

**Programmatic Cooperation Framework for
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus**

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A conference to launch the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Supporting
Education Policies in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights
Education in 6 Eastern Partnership countries”

4-5 June, 2015

Kyiv, Ukraine

Conference Report

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Council of Europe Expert in EDC/HRE**

INTRODUCTION

This is a report¹ on the conference held on 4-5 June, 2015, in Kyiv, Ukraine, to launch the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Supporting Education Policies in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in 6 Eastern Partnership countries”.

The EU/CoE Joint Programme is a regional project for the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Its aim is to support integration and/or further develop of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in national education systems (including school curriculum) in the Eastern Partnership countries, in accordance with the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

AIMS

The aims of the launching conference were to:

- raise awareness of the principles of EDC/HRE and of the Council of Europe programme
- introduce the Council of Europe tools for EDC/HRE, including the teachers’ manuals, the manual of teachers’ competences and the Charter document
- show case the pilot projects in EDC/HRE which have been undertaken in each of the participating countries
- consider the benefits and methods of pilot training in EDC/HRE for teachers and school leaders in the countries in the partnership.

The conference was held in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Kyiv. The working languages were Russian and English with simultaneous translation.

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OPENING SESSION

a) Welcome and opening remarks

Chair: Ms Raiysa Yevtushenko, Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine

Ms Yevtushenko opened the conference by welcoming guests and participants. She spoke about the 2014 national strategy in human rights in Ukraine and the requirement for the study of human rights in secondary and higher education.

Ms Inna Sovsun, First Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Ukraine, expressed her pleasure at hosting the joint conference. She said that the timing was particularly apposite given the educational reforms which were currently under way in Ukraine. Ms Sovsun argued that despite the differences between the six countries in the partnership, everyone present shared the same problems and stood to benefit from the topic under discussion. What was required, she said, was not just a change in the system, but also changes in thinking and in the approach to educational governance. This would take time and require long-term thinking.

Mr Juan Manuel Vilaplana Lopez, Political Officer, EU Delegation to Ukraine, wished the conference well and pledged his full support for the process of Europeanization in the region and the role played by the Council of Europe in this.

Ms Katia Dolgova-Dreyer, Project Co-ordinator, Council of Europe, thanked the Deputy Minister. She said that the six countries involved in the joint project are not novices in EDC/HRE but already practising it in different ways. She explained how this regional project was one element in a bigger package of Council of Europe joint co-operation with the European Union, and how the Council of Europe's EDC/HRE programme was a not a new initiative but had been many years in the making, culminating with the adoption of the Charter on EDC/HRE in 2010. Finally, she spoke about the different purposes of education and reminded the conference that education aims at personal development as well employment, including helping individuals to become active citizens in a democratic society

b) Project Objectives

Ms Katia Dolgova-Dreyer and Mr Mykhailo Koriukalov, with the participation of the Project Steering Committee members, outlined the main objectives, themes and intended results of the joint project, 'Supporting Education Policies in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship'. The chief strategic objective is to support integration and/or further development of EDC/HRE in the national education systems of the six countries of the six Eastern Partnership countries. This includes:

- contribute to integrating EDC/HRE into the school curriculum in the six countries
- training at least 900 educational professionals, youth leaders/ workers in EDC/HRE
- the piloting of Council of Europe materials in 90 target schools
- translating at least 6 Council of Europe EDC/HRE materials into the languages of the Eastern Partnership countries
- increasing NGO- and youth organisation-advocacy and support for EDC/HRE
- developing a glossary of essential terms.

c) Keynote presentation: Council of Europe work in the field of EDC/HRE

Mr Ted Huddleston, Consultant in Civic and Citizenship Foundation, Council of Europe Expert in EDC/HRE, UK, made a presentation of the work of the Council of Europe in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Ted began by pointing to the close relationship between education and society. In particular, he reminded the participants of Tironi's dictum that to ask what kind of education system we need is to ask what kind of society we want. He argued that violence, discrimination, authoritarianism, unquestioning loyalty to the state, tokenistic democracy and passive citizenship at a country level have their origins in the school system. If this is the case, the reverse could also be true: non-violent conflict resolution, equality, human rights, critical patriotism, real democracy and active citizenship could be encouraged by schools.

This led into a description of the Council of Europe's Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Project, (EDC/HRE) first launched in 1997. The Project is based on the three core values of the Council of Europe – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – and was devised to have application across Europe. It takes a 'whole-school' approach to citizenship and human rights learning. This approach can be divided into 4 key areas: lessons, beyond lessons, communication and governance. As such, it is relevant to all subjects across the curriculum, not only to formal civic education lessons. It differs from traditional approaches to teaching and learning by treating the pupil as a subject, as active in their own learning, rather than being the passive object of the teacher's teaching.

Ted outlined some of the challenges facing the introduction of a 'whole-school' approach to EDC/HRE into schools and described different ways in which the Council of Europe Project could help support the participants in this process, including through its teaching manuals and tools, the EDC/HRE national co-ordinators and the 2010 Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

SESSION 1

a) Presentation of the EDC/HRE teaching manuals

Mr Peter Krapf, Co-editor and Co-author, Teacher Training College, Weingarten, Germany, introduced the six Council of Europe manuals for teachers and outlined the distinctive educational principles which underpin them. In particular:

- the manuals are not context –specific and can be used in a range of countries
- they follow the principle that 'the medium is the message' – in EDC/HRE how things are taught are as important as what is taught
- lessons are task-based – the students do the work and the teacher acts as facilitator
- interactive teaching is emphasized – with students encouraged to think for themselves and express their ideas and opinions publicly
- they focus on real-life problems in society and the search for potential solutions
- they operate according to the principle of the 'spiral curriculum' – the same core EDC/HRE concepts being re-visited at increasing levels of complexity as students get older.

b) EDC/HRE in practice – achievements and challenges

Ms Ana Perona-Fjeldstad, Executive Director, European Wergeland Centre, outlined the work of the European Wergeland Centre in the field, emphasizing the idea of a 'whole-school' approach to EDC/HRE and explaining some of the achievements of the Summer Academy initiative.

She spoke about the lessons learned from the local projects stimulated by the Summer Academies over the last six years. Firstly, on how these projects highlight the concerns many teachers and other stakeholders have about this area of education. These include:

- negative school climate
- traditional forms of school governance
- lack of self-government mechanisms
- lack of communication and poor relationships between stakeholders
- lack of parental involvement
- lack of civic engagement
- reliance on traditional teaching methods and the consequent poor motivation of students
- frequency of violence, discrimination and forms of bullying.

Secondly, on how the projects were meeting these concerns, including through:

- establishing student councils
- designing EDC/HRE lesson plans
- developing a more democratic ethos and approach to rule-making
- creating spaces for dialogue
- forging new and more productive partnerships.

Thirdly, on what the projects had achieved in schools, including:

- a more positive and democratic school atmosphere
- more engaging teaching methods
- empowered students
- better relationships between stakeholders.

Finally, on the challenges that remain, including:

- lack of appropriate educational material in local languages
- shortage of resources and time
- resistance to change
- slow pace of change
- low parental involvement
- lack of support from educational authorities.

SESSION 2

a) Examples of good practice in EDC/HRE the Eastern Partnership countries

Chair: Ms Ana Perona-Fjeldstad, Executive Director, European Wergeland Centre

The session began with a showing of a film of the Summer Academy process made by the European Wergeland Centre.

Moderated by Ms Olena Styslavska, Expert, Center for Education Development, Poland, graduates of the Summer Academy explained how they had used Council of Europe support materials in their countries and the changes that had occurred as a result.

1) Moldova

Pavel Cerbusca described the achievements of a voluntary group which had been set up in his school to

implement the principles of EDC/HRE. These included:

- a school partnership programme, 'We are Europe', involving young people, parents and members of the local community
- supplementing the basic course in civic education with activities such as an essay competition, student-led research, flash mobs on discrimination, a Human Rights Day, games and workshops
- student volunteering – working with children with special needs
- a collaboration with Amnesty International.

Pavel reported that though some of these initiatives initially met with a certain amount of resistance, teachers gradually became more involved and interested in the concept of EDC/HRE. In many ways, he suggested, the teachers were learning from their students – “We sometimes say that students know more than the teachers”.

2) Ukraine

Natalia Kidalova described the process of introducing EDC/HRE principles into her school through the use of a teacher questionnaire. This is a good way of assessing teachers' existing competences and future training needs. She recommended a multi-dimensional approach to EDC/HRE development as the one most likely to get immediate results and to embed EDC/HRE in a more sustainable way in school life.

3) Belarus

Larisa Tarasuik highlighted the importance of having teacher specialists in EDC/HRE. She explained the six steps approach to active citizenship training that had been developed in her school – a kind of pedagogical lab. She also spoke of the importance of raising awareness of diversity and intercultural issues, and described the development of a school Debate Club, a school exchange and partnership working with university and US colleagues on a play, 'My City', highlighting social problems.

4) Azerbaijan

Rauf Rajabov, representing the Third View think tank, presented a pilot project, 'Every Voice to be Heard'. This is a civil initiative designed to increase stakeholder involvement in secondary education, especially parents. It is run by a team of 8 people and involves 58 different stakeholders. The Council of Europe EDC/HRE manuals had been used in designing the project, especially the volume on competences.

5) Armenia

Karine Harutyunyan presented a country-wide project focusing on four target groups: head teachers; teachers; pupils; and heads of training departments. EDC/HRE standards were developed for Years 8 and 9 and a series of modules created, including; democratic rules; lesson topics from the manual Living in Democracy; and pupil councils as a first tier of school decision-making. Karine emphasized the strategic importance of working with head teachers: in Armenia candidates applying to be head teachers are expected to make a public presentation of their plans for how the school should develop,

6) Georgia

Sulkhan Chargeshvili reported on the pilot course, 'European Citizenship and Youth Participation'. The school-based course is designed to link formal and non-formal education. Sulkhan also reported on the training of 30 youth workers in Georgia with a view to them using their skills in co-operation with school students in and out of school. He spoke about the value of the European Wergeland Centre's Share & Connect platform as a means of communication and initiative-sharing, and of linking with the Council of Europe programme on youth participation, locally and regionally, as well its EDC/HRE programme.

These presentations were followed by a short Q&A session with all the country representatives. During this session a number of points were highlighted, including:

- the value the Council of Europe's work on the teaching of history (Moldova)
- the role of the Council of Europe Charter for funding proposals (Georgia)
- the need for initiatives to cope with the psychological stress being suffered by teachers, pupils and parents as a result of the present hostilities (Ukraine)
- the use of social psychology and communication training for parents and its value in increasing parental involvement in schools (Azerbaijan).

The session ended with a summary of the day's work by Ted Huddleston, General Rapporteur.

Day 2

SESSION 3: Democratic School Governance, Curriculum Development and Teacher Competences, Piloting

a) Democratic School Governance

Ms Marzena Rafalska, education consultant and Council of Europe expert, introduced the Council of Europe manual for school leaders. She said that underlying the idea of democratic school governance was the important question: To what extent can a school become a model of a democratic state?

In exploring this question, Marzena argued that:

- democratic school governance focuses on the values of equality, freedom and dignity and how these may be manifested across all of school life and engage all of those involved
- democratic school governance has its roots in the Convention of the Rights of the Child
- although democratic school governance can be seen as a threat by some teachers, experience has shown that it can improve discipline and awareness of school rules and the reasons for having them, increase motivation, increase academic progress, and reduce levels of conflict (because disputes can be solved by discussion)
- being treated as an active participant in school life makes students feel good, which in turn makes a school more attractive to pupils and parents, and, ultimately, more competitive
- being able to influence their school gives students more confidence – the alternative is that they will become increasingly frustrated if their opinions and suggestions are not listened to
- school is real life for students not just a preparation
- although democratic school governance is sometimes caricatured as being all about rights, it is actually a way of introducing the idea of obligations
- participation doesn't just happen, schools have to create the conditions that will encourage students and other stakeholders to become more involved
- student participation is sometimes resisted by adults because they do not believe that young people can be responsible, but they will never learn to be responsible if they are not given the opportunity to try
- it is sometimes thought that schools need to ask permission before introducing more democratic forms of participation, but there is no requirement for this – especially in an era when schools are becoming increasingly de-centralized – and they should just 'get on with it'

- democratic school governance is a never-ending process – it is never done.

b) Curriculum development and teachers' competences

Ms Olena Styslavska, Centre for Education Development, Poland, posed the question: How does EDC/HRE differ from Maths or Languages teaching? One important difference is that few students grow up to become mathematicians or translators, but all become citizens. The key to citizenship development in young people lies in their teachers. Building on this perception, Olena introduced the Council of Europe manual on teacher competences and how it can be used.

Participants were asked to reflect on the competences in the manual and consider which they found most useful, but also what they wouldn't have expected, what they found controversial, which were already in present in their current teacher training and which they felt were missing.

c) Piloting EDC/HRE tools

Mr Peter Krapf distinguished between piloting and training, suggesting that the aim of piloting is to give a taste of what training could be. He proposed a model of piloting EDC/HRE tools in which visiting Council of Europe experts would work not with individuals but with school teams – consisting of the school leader and a sample of teachers from the same school, forming school teams. He outlined two alternative versions of this, taking 2 and 3 days respectively. Central to both would be the presentation of a model lesson.

d) Three parallel sessions

Participants split into three groups to discuss the implications of what had been presented in this session – one on democratic school governance and the other two on teacher competences.

FINAL SESSION: Feedback and conclusions

Chair: Ms Katia Dolgova-Dreyer, Council of Europe

a) Feedback from the parallel groups

Group 1 concluded that despite coming from different countries, all had experienced similar problems with regard to the introduction of more democratic forms of school government. They reported on progress to date in each of their countries and discussed the idea of identifying development indicators to measure progress in this field.

Group 2 had discussed the assumption of many stakeholders that EDC/HRE is relevant only to teachers of history, geography or social studies. They spoke about sustainability and the need for schools and teachers to be able to evaluate and monitor their progress in EDC/HRE. The group had divided into 5 sub-groups to consider the present situation in their schools, obstacles to progress, ways forward and how the Council of Europe programme could help. They concluded, among other things, that:

The principles in Charter provide a good starting-point for EDC/HRE development

- it is important to work with teachers from a range of disciplines
- schools need to build trust and gain support from their stakeholders, especially of pupils and their parents
- school change begins with change in individuals.

Group 3 reported on the experience of modeling an EDC/HRE lesson from the Living in Democracy manual,

with participants standing in the shoes of students. They identified the kind of competences teacher would need in order to be able deliver the lesson.

b) Concluding remarks by the general rapporteur

Ted Huddleston drew together the main themes emerging from the conference. There was clearly a good case for further development in EDC/HRE in the six partnership countries, he argued. This case was built on what EDC/HRE has the potential to offer both in societal terms and its wider benefits to individuals. The case studies of pilot projects in the different countries showed that further work in this field would not only be a theoretical but also a practical possibility. Feedback from these projects had shown that there already exists in each of the countries a pool of experience and good practice on which to build. To this one could add the lessons learned from the six years of school-based local projects stimulated by the Summer Academy programme.

The pilot projects in the partnership countries had highlighted the strategic importance of, among other things:

- role of partnership working, e.g., with youth organisations (Georgia); universities (Belarus); and parents (Azerbaijan)
- collaboration with non-formal youth education (Georgia)
- young people's participation in the development process (Moldova)
- school leaders (Armenia)
- building on existing knowledge and competence, e.g., through a teacher questionnaire (Ukraine)
- a bottom-up, grass roots approach (All)

Ted reminded participants that EDC/HRE is just as important as and deserves the same attention as other areas of the school curriculum. There should be same emphasis on the development of professional competences, the provision of training opportunities, assessment of learning, and the monitoring and evaluation of progress. He also reminded participants that in a 'whole-school' approach the 'hidden', or 'implicit', curriculum is as important as the explicit one.

He noted how the conference had also drawn attention to a number of challenges facing development in this field. These included:

- lack of resources in local languages
- continued resistance to the concept amongst some stakeholders
- building a larger constituency for EDC/HRE – including support from parents, potential funders and public authorities
- designing and co-ordinating a coherent EDC/HRE curriculum or 'offer' in schools
- going beyond a 'numbers' or 'ticking boxes' mentality in monitoring progress.

Finally, he described a range of new opportunities which would help participants meet these challenges. Firstly, there was the support of the Council of Europe Charter, its recommendations formally agreed by all six countries in the partnership, and the Council of Europe manuals. Secondly, a number of the countries were currently undergoing reviews or revisions of their national curricula, providing fertile ground for the development of new approaches to the traditional subject of civic education. Thirdly, the relevance of the 'soft skills' engendered in active citizenship education to new forms of employment and the requirements of national economies. Fourthly, the forthcoming introduction of global competences into national PISA assessment reinforced the importance of developing such skills in schools. Fifthly, the arrival of new forms professional networking and school linking made possible through the European Wergeland Centre's Share & Connect

platform and Summer Academy alumni networks.

c) Close of conference

Raiysa Yevtushenko closed the conference by thanking the organisers and the participants. She endorsed the points made by participants and drew attention to their need to distance themselves from some of the restrictive practices of the Soviet period and to re-create them on the basis of democratic values.

Ted Huddleston
Consultant in Civic and Citizenship Education
Council of Europe Expert in EDC/HRE