

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Conference

Warsaw, 26 September- 7 October 2011

Working Session 3: Fundamental Freedoms

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Democratic citizenship and human rights education

Citizenship and human rights education play a crucial role in the promotion of mutual respect and understanding. Since 1997, the Council of Europe has been supporting a programme of activities on this topic, in the framework of which reference texts were developed, exchange and co-operation were facilitated, and high quality materials were produced.

A. Reference texts

The most recent and the most comprehensive text developed on this topic in the Council of Europe framework is Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the **Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**. It was adopted on 11 May 2010 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and representatives of the 47 Council of Europe member states at the 120th Session of the Committee of Ministers. The Charter – which was developed over a period of several years with wide consultations - is an important reference point for all of Europe and is being used as a basis for the Council of Europe's work in this field.

In 2012, it is foreseen to prepare a report on the implementation of the Charter in the member states, based on governments' replies to a questionnaire. The conclusions of the report and future co-operation activities will be discussed at a Council of Europe conference to be held in November 2012.

B. Networking

The CoE supports a **network of EDC/HRE co-ordinators** appointed by the Ministries of Education. These co-ordinators meet at least once a year and are a major contributor to both the CoE's work, on the one hand, and implementation within member states on the other. Many of the coordinators are currently working on reforms in their countries regarding EDC/HRE, or have recently been involved in preparing and implementing such reforms. Through the network of the coordinators, support on specific questions (curricula, teacher education) related to EDC/HRE is provided by the Council of Europe to its member states on a regular basis.

In addition, the CoE supports **regional networks** on EDC/HRE, including a South East Europe EDC/HRE Network, a Baltic/Black Sea Network and a Nordic Network.

C. Materials

The CoE has produced a wealth of materials. The major ones, called the '**EDC/HRE Pack**' are the following:

- Tool 1: Policy Tool for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE) : Strategic Support for Decision Makers
- Tool 2: Democratic Governance of Schools
- Tool 3: How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for the development of competences
- Tool 4: Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Schools
- Tool 5: School-Community-University Partnerships for a Sustainable Democracy: Education for Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the United States of America

These instruments have been developed in consultation with a large number of experts from all member states, including the EDC/HRE coordinators.

A series of high quality **materials for teachers** for use in the classroom in the field of EDC/HRE were recently produced, including

- *Teaching democracy* (collection of models for democratic citizenship and human rights education)
- *Living in democracy* (lesson plans for lower secondary education)
- *Exploring Children's Rights* (projects for primary schools)

D. Bilateral support

While most of the CoE's work is inter-governmental, some bilateral assistance has been provided in this field through joint programmes with the European Commission, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina and more recently in Turkey and Kosovo.¹

E. Inter-institutional Co-operation

The Council of Europe works closely with other major organisations working in the field of citizenship and human rights education in order to avoid overlap and create synergies. For instance, it was agreed with the United Nations that the CoE would support the European region in the implementation of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005. The European Commission has asked for CoE assistance in this field, including when developing indicators for active citizenship.

At the initiative of ODIHR, the Council of Europe, OHCHR, UNESCO and OSCE/ODIHR have developed jointly a "Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: a **Compendium of Good Practice**" (published in

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

2009). Following another initiative from ODIHR in 2010, the Council of Europe and UNESCO joined forces in a project to develop “**Guidelines for Educators to counter intolerance and discrimination against Muslims**” (to be finalised in 2011).

The Council of Europe regularly hosts and organises inter-institutional meetings on EDC/HRE whereby 20 major international organisations, NGOs and foundations meet. The last meeting was organised in March 2011. As a follow up to this meeting, and **International contact group on citizenship and human rights education** was set up, and a letter of cooperation was signed by the OHCHR, UNESCO, European Commission, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OSCE/ODIHR, ALECSO [signature is pending] and the Council of Europe.

In May 2009, the Norwegian government inaugurated the [European Wergeland Centre](#), a European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. This Centre (located in Oslo) has been set up in close co-operation with the Council of Europe and is being governed in co-operation by the CoE and the Norwegian government.

Further information is available at the following address: www.coe.int/edc .

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Human Rights Education in Youth

Human rights education with non-governmental youth organisations has been a strong element of the Council of Europe youth policy for many years. It was underlined as one of the priorities set down by the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for youth affairs (Kyiv, October 2008) and the subsequent Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Supporting youth organisations in their educational activities through training courses, seminars and the development of educational material is the overall objective. The aim is to improve the capacity of youth organisations and multipliers, involved in human rights education and democratic participation and citizenship, to develop standards and tools in this regard for youth policy and youth work actors.

Every year, more than 700 youth leaders and multipliers participate at international and national level in activities promoting human rights education (including gender equality and sustainable development) and youth participation. Educational resources, particularly the "Compass" and "Compasito" manuals (human rights education manuals for young people and children) are distributed in member states and in regions outside Europe.

A European training course for trainers on human rights education with young people is held every year. The 2011-2012 course started in September and will run until 1 May 2011; 45 trainers and multipliers from across Europe who in turn develop human rights education activities with young people are involved. The course makes use of the educational facilities of the European Youth Centres and is partly based on blended-

learning, combining intercultural training seminar methods with e-learning approaches and technology.

Four national training courses on human rights education based on “Compass” are being implemented or planned in co-operation with national partners in Kosovo, Ukraine, Cyprus and Turkey.

“Compass”, the manual on human rights education with young people is now available in 30 languages, the latest editions being Basque and Latvian. The process of revising and updating Compass has been initiated. The new version, covering a wider variety of human rights issues and proposing more methodological approaches, is expected to be published in early 2012.

In all these activities, the Council of Europe co-operates closely with national authorities in member states and with youth organisations.

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