

PC.DEL/394/13
24 May 2013

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

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OF UKRAINE, AT THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION (INCLUDING HUMAN
RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE AND
NON-DISCRIMINATION)**

Tirana, 21 and 22 May 2013

**Plenary session 5: The role of human rights youth education in promoting
mutual understanding and respect for diversity in accordance with the
existing OSCE commitments**

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you are aware, enabling tolerance and non-discrimination through human rights youth education is a priority of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship in 2013.

In their commitments under the auspices of the Organization, participating States have recognized that education, good governance, civil society and strategies to prevent hate crime play a decisive role in reinforcing a culture of peace and mutual understanding. In the 1990 Copenhagen Document in particular, the States noted the important role of education in building tolerance. In the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting, the States underscored the role of human rights youth education in human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As has previously been stated, in a decision of the 2005 OSCE Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, the participating States committed themselves to the promotion of State and private educational programmes aimed at raising public awareness of the inadmissibility of intolerance and discrimination.

We are convinced that education, including that of young people, is of the utmost importance when tackling manifestations of anti-Semitism, intolerance towards Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions, as well as racism, xenophobia and discrimination against other groups. This has also been confirmed by our discussions at the previous sessions of this Conference.

This Session will allow us to assess participating States' implementation of their commitments in this area and to share best practices in education aimed at promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

In this regard, allow me to share practices in Ukraine regarding human rights youth education with an emphasis on tolerance and non-discrimination.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine attaches great significance to human rights education and fostering in young people a tolerant attitude towards people of the different nationalities and religions who live in Ukraine.

In comprehensive educational institutions in Ukraine, teaching takes place both in the State language and in the students' mother tongue; namely, in eight ethnic minority languages. A total of 31 languages are taught, including 19 minority languages.

Issues regarding human rights and intercultural and religious education in Ukraine are regulated by law and enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, as well as in acts regarding education, national minorities, languages in the Ukraine, and freedom of conscience and religious organizations, among other things.

The process of reviving an independent democratic Ukraine and its integration into the international community requires the comprehensive introduction into citizens' public and personal lives of the civilizing foundations upon which society rests, based on universal human values.

Psychological research has shown that the most effective way to bring about democratic reforms in society is to create the conditions necessary to form a political culture among the general public and, first and foremost, among young people.

Pupils and students should have a high academic level of knowledge about Humanity and the World as a specific topic. These issues are therefore covered in State standards for primary schools, comprehensive secondary education and the curricula of vocational and tertiary educational establishments.

In accordance with State standards, conditions are created in primary school for the all-round development of the youngest pupils, as well as for their acquisition of basic knowledge about the State, about laws, and about the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the individual and the citizen. These topics are most thoroughly addressed in subjects like Humanity and the World and Languages and Literature.

State standards for comprehensive secondary education and the curricula for middle and secondary schools provide the opportunity to ensure the full development of the individual, based on universal and national values, allowing pupils to form an active position as members of society and as citizens, and facilitating their social inclusion.

The goal of the Human Rights course is to educate pupils in the spirit of human rights and respect for human dignity and equality, as well as to provide them with an understanding of the link between the rights and obligations of the individual and the citizen. This is done by educating pupils in the foundations of human rights and freedoms, and by developing their competence regarding rights, citizenship, related values, knowledge and skills, as well as their experience of defending their own position. Since the academic year 2011–2012, the compulsory Humanity and the World course has been introduced.

Teaching about human rights and citizenship education in a multicultural society underlies Ukraine's co-operation with the international organizations. Between 2007 and 2009, a joint programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe, Ukraine and South Caucasus – Fostering a culture of Human Rights, was implemented. This programme primarily focused on multicultural and multifaith education.

Several seminars for teachers and trainee teachers were held under this programme. Ukrainian teachers were involved in the operation and presentation of materials on international Internet-based programmes on multiculturalism (through the Council of Europe's Moodle learning platform). A textbook, *Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools*, by John Keast, was published.

In 1998 Ukraine began to introduce courses on sociology within the system of comprehensive secondary education. Our teaching specialists played an active part in the project Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights: Learning and Living Democracy for All, which was implemented by the Council of Europe from 2006 to 2009.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the Council of Europe's education programme, organized a series of seminars on the system of democratic values taught during school history classes.

The seminar participants noted that instilling a sense of a shared European home in pupils through the teaching of history in a multicultural environment was an achievable goal. Reaching this goal and creating a common European consensus is a requirement of our time. At the same time, history provides a good platform for pupils to develop a democratic world view and an understanding of human rights values, as well as for them to become prepared to insist upon them. An analysis was performed on precisely how information technologies can help in developing pupils' intercultural communication skills during school history lessons.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has positive experience of co-operating with the OSCE. The Ministry has been actively involved in OSCE projects to foster tolerance and prevent anti-Semitism in Ukraine. In particular, this was done through the Teacher Training on Anti-Semitism Education in Ukraine project, as part of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme.

On 22 and 23 September 2011, the School of the Twenty-First Century: Kyiv Initiatives forum, involving the Ministers for Education of European countries, was held in Kyiv. The participants in the forum adopted as its final document the Kyiv Communiqué, whose main focus was the secondary education system. In accordance with the Communiqué, Ukraine submitted an initiative on holding the first ever international history olympiad for schools and the first ever international schools competition on human rights and the rights of the child.

The first international history olympiad took place from 17 to 21 September 2012 at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine plans to hold the first international schools competition on human rights and the rights of the child this year at the Odessa Law Academy.

The first international school competition on human rights and the rights of the child aims to popularize knowledge about rights among school pupils, providing a platform for

international co-operation in the study of human rights by pupils. It is a competition between teams of secondary school pupils who are capable of presenting and justifying their positions on rights issues regarding human rights and the rights of the child at a high academic level. They are also able to substantiate their position in academic discussions on rights.

Due attention is devoted to educating young people in human rights to support mutual understanding and tolerance in a multicultural society. Thus, under the Citizenship Education Ukraine project, programmes have been developed for higher educational institutions and postgraduate teacher training institutes. For students and tutors of social disciplines, a 72-hour citizenship education course has been designed. A similar programme, lasting eight hours, has been developed for students and tutors in other fields. These programmes have been approved and are being introduced into higher educational establishments.

I should like to emphasize that the principles underpinning education in Ukraine are aimed at educating and training citizens who recognize that progress can only be achieved where manifestations of radicalism are not permitted on international, inter-ethnic and political levels. Education is a source of dialogue and mutual understanding which should solve conflict situations rather than creating them, and which should help us to reach humanity's broad objectives.

Conference participants,

As part of the implementation of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship's priority regarding youth education in the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination, the OSCE Youth Summit will be held at the Artek International Children's Centre in Ukraine from 20 July to 1 August 2013.

The event will take place under the auspices of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship. The goal of this event is for young people to gain an understanding of the Organization's activities and create platforms for inter-ethnic communication with the aim of educating the younger generation in the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination. Youth delegations (12 to 16 years old) from the 57 OSCE participating States and the Partners for Co-operation have been invited to participate. We hope for broad participation by young people from different countries in this event.

Colleagues,

It is my hope that today's discussion will not only reaffirm our shared determination to strengthen the commitments in this area, but will also facilitate the development of recommendations and strategies to build the role of education in the principles of tolerance and mutual respect among young people.

Thank you for your attention.