

Effective Education Policies for the Promotion of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

The 24th Meeting of the Council of Europe Network of Co-ordinators for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Palais de l'Europe, Room 11
Strasbourg, 11-12 February 2016

Mr Sjur Bergan, Director ad interim for Democratic Citizenship and Participation and Head of Education Department

A very warm welcome to the Coordinators for education for democratic citizenship and human rights and to our special guests and experts present today.

I would like to thank the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers for having included this meeting in their programme, thus expressing their support to the Council of Europe work in the area of education.

The network of Coordinators is a cornerstone of the Council of Europe work in this area, as it allows us to have a vital connection with the member states and to ensure that our work is of relevance and support to the countries in accordance with their countries needs and priorities. We are therefore delighted to see you all in Strasbourg today, to learn about the latest developments and to discuss future priorities.

This meeting is taking place at a very challenging time. Today many European countries are looking for solutions for successful integration of migrants, for preventing and addressing violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism, and for ensuring peace and democratic security on the European continent.

Since 2015 we have seen unprecedented increase in political interest in the role of education in addressing these challenges. There are also very high expectations towards the education sector to deliver quick and tangible results that can help make our societies more peaceful and inclusive.

This year will therefore be full of important events and developments. In particular, on 11-12 April Ministers of Education will meet in Brussels to discuss "The role of education for the development of competences for democratic culture". On 7-9 November the World Forum for Democracy will debate the role of education in promoting democracy and will explore innovative grass root practices in this area. The Report of the State of citizenship and human rights education will be prepared, based on a questionnaire for the governments and a survey for civil society organisations.

We hope that these events and developments will allow us to produce the tangible results that our member states are looking for, and we look forward to working closely with you to achieve this objective. We hope that the current momentum will help us to develop a common vision and a blueprint for future action. We also hope that it will allow us to connect all the key partners in this area in a systematic and sustainable way, and to set up an effective model for on-going dialogue and cooperation.

I wish you a fruitful meeting.