2016 assessment framework (Schulz et al., 2016).

Although the 2016 European student questionnaire included items pertaining to new region-specific issues of civic and citizenship education (e.g., migration within Europe, the financial crisis, European cooperation to address common issues), it also gathered data on aspects of students' attitudes that were collected during the 2009 ICCS survey. This inclusion made it possible to compare data across the two ICCS cycles.

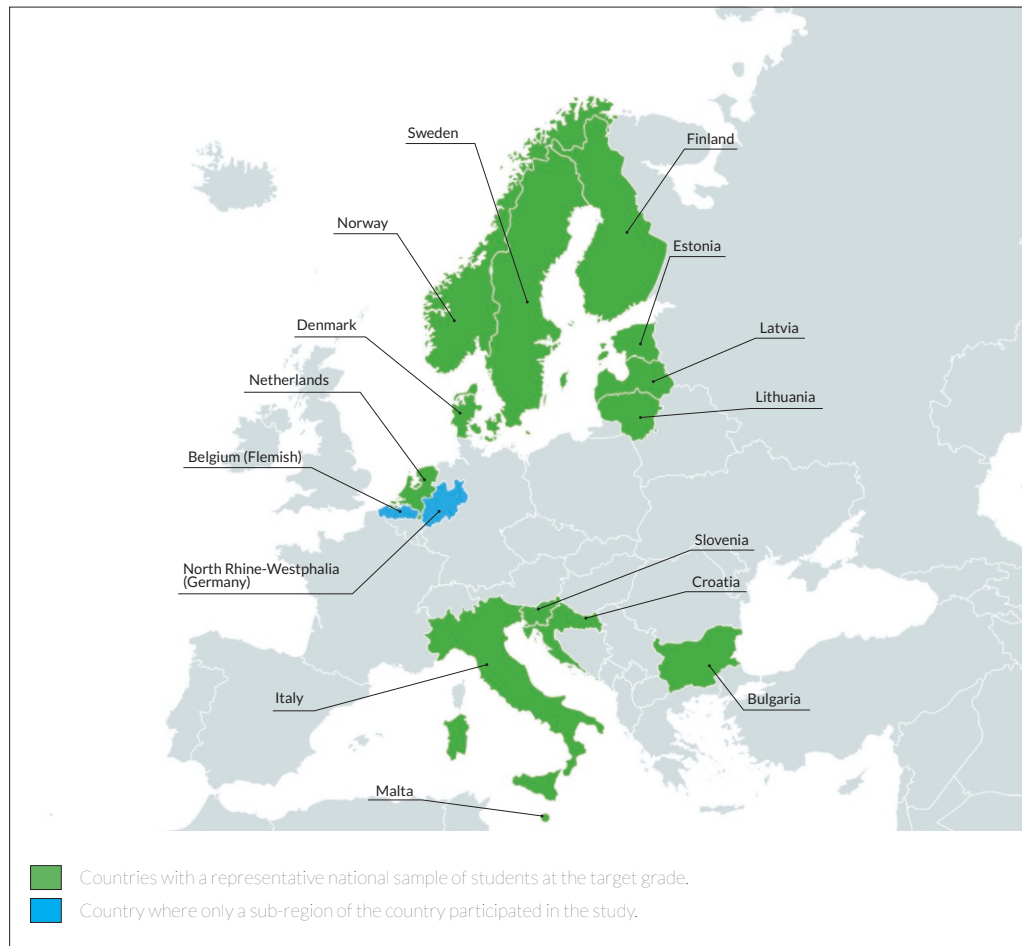
In the European region, 14 countries<sup>1</sup> and one benchmarking participant (the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia) participated in ICCS 2016 and administered the European student questionnaire (see [Figure 1.1](#)). This report focuses on the data gathered by that questionnaire from random samples of students (52,788 in total; see [Table 1.1](#)) typically in their eighth year of schooling.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For ICCS 2016, the word "countries" also refers to sub-regions or education systems that participated in the study. The Flemish part of Belgium is an example.

2 Malta assessed Grade 9 students given that the average age of Grade 8 students is below 13.5. In order to assess an age group similar to those in other Nordic countries, Norway deviated (for ICCS 2016) from the International Defined Target population and assessed Grade 9 instead of Grade 8. As a consequence, all Norwegian results are presented with an annotation. Because Norway included Grade 9 as an additional population in ICCS 2009, it is still possible to compare results for this country between 2009 and 2016 for the chosen target population.

Figure 1.1: Countries that administered the European ICCS 2016 student questionnaire

Table 1.1: Numbers of surveyed students with data from the European regional questionnaire<sup>3</sup>

Country	Number of surveyed students
Belgium (Flemish)	2931
Bulgaria	2966
Croatia	3896
Denmark	6254
Estonia	2857
Finland	3173
Italy	3450
Latvia	3224
Lithuania	3631
Malta	3764
Netherlands	2812
North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)	1451
Norway	6271
Slovenia	2844
Sweden	3264
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,788</b>

<sup>3</sup> The sampling design is described in the ICCS 2016 technical report (Schulz, Carstens, Losito, & Fraillon, forthcoming).

As stated above, the general purpose of the European student questionnaire was to investigate Europe-specific civic and citizenship issues. However, all measured constructs can be mapped to the overarching ICCS 2016 assessment framework (Schulz et al., 2016), and the data collected should be regarded as supplementing the international survey results in terms of providing further information specific to the region. Please note also that aspects measured in relation to the European regional context in general include questions more specifically related to European integration and to policies and practices particular to the European Union (EU).

Development of the European regional student questionnaire was undertaken alongside and with reference to the development of other ICCS 2016 instruments. The process commenced with a revision of the previous ICCS 2009 European instrument. This work was carried out in close cooperation with the participating countries, and it led to the identification of new issues of interest that could be mapped to the ICCS 2016 assessment framework. Throughout the different development stages, European national research coordinators (NRCs) reviewed draft questionnaire items. Their suggestions and proposals were discussed during NRC meetings and during a dedicated meeting of the European NRCs. Input and feedback from countries were integral to the successful development of the European student questionnaire.

### **Previous findings from the ICCS 2009 European regional survey**

ICCS 2009 developed three regional instruments—for Asia, Europe, and Latin America (Fraillon, Schulz, & Ainley, 2012; Kerr, Schulz, & Fraillon, 2011; Kerr, Sturman, Schulz, & Burge, 2010; Schulz, Ainley, Friedman, & Lietz, 2011). Twenty-four of the 26 European countries that participated in ICCS 2009 administered the European regional instrument, which consisted of two parts. The first part was a test designed to measure students' knowledge about the EU and its policies and institutions, as well as of basic facts about the EU, its laws, and the euro currency. The second part was a questionnaire designed to gather data on the following: students' perceptions of European identity; students' engagement in activities related to Europe; students' attitudes toward learning European languages, migration within Europe, and European integration; and students' self-reported knowledge about the EU.

Although a majority of European students surveyed in ICCS 2009 demonstrated knowledge of main civic and citizenship institutions and understanding of the interconnectedness of institutions and processes, substantial minorities of students had relatively low levels of civic knowledge. Considerable variation in students' knowledge about the EU and its laws and policies was also evident.

The results furthermore showed marked variation in students' attitudes toward European civic issues. A majority of students indicated positive attitudes toward intercultural relations and European language learning. They also stated strong support for equal rights for minority groups, for immigrants, and for freedom of movement of citizens within Europe. However, large minorities of students expressed rather negative attitudes toward the above-mentioned areas (Kerr, Sturman, Schulz, & Burge, 2010).

## Content and structure of the ICCS 2016 European regional questionnaire and report

The ICCS 2016 European regional instrument consisted of a questionnaire primarily focused on affective and behavioral domains. It included 11 questions (with Likert-type response categories) aimed at investigating students' interest in and opinions regarding the following Europe-specific civics and citizenship issues:<sup>4</sup>

- Students' perceptions of their European identity. This question was included in ICCS 2009, and the items relating to it were not modified for ICCS 2016.
- Students' reports on opportunities to learn about Europe at school. A similar question was included in ICCS 2009 but was modified for ICCS 2016.
- Students' views on European citizens' freedom to reside and work within Europe. This question was included in ICCS 2009 but was modified for inclusion in ICCS 2016.
- Students' attitudes toward immigration. This question was included in the ICCS 2009 (international) student questionnaire, and the same items were used for the 2016 European questionnaire.
- Students' views on cooperation among European countries. This question was a new one for ICCS 2016.
- Students' perceptions of discrimination in Europe (a new question for ICCS 2016).
- Students' perceptions of the future of Europe (new question for ICCS 2016).
- Students' perceptions of their life in the future (new question for ICCS 2016).
- Students' attitudes toward political and ethical consumerism (new question for ICCS 2016).
- Students' views on the age at which young people should acquire different rights and obligations (a new question for ICCS 2016).
- Students' perceptions of the European Union (a new question for ICCS 2016).

This report does not present findings from all questions in the European student questionnaire. Rather, it focuses on students' attitudes and perceptions toward three civic and citizenship content areas related to the European context:

- Students' perceptions of their being European and students' opportunities to learn about Europe at school;
- Students' attitudes toward freedom and restriction of movement and immigration in Europe; and
- Students' perceptions of Europe and the future of Europe.

The results presented in this report also do not include findings based on the international instruments. However, some data regarding topics that are relevant to the European regional context are included (specifically, data related to European options forming part of the student questionnaire).

This report has five chapters. Chapter 2 examines students' sense of European identity and the opportunities students have to learn about Europe at school. Chapter 3 focuses on students' attitudes toward freedom and restriction of movement for European citizens within Europe and

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<sup>4</sup> The metric of the European regional questionnaire, as in all ICCS 2016 questionnaire scales, was set to a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for equally weighted national samples that had met sample participation requirements. For two scales (measuring students' sense of European identity and endorsement of equal rights and opportunities for immigrants), the scores were set to the same metric as in ICCS 2009, so that in these cases 50 reflects the ICCS 2009 average (with equally weighted national samples) and 10 the corresponding standard deviation.

toward the principle of providing equal rights and opportunities to immigrants. Chapter 4 reports on students' perceptions of the future of Europe and of their individual futures. It also covers students' perceptions of the EU. In the final chapter, Chapter 5, we discuss possible implications of the main findings for policy and practice.

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