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# **Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education**

The 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council of Europe Network of  
Coordinators for Education for Democratic Citizenship  
and Human Rights Education

Baku, Azerbaijan

20-21 May 2014

## **Provisional Conclusions**



## **Draft Conclusions**

The present document provides a provisional overview of the main conclusions of the 21st meeting of the Council of Europe Network of Coordinators for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE), which was held in Baku on 20-21 May 2014. The complete meeting report will be available by 30 June 2014.

### **Theme 1: Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education**

1. The participants discussed the current challenges in the States Party to the European Cultural Convention in respect of children in vulnerable situations. There is a broad range of different groups of children, with some that are common in many countries, and some others being specific for a particular country or region. While it is necessary to identify such groups, it is also important to remember that, on one hand, any child can be vulnerable and in need of protection, and, on the other hand, it is important to avoid stigmatisation of specific groups. The participants concluded that vulnerability is often linked to poverty and to denial of human rights protection. The principle of universality of human rights needs to be applied as a foundation for the action in this area.
2. The participants suggested that possible areas for the Council of Europe Programme on Citizenship and Human Rights Education could be the following: integrate themes related to children in vulnerable situations in the curriculum and promote educational activities which raise awareness of children in vulnerable situations (with participation of such children), pay special attention to children in vulnerable situations in the work on child participation, address such issues in teacher training for all teachers and facilitate exchange of good practice within and across countries. It will also be important to bear this issue in mind when developing the Council of Europe framework of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (see below). Other proposals included development of a high level political document on children in vulnerable situations, including a definition, with commitment for implementation.

### **Theme 2: Competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue**

3. The initiative to develop descriptors of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (launched in the framework of the Andorran Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in 2013) was welcomed. The participants felt that this would be a useful instrument, provided that it can be easily adapted to national context.

### **Theme 3: The Council of Europe Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**

4. The participants also discussed the on-going cooperation activities in the area citizenship and human rights education. They felt that the countries currently face two major challenges as follows: 1) how to ensure and maintain high level commitment and support to citizenship and human rights education? and 2) how to disseminate broadly examples of good practice and to raise awareness of the benefits of such education among education professionals and the general public (including parents)? They highlighted the need for innovative approaches and for new strategies, and explored possible new avenues for future cooperation.
5. The EU/CoE Pilot Projects Scheme "Human Rights and Democracy in Action" contributed to the consolidation of the network in 2013 and is highly appreciated by the countries, as an effective way of sharing and cooperation on subjects of common interest. The new proposals were discussed at the meeting in Baku, and the selection of the projects to be funded will be done by the Scheme's Advisory Board in June 2014.
6. The participants expressed their support for the way the joint CoE/UNESCO/OSCE-ODIHR/OAS publication on curriculum development for citizenship and human rights education is now being prepared, and made additional suggestions for further improvement.
7. Cooperation with relevant Council of Europe bodies needs to be further reinforced, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (in particular in respect to the preparation of the report on "Towards a European framework of competences for democratic citizenship,

human rights and intercultural dialogue”) and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (in particular in respect of the European Local Democracy Week in 2014).

8. Possibilities for future cooperation with the Council of Europe Programme “Building Europe for and with Children”, and with the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children (ENOC) need to be explored, in particular with the view of the ENOC’s forthcoming campaign in 2015, which will be devoted to the impact of the economic crisis on children.

The conclusions of the present conference will feed into the Council of Europe Programme on Education. In particular, they will contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Citizenship and Human Rights Education through further development of the network of EDC/HRE coordinators and through recommendations inspiring further action in this area.

The participants have greatly appreciated the smooth organisation and the efficient assistance and support that they have received, as well as the warm hospitality of the host country.

## Annex I –Concept and Programme

### 20 May 2014:

**9.00-9.30 Registration**

**9:30-10:30 Plenary**

Chair: Mr Azad AKHUNDOV, EDC/HRE coordinator for the Republic of Azerbaijan

Welcome addresses

- Mr Jeyhun BAYRAMOV, Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan (10 minutes)
- Mr Sjur BERGAN, Head of the Education Department, Council of Europe (10 minutes)
- Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV, Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (5 minutes)
- Mr Aydin SAFIKHANLY, Head of Staff, Office of the Ombudsperson, Azerbaijan (5 minutes)
  
- *Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education* – Key note speech by Mr David LALLEMAND, on behalf of Mr Bernard DE VOS, Ombudsman for Children, Belgium, and Chairperson of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (20 minutes)
  
- *Practical information about the meeting (5 minutes)*

**10.30-11.00 Coffee break**

**11.00-12.00 Plenary**

Moderator: Mr David ADDIS, Journalist

### **Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education**

- *Improving the situation of Roma children through education in the United Kingdom* – Mr Arthur IVATTS, Senior Consultant to the British Department for Children, Schools and Families, United Kingdom (10 minutes)
- Discussion (10 minutes)
- *Challenging anti-Muslim prejudice and promotion of mutual understanding in multicultural societies through education* (10 minutes) – Ms Katarzyna GORAK-SOSNOWSKA, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Warsaw School of Economics, Poland
- Discussion (10 minutes)
- *Supporting separated children seeking asylum* – Mr Aidan CLIFFORD, Curriculum Development Unit, EDC/HRE coordinator, Ireland (10 minutes)
- Discussion (10 minutes)

**12.00-13.30 Lunch break**

**13.30-15.00 Workshop 1: *Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education - current challenges and future priorities* (3 parallel groups)**

**15.00-15.30 Coffee break**

**15.30-17.30**    **Workshop 2:** *Exchange of information on recent developments in the States Party to the European Cultural Convention in the field of citizenship and human rights education* (3 parallel groups)

**19.00**            **Dinner hosted by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

## **21 May 2014**

**09.00-10.30**

### **Plenary**

Chair: Mr Salvador SALA CARRASCO, EDC/HRE coordinator, Andorra

- Competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue - Mr Sjur BERGAN, Head of the Education Department, Council of Europe (20 minutes)

Discussion

**10.30-11.00**    **Coffee break**

**11.00-12.30**

Chair: Ms Ivanka MIJIKJ, EDC/HRE coordinator, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Interactive feedback from the workshops 1 and 2 with Mr David ADDIS (30 minutes)

- *European Local Democracy Week* - Ms Gaye DOGANOGLU, Political coordinator of the European Local Democracy Week, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (10 minutes)

Discussion (15 minutes)

- *Council of Europe Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights: recent developments and future activities* - Ms Yulia PERERVA and Mr Marc HORY, Education Department, Council of Europe (10 minutes)
- *How do the Regional Summer Academies "Human Rights in Action and Democracy at School" support the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on citizenship and human rights education?* – Ms Anna PERONA and Mr Lars M. GUDMUNDSON, European Wergeland Center (10 minutes)

Discussion (15 minutes)

**12.30-14.00**    **Lunch break**

**14.00-15.30**    **Workshop 3:** Council of Europe Programme of Activities (3 parallel groups as follows)

- A. Preparation of the 22nd meeting of the EDC/HRE coordinators, organised in conjunction with the meeting of the Pedagogical Club of the European Capitals
- B. Publication on curriculum reform for citizenship and human rights education
- C. How do the Regional Summer Academies "Human Rights in Action and Democracy at School" support the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on citizenship and human rights education?

**15.30-16.00**    **Coffee break**

**16.00-17.30 Plenary**

Chair: Ms Sigrid STEININGER, EDC/HRE Coordinator, Austria

Interactive feedback from the workshop 3 with Mr David ADDIS (15 minutes)

Preliminary conclusions of the meeting by Mr François PARAIN, General Rapporteur, EDC/HRE Coordinator, France (20 minutes)

*Discussion (35 minutes)*

Closing of the meeting:

- Mr Mukhtar MAMMADOV, Head of Unit, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan (10 minutes)
- Mr Sjur BERGAN, Head of the Education Department, Council of Europe (10 minutes)

**18.00 Bus Tour**

**20.00 Dinner at the hotel**

The 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council of Europe Network of Coordinators for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) is organised in the framework of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is held under the auspices of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The EDC/HRE coordinators are officially nominated representatives of the States Party to the European Cultural Convention for liaison with the Council of Europe in this area. The coordinators hold their annual meetings to share information on the latest developments in their countries, in the Council of Europe and in other international organisations and to discuss cooperation activities organised in the framework of the Council of Europe Programme "Learning democracy and human rights".

At the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the network special attention will be given to the topics of "Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education" and the development of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (follow-up to the Andorran Chairmanship).

## **Background**

The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) points out that "Children are legally entitled to equal enjoyment of their rights, yet in practice, some children are particularly exposed to rights violations, and need special attention and measures to protect them as well as measures to empower them, in particular through access to citizenship and human rights education". It is proposed to hold the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the network of EDC/HRE coordinators in the framework of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on Children's Rights, with a special focus on children in vulnerable situations (on the first day) and a focus on the topic of the development of competences (on the second day). The discussions and presentations on the first day could include the following issues:

- Who are children in vulnerable situations? Overview of the similarities and differences across the countries
- Why is EDC/HRE important? (1. raising awareness of the majority population of these children's situation and encouraging action for support and protection of such groups, 2. empowering vulnerable groups for full participation in the life of a democratic society)
- EDC/HRE in classrooms, where there are children in vulnerable situations (ex. ethnic minorities, refugees and internally displaced persons, children with disabilities, children with underprivileged social backgrounds) - challenges and opportunities
- Use of case studies related to children in vulnerable situations in EDC/HRE– possibly with guest speakers from the UNHCR (refugees), Red Cross (children in military conflicts), OSCE/ODIHR (Muslims)
- Recommendations and priorities for future action

The discussions on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day will be devoted to the development of descriptors on competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (follow-up to the Andorran Chairmanship), as well as other issues related to the on-going cooperation within the network.

## **Aims and objectives**

On the topic of the "Children in vulnerable situations: Making a change through citizenship and human rights education":

- Explore the current challenges in the States Party to the European Cultural Convention and discuss possible solutions
- Share examples of good practice
- Reflect on priorities for future action

On the topic of "Competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue"

- Contribute to the development of a framework for competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue

### **Expected outcomes**

- Raised awareness of the situation of children in vulnerable situations
- Conclusions on the role of EDC/HRE in improving the situation of such children
- Improved access to examples of good practice in this area
- Reinforced cooperation with other partner institutions active in this area
- Feedback on the development of a framework for competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue

### **Participants**

- EDC/HRE coordinators from the 50 States Party to the European Cultural Convention
- Experts
- Local hosts and participants

### **Organisers:**

- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Unit for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Council of Europe

### **Working languages**

English/French

### **Date and place**

20-21 May 2014, Baku, Azerbaijan

### **Background documents**

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education
- Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7)
- Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015)
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in education
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child