# DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

## YOUTH EXCHANGE
## KAUNAS, LITHUANIA, 2022

# WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

DEMOCRACY, LITERALLY, RULE BY THE PEOPLE. THE TERM IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK DĒMOKRATIA, WHICH WAS COINED FROM DĒMOS ("PEOPLE") AND KRATOS ("RULE") IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 5TH CENTURY BCE TO DENOTE THE POLITICAL SYSTEMS THEN EXISTING IN SOME GREEK CITY-STATES, NOTABLY ATHENS.

## CORE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

### 1. THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED

- A requirement for legitimate government usually expressed by votes in elections.

### 2. REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

- A type of government comprised of politicians who represent certain individuals or groups.
- In most cases, these representatives are voted for by citizens through a democratic process.
- Examples: The US Congress and British Parliament.

### 3. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

- The rights needed by each individual to pursue their lives and goals without interference from other individuals or the government.
- Typical examples of individual rights: The rights to life, liberty, and voting.

### 4. THE RULE OF LAW

- The rule of law implies that every person is subject to the law, including persons who are lawmakers, law enforcement officials and judges.

### 5. SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

- Principle of government under which separate branches are empowered to prevent actions by other branches and are induced to share power.
- Usually powers are separated among legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
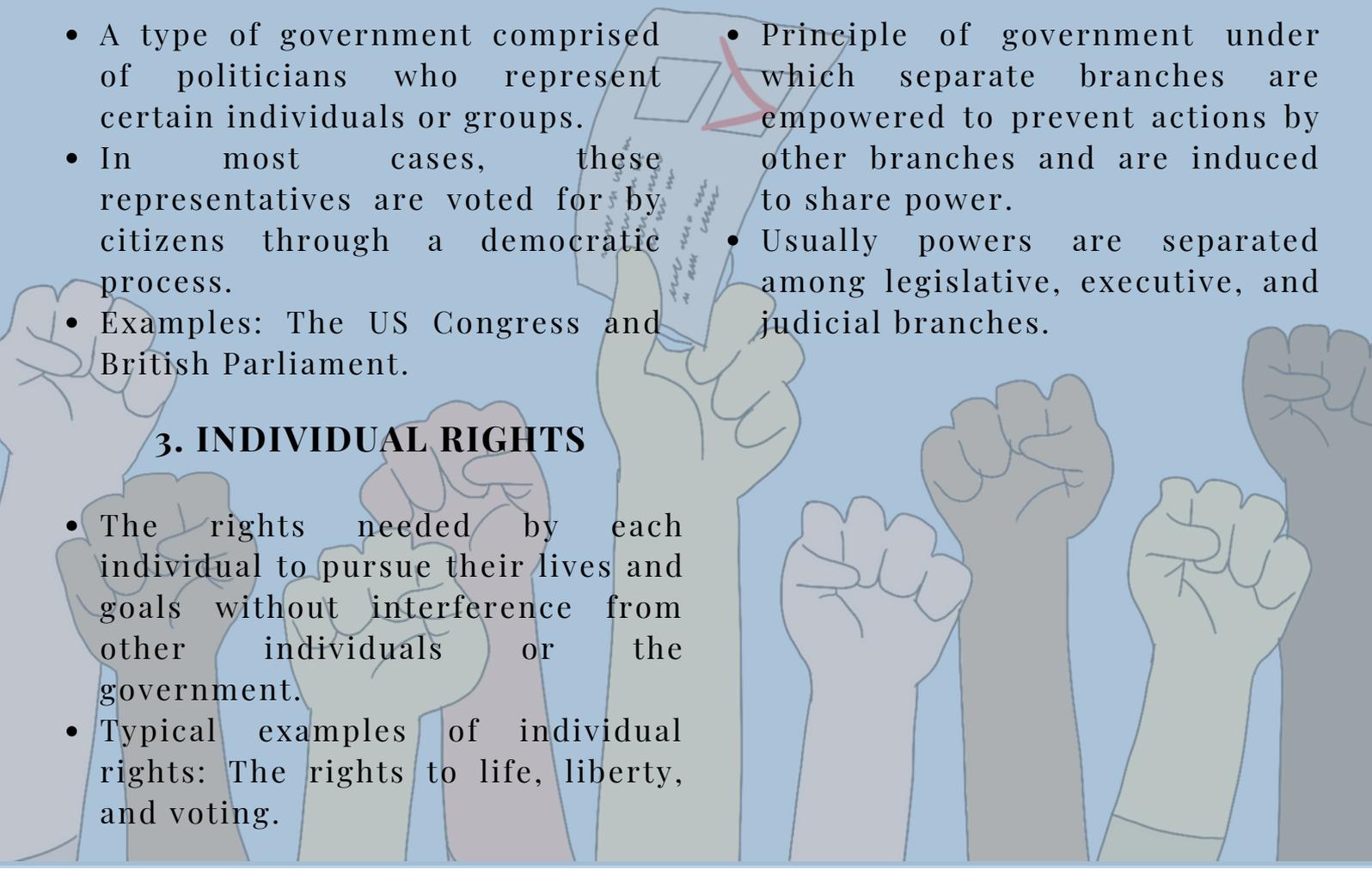
# ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

**ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION** PRESENTS EIGHT LEVELS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION THAT START FROM MANIPULATION AND TOKENISM AT THE LOWER RUNGS, TO FULL PARTICIPATION AT THE TOP.

## ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

**RUNG 8 - Youth initiated shared decisions with adults**: Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

**RUNG 7 - Youth initiated and directed**: Youth-led activities with little input from adults.

**RUNG 6 - Adult initiated shared decisions with youth**: Adult-led activities, in which **decision** making is shared with youth.

**RUNG 5 - Consulted and informed**: Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions.

**RUNG 4 - Assigned, but informed**: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role.

**RUNG 3 - Tokenism**: Adult-led activities, in which youth may be consulted with minimal opportunities for feedback.

**RUNG 2 - Decoration**: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.

**RUNG 1 - Manipulation**: Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, as cited in www.freechild.org/ladder.htm

# WHAT IS EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP?

ANY PERSON WHO HOLDS THE NATIONALITY OF AN EU COUNTRY IS AUTOMATICALLY ALSO AN EU CITIZEN.

The Four Dimensions: a social approach to citizenship.*

In the relationship between individual and society we can distinguish four dimensions, which correlate with the four subsystems which one may recognise in a society, and which are essential for its existence: in political/legal dimension, the social dimension, the cultural dimension and the economic dimension.

As you read the descriptions of the Four Dimensions, ask yourself how developed you think each of the dimensions is in you. How developed is your citizenship in each of the dimensions?

**FOUR DIMENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP**
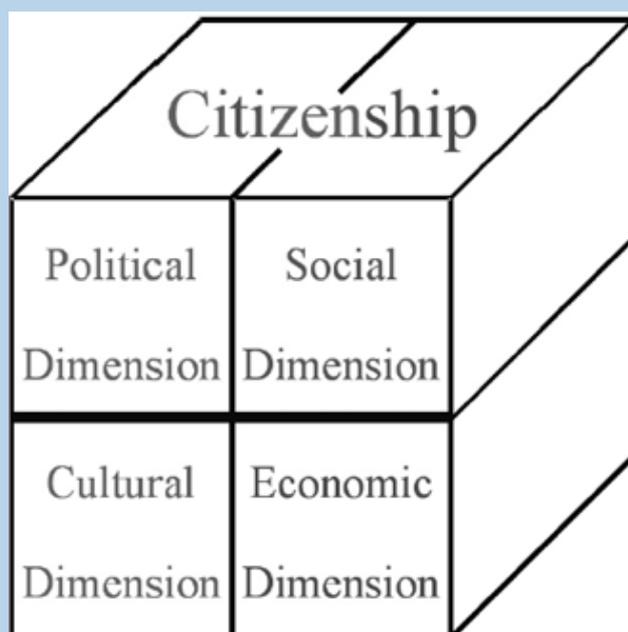
# 4 DIMENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

## POLITICAL DIMENSION

This dimension implies that education should address the knowledge, attitudes and competencies needed for individuals to exercise their rights, and carry out their duties in the context of the political and legal systems governing citizenship, whether national, international (i.e. Council of Europe) or supra-national (i.e. European Union). This implies that education for European Citizenship should be concerned with developing knowledge concerning political and legal systems (for example, civil and political rights, other human rights, civic obligations), skills for participation in those systems and constructively critical attitudes towards them.

## SOCIAL DIMENSION

This dimension implies that education for European Citizenship should address the ways in which social relations develop and are carried out between individuals and groups. Covered by this dimension are issues and values such as solidarity and mutual respect, valuing the contribution of all individuals to society, and having equal opportunity to contribute to the development of society. Social competencies such as negotiation skills, empathy, active tolerance and mutual support should be educated for.

# 4 DIMENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

## ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Although often little acknowledged, economics plays a determining role in the extent to which people can act as citizens. The "have-nots" of society are often the target of specialised programmes to develop their capacity to participate as active citizens. However, under this dimension, all citizens would be socialised to the development of the economic competence necessary to actively participate, including knowledge of how economics function, in particular knowledge of the growing global dimension of economic life, the role of consumption in the production of sites of citizenship and knowledge of the world of production and employment.

## CULTURAL DIMENSION

Under the cultural dimension would be placed all skills pertaining to the development and practice of the common values espoused under European Citizenship. It refers to high cultural aspects such as knowledge of European and world history, different cultures and peoples and languages. However, more importantly, it also refers to the interior side of European Citizenship, to varied but complementary senses of belonging within a common heritage and to values such as the universality of human rights, environmental protection, non-discrimination and respect for others.
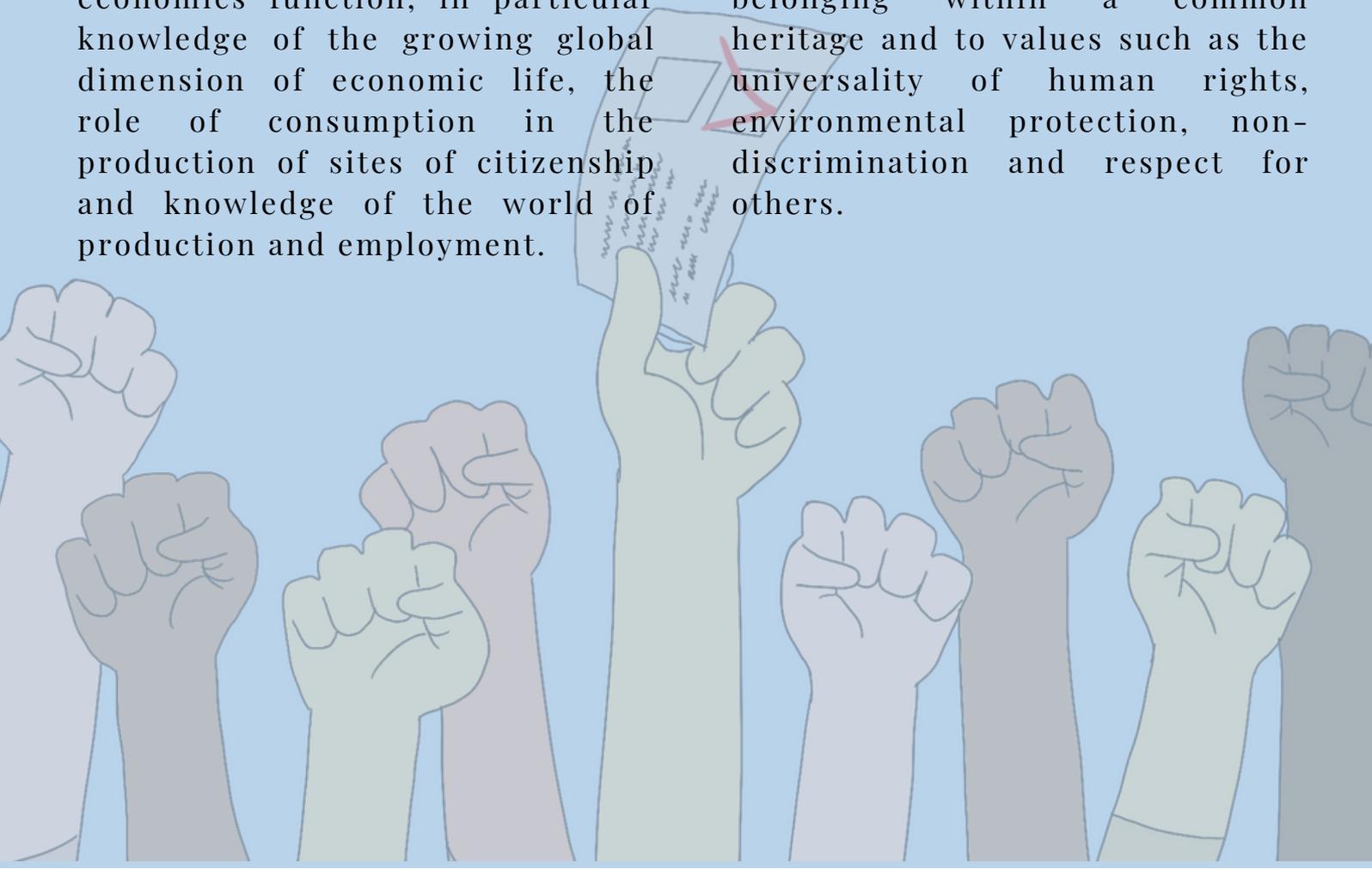
# HOW TO FOSTER ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP?

## PRACTICE ACTING WITH KNOWLEDGE

Citizenship needs involvement. Engaging in community service within and outside of the school is a great opportunity to practice becoming an engaged citizen. Actually, students may interact with governing institutions, voice their opinions, gather and evaluate information, and affect change.

## TAKE PART IN SERIOUS CONVERSATIONS

Democracy necessitates debate. To find answers, it urges on us to politely engage in discussion while listening to opposing points of view and taking into account other viewpoints. Today's students may find it challenging to locate positive examples of democracy in action in a nation where people are mostly split along ideological lines.

## BOOST DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY CAPABILITIES

To form opinions and cast votes, informed citizens get information from a variety of media sources. However, compared to the digital media environment that their teachers and families grew up in, today's children live in, it is far more complex. Beyond knowing the differences between a news article and an opinion one, today's students must handle a large web of false information. In today's media world, separating reality from fiction has never been more difficult.

## BUILD YOUR GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Students must comprehend how interrelated the world is and has always been in order to become fully educated and responsible citizens.