

Honorable Chair,

Distinguished Participants,

It is my privilege to participate in this Conference and address you all as a key speaker. I am also pleased that I have had the opportunity to discuss with you the latest developments and key issues on Learning Democracy and Human Rights during the conference.

We cannot ignore the contributions that Council of Europe has made for incorporating at minimum commons in a democratic and multicultural Europe. Europe has gained stronger values by the work of CoE, which aim to bring up peaceful individuals as well as respectful to individual rights and freedoms and open to intercultural dialogue at the same time.

I believe that CoE's "Democratic Citizenship Education" Project is a very successful one, which aims to strengthen the main missions of the Council of Europe: pluralistic democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In the 22nd Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in İstanbul in 2007, the theme was about the role of education for "Building a more humane and inclusive Europe". Ministers of Education decided to promote intercultural learning, education for democratic citizenship and human rights in a lifelong learning perspective.

Under this perception, from 2006 through 2009, many actions were performed for social cohesion and social inclusion from the perspective of life-long learning. Democratic citizenship concept was reinforced and education policies were developed, new roles and competencies of teachers' and trainers' were determined and democratic management of the educational institutions was strengthened. Within this framework; teachers and trainers have been trained, necessary documents and materials have been developed, and a network have been established.

Apart from these, curricula of the primary and lower secondary education have been redesigned according to these values, by adding new classes on Democracy and Human Rights or by integrating these acquisitions into other disciplines.

However, awareness raising and dissemination of these values to a wider public will only be possible by Media. In the 2010-2014 programs, the role and the efficiency of the media should be stressed.

On the other hand, teacher-training activities should focus on democracy and human rights issues. It is commonly noticed that teachers in many schools do not comply with what they teach. They teach democracy and human rights education but the way they treat their students might not necessarily be consistent with what they teach. For this reason, both pre-service and in-service training of the teachers are of great importance.

Dear colleagues,

As a member of the Council of Europe, related institutions of the Republic of Turkey take operative roles in the works of the Council. As we are also a candidate state for European Union, our government implements the necessary acquire within the context of adaptation process. As you may know, Accession Partnership Document (2008) includes many highlights on human rights, democracy and tolerance issues as Short-Term Priorities for my country.

Actually, "Education for democracy is one of the principles of the Turkish national education system, and aims to get the youth acquainted with the subjects on democratic citizenship and human rights, and provide guidance for them.

Since education is the main driving force behind societies, Ministry of National Education closely follows the activities in education for democratic citizenship and human rights. Documents prepared in this sense by the Council have been examined by our experts and reflected into the curriculum.

In that context, democracy and civic education has been included in the school programs of the young Turkish Republic since late 1920s, either as multidisciplinary or independent courses aimed at ensuring that students adapt and acquire a democratic thinking system.

In order to raise awareness and teach democratic behavior to students and ensure that they are aware of their own and others' rights and freedom, 7th and 8th grade classes of primary schools include one hour of "Civil and Human Rights Education". 11th grade timetable includes a selective "Democracy and Human Rights" course.

During these courses, students are meant to:

- learn to respect human rights,
- adopt, apply, and protect human rights and democracy in their daily lives,
- learn about their own rights and liberties and protect them as well as others' in the society,
- be responsible and respectful to human beings and human honor,
- be individuals and active citizens who are at peace with the community and the world.

As for activities focused on teachers, I can say that 726 teachers have received in-service training courses on democratic citizenship and human rights. 251 of these teachers have become teacher trainers on Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

These teacher trainers organized approximately 1400 Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Seminars with the attendance of 26.000 primary and secondary school teachers. Teachers have learned the efficient teaching techniques and methods of the concepts and the acquisitions of human rights and democracy and have had the opportunity to apply them in their classrooms.

For the next couple of years, a new project will be implemented in Turkey with the collaboration of the Council of Europe and European Union in 2010.

The purpose of the project is to:

- increase the institutional capacity of MoNE on EDC/HRE through developing and revising regulations and curricula;
- producing educational materials and increasing the capacity and awareness on EDC/HRE of teachers, pupils, students, non-teaching staff, parents and community leaders, and
- foster a democratic school culture from pre-school to the end of the secondary education.

Since education is the main driving force behind societies, the current project aims to complement the missing or inadequate points relating human rights, democracy, and tolerance in Turkey by increasing the capacity of Ministry of National Education about EDC/HRE. The project will provide a fresh impetus for the further introduction of EDC/HRE in Turkey to meet European core values.

Sustainability will be attained through:

- Preparation and adoption of new regulations and curricula,
- Improved capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff,
- Preparation of good quality educational material for effective implementation of human rights principles in their daily work.

Sustainability will also be ensured through the active involvement of all stakeholders, school principals, teachers, NGOs and all other stakeholders and by giving them a strong ownership of the program. Six groups will be set up:

- 1) Regulation review group;
- 2) Program developing group;
- 3) Group to analyze and develop curricula;
- 4) Group to develop teaching material;
- 5) Group to set up programs for training of teacher trainers;
- 6) Group to promote democratic school governance.

All the groups will be trained so as to pass their knowledge on to their colleagues, thus creating a cascading effect. The project will take a holistic approach to EDC/HRE, encompassing programming, training, teaching manuals and democratic school culture.

Dear Friends,

Once this 36-month project is finalized, the dissemination of Human Rights and democratic values in pre-school, primary school and secondary school will be sustainable through the training of 440 teacher trainers who will be ready to go back to Turkey's 81 provinces as multipliers. This means that through the multiplier effect a large number of pre-school, primary school and secondary school teachers from all

over the country will have been trained and will share their experiences with their colleagues in their schools. Furthermore, the curricula and the materials will have been tested in 21 pilot schools, thus establishing a network, which can easily be extended to other schools.

In addition, the project will comprise a grant scheme for awareness-raising and training activities, the beneficiaries of which will be parents associations, local decision makers, universities, human rights and education NGOs.

This project could be an example of good practice for other countries in the region and thus have a cross border effect.

Ministry of the Education of the Republic of Turkey considers the “Learning democracy and human rights in school and out of school throughout life” Project, which is one of the programs of the Council of Europe set for 2010-2014, as essential and worthwhile.

Lastly I would like to finish my speech by emphasizing that these kind of values could not only be gained at schools; acquisitions from the family and the moral environment are also very important in people’s daily lives and therefore precautions that reach all layers of the society should be taken.

I give you all my regards with the wish of creating a future that is more democratic and more respectful to human rights.