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“Democratic culture – from words to action”

Council of Europe Conference of the Danish
Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers

Copenhagen, 23-24 April 2018

Draft Concept and Programme

Background and context

The Council of Europe Education Department has identified the strengthening of democratic culture, as well as the development of open, inclusive and safe learning environments in schools across its member states, as main priorities in the new programme of activities 2018-2019. The reinforcement of democracy in schools will therefore be the fundamental objective of both the implementation phase of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) – the development phase having ended in Prague at the 8th Education Forum, organised by the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers – and the new Council of Europe Education Department initiative “Democratic Schools for All”.

At the invitation of the Danish government, education specialists and practitioners from states parties to the European Cultural Convention will meet in Copenhagen from 23 to 24 April 2018 to discuss and define the implementation phase and action plan of the RFCDC and launch one of its key implementation tools, the new “Education Policy Advisers Network” (EPAN).

Relevance to the Chairmanship

The programme of the Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers has set the “involvement of children and youth in democracy” as a main priority:

“... [a] special focus on active citizenship and well-functioning and inclusive communities among the youngest generations in order to address extremism and radicalisation among other things. In particular, schools play an important role in shaping the next democratic citizens and create communities that can enhance learning, promote gender equality, reduce bullying and protect children and youths from the negative forces of extremist environments. Radicalisation is one the biggest threats to communities throughout Europe, therefore it is essential to have an active effort against radicalisation of children and youth”.¹

This main priority of the Chairmanship Programme and of the Danish Ministry of Education aligns with the priorities of the Council of Europe Education Programme. The majority of member states urgently need to reinforce democracy in schools, to deal effectively with all challenges facing member states now and in the future, through a renewed focus on children and young people’s development of democratic competences at school in order to build inclusive and sustainable societies.

The theme of the conference

The main theme of the conference will be “Democratic culture – from words to action”. The goal is to complete the transition from development of the Framework to application,

¹ Danish Ministry of Education

putting the emphasis on taking effective measures across member states in response to these challenges, including issues related to violent extremism and radicalisation. This includes taking stock of effective practices in Denmark and other member states which support the development of democratic competences in children and young people, as well as the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in a whole-school approach.

The conference will be structured as follows:

Content

Taking note of the main priority of the Chairmanship Programme and of the Danish Ministry of Education, and the priorities of the new Council of Europe education programme of activities 2018-2019, the Council of Europe will use the conference to launch the Education Policy Advisers Network. The network will begin by covering three major fields linked to the implementation of the RFCDC: 1) Curriculum development, 2) Teaching and 3) Assessment.

As a wide range of stakeholders will be participating, it will also be possible through plenary sessions and interactive workshop to explore a number of important current issues relating to inclusive democratic schools. Participants will become familiar with the RFCDC and how its implementation can make a practical contribution to reinforcing democratic schools as safe spaces for all. One thread running through the conference, and used as an illustrative example of the methodology behind and implementation of the RFCDC will be current practice and challenges associated with teaching controversial issues in schools, drawing on experiences from Denmark and elsewhere.

Outputs

The aim of the plenary sessions and interactive workshops is to create a learning environment allowing participants to explore, discuss and share different approaches to addressing the issues under discussion with regards to both primary and secondary education (including vocational).

The conference is expected to produce elements for a "Strategy for the implementation of the RFCDC" and a "Compendium of effective practices in teaching controversial issues in schools" as its main outputs. Finding new angles and clearly identifying effective approaches around teaching controversial issues, including violent extremism and radicalisation, will be important.

Participants

The Conference will bring together approximately 100 participants from the public education sector in the 50 countries of the European Cultural Convention. Observers will be invited as well as representatives of major intergovernmental organisations and NGOs.

Profile of participants

- the newly-appointed members of the Education Policy Advisers Network
- education practitioners from States parties to the European Cultural Convention

- government officials from Denmark and the Nordic Council of Ministers
- representatives of major intergovernmental organisations and NGOs

Format of the Conference

Several plenary sessions, keynote presentations and working groups will offer opportunities for participants to discuss and share knowledge and examples of good practice.

Conference budget

The Council of Europe will cover transport and accommodation costs for the newly appointed members of the Education Policy Advisers Network and invited experts as well as provide interpretation between the Council of Europe's official languages (English and French). The Ministry of Education of Denmark will cover the costs for practitioners.

Co-organiser: The major partner in Denmark is the Ministry of Education.

Provisional Programme

Day 1, 23 rd April 2018	
09:30	<p>Registration of participants Venue: DGI-Byen Hotel and CPH Convention Center Tietgensgade 65, 1704 København, Denmark</p>
10:00 –10:45	<p>Official Opening “Democratic culture – from words to action” Moderator: Lise Lotte Toft, Head of Division for International Affairs, Danish Ministry of Education</p> <p>Welcome to the working conference by Merete Riisager, Danish Minister of Education</p> <p>Welcome on behalf of the Council of Europe by Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General for Democracy</p> <p>Welcome by Etienne Gilliard, Chair of the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice of the Council of Europe (CDPPE)</p> <p>Lotte Groth-Andersen Vice President of the National Agency for Education and Quality</p>
10.45	<p>Break</p>
11:00 - 12:30	<p>Plenary Session 1: Competences for democratic culture in a whole-school approach Moderator: Villano Qirazi, Head of the Education Policy Division, Education Department, Council of Europe</p> <p>Keynote speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martyn Barrett, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, School of Psychology, University of Surrey, United Kingdom • Claudia Lenz, Professor Samfunnsfag, Norwegian School of Theology, Norway • Călin Rus, Director, Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, Romania <p>Discussion</p> <p>Introducing the Council of Europe Education Policy Advisers Network (EPAN) Christopher Reynolds, Katerina Toura, Education Policy Division, Council of Europe</p>

12:00–13:30	Lunch		
	Parallel Workshops 1 for EPAN Members: Finalising Strategic Plan for the Implementation phase of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)		
14:00– 15:30	Curriculum development Moderator: Călin Rus Room:	Teaching Moderator: Claudia Lenz, Room:	Assessment Moderator: Martyn Barrett Room:
14:00– 15:30	Parallel Workshops 1 for all other participants : Lessons learned from existing practices in the whole-school approach and effective practices (Compendium)		
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break		
16:00 – 17:00	Workshops conclusions Presentation of workshops conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalising the Strategic Plan for the Implementation phase of the RFCDC - Finalising the Compendium of effective practices 		
18.00	Akademiet for utæmmet kreativitet (AFUK) "Academy of untamed creativity" Presentation of the AFUK Dinner with cultural programme Enghavevej 82 B , 2450 Copenhagen		

Day 2, 24 th April 2018			
9:00 – 9:05	Welcome and introduction to the day Lise Lotte Toft, Head of Division for International Affairs		
9:05 – 10:00	Controversial issues linked to critical thinking Examples from theory and practice Claudia Lenz Project manager Peder Nustad		
10:00 – 10:10	Go to workshops		
10:10 – 11:30	Curriculum development Moderator: Dorthe Anthony 2 presentations: 2x5 min. 1: Hugo Wester (Sweden) 2: (Person appointed by CoE)	Teaching Moderator: Lakshmi Sigurdsson 2 presentations: 2x5 min. 1: Maria Biskop (Finland) 2: (Person appointed by CoE)	Assessment Moderator: Satnam Singh 2 guest presentations: 2x5 min. 1: Peder Nustad (Norway) 2: (Person appointed by CoE)
11:30 – 12:30	Closing Session: Workshop conclusions Chair: Maria Fassari, Vice Chair of the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice Presentation by the moderators of the conclusions of the workshops and proposed follow up Finalising the Compendium of practices for teaching controversial issues at school effectively Concluding remarks: Danish Chairmanship and Council of Europe		
12:30 – 13.30	Lunch & Departure		