Digital Citizenship Education Phase III

Implementing Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on digital citizenship education: a policy development guide

Concept note

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CONCEPT NOTE

Summary

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers on developing and promoting digital citizenship education[1] was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 21 November 2019.

This important instrument recommends *inter alia* that member States review their legislation, policies, and practices in line with the digital citizenship education of the Council of Europe. Since 2017, the Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) initiative of the Education Division, Council of Europe has promoted the concept of digital citizenship and developed extensive resources to empower learners and educationalists as active participants in a digital society.[2]

With the accelerated pace of digital innovation and the increased role of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence in all aspects of society including education, the task for member States has become more urgent to ensure their education policy development keeps pace with and benefits from the digital environment.

The purpose of this project is to provide guidance materials and tools to support digital citizenship at the core of member States' education policies.

The project will extend over the course of the 2022-2025 planning cycle and will facilitate implementation of Recommendation CM/(2019)10 with resources available to all Council of Europe member States, supported by an evidence base of detailed studies of implementation in a minimum of 15 member States.

Background and aims

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 invites governments of member States to review their legislation, policies and practices, including learning frameworks, and to put in place enabling frameworks that support the adoption and implementation of digital citizenship education policies.

Policy is a driving force in education.[3] It formalises and shapes the work of educational practitioners. However, effective implementation of policy in education depends on 3 key elements:

- unambiguous definitions
- clear goals and
- a means of evaluation to measure progress

This project, *Implementing Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on digital citizenship education: a policy development guide* (hereafter "Implementing the Recommendation") has the following aims:

a) The project will aim to **assist member states to review and develop their education policies for digital citizenship** as outlined in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10. Drawing on the Recommendation, the project will produce a Policy Development Guide, providing guidance about digital citizenship education as well as practical suggestions for its incorporation into policy initiatives.

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1. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.
2. https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/digital-citizenship-education-project
3. https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/policy-makers

b) The project will aim to **assist member States to keep track of their progress** through a self-assessment process using a comprehensive range of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

c) The project will aim to **support comprehensive knowledge exchange** through detailed case studies or Country Profiles. These will allow for a more in-depth investigation of the implementation of digital citizenship education, the sharing of sense-making practices across Council of Europe member States and will inform the roadmap for its future development.

The need for this initiative derives from the fact that policy development in the field of digital citizenship education is still at an early stage of development. While some significant examples of digital citizenship education exist across member States, overall policy development is uneven and fragmented. As such, the project will help bring about coherence and consistency to achieve the underlying objectives and benefits of digital citizenship.

This initiative will put in place some of the key elements to enable member States to lay the foundation for education as a lifelong learning process and to support the fostering of a flourishing democratic culture at the heart of the evolving digital environment.

The initiative will be supported by a **Working Group** comprising experts and interested members of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) to oversee its implementation.

Project outline

In 2019, the Committee of Ministers adopted a set of guidelines to its then 47 member States asking them to develop and promote digital citizenship education and make it a priority for policymakers.

According to the Recommendation, the digital environment provides an unprecedented means for people to express themselves, to assemble and participate, and opens new opportunities to improve access and inclusion.

Digital citizenship education underlines the importance of empowering "learners" by providing the means to acquire the skills and competences for democratic culture, and by enabling them to tackle the challenges and risks arising from the digital environment and emerging technologies.

This project 'Implementing the Recommendation' will assist member States in the development and implementation of policies consistent with **Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers on developing and promoting digital citizenship education**.

The project comprises the following elements:

A. **A Policy Development Guide:** this will provide guidance on the definition and conceptual model for digital citizenship education, examples and recommendations for policy development, and methods for reviewing progress in implementation.

B. **Tools to Keep Track of Progress**: the project will develop detailed qualitative and quantitative policy indicators and a survey instrument to assist in the process of reviewing and guiding progress in policy implementation.

This first phase of the programme will be developed over the course of 2022. This will be followed by country profiles and policy roadmap in the subsequent years:

C. **Country Profiles of DCE Implementation**: following a baseline assessment, the project will undertake a series of case studies based on country site visits to be carried out over the duration of the programme

D. A **policy roadmap** for future development of digital citizenship education in the member States.

Figure 1 presents an overview of the four main elements organised in two distinct phases, *Establishing the Baseline* to be carried out in the current year (2022) followed by a programme of activities (2023-24) in the form of a *DCE Policy Development Programme*.

Figure 1 – The 'Implementing the Recommendation' initiative

| A. Policy Development Guide | → | B. Tools to keep track of progress | → | C. Country Profiles of DCE Implementation | → | D. Roadmap for DCE Development |

2022
Phase 1: Establishing the Baseline

2023-24
DCE Policy Development Programme
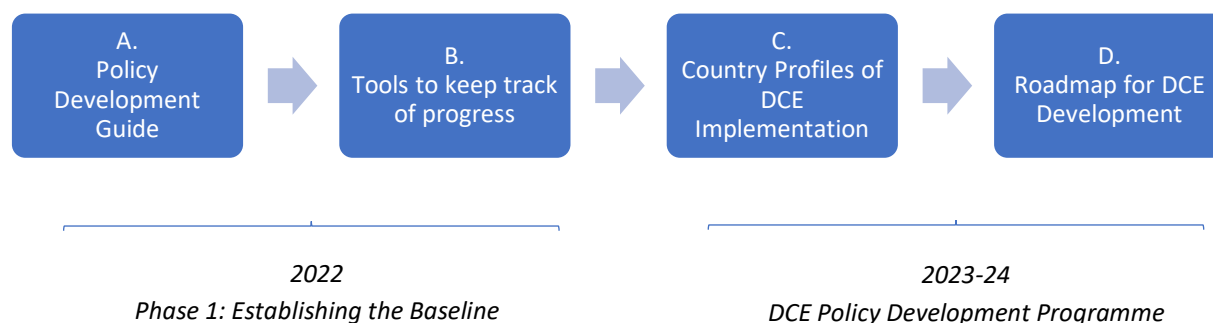
The timeline for the first phase of the project is as follows:

May 2022	Invitation to member States' representatives in the CDEDU to participate in the first workshop and join the Working Group to steer its development
June 21, 2022	Online Workshop "DCE in the member States: Establishing the Baseline" Setting up the Working Group to steer the project
October 2022	Follow up validation workshop with Working Group on Phase 1 of the project
October 2022	Launch of the *Survey*
End November 2022	Submission deadline for completed questionnaires
December 2022	Interim Preliminary report summarising first initial findings.

In **Phase 2** of the project (2023-24), member States will be invited to participate in the DCE Policy Development Programme. Drawing on the baseline survey of implementation of digital citizenship education, interested member States will participate in a programme to develop detailed country profiles. This will involve site visits coordinated by the Council of Europe, further data collection, stakeholder interviews and reviews of practices and initiatives. A Country Profile will be prepared following each site visit, validated by both the country reference group. It is anticipated that 5 countries will participate in 2023 with a further 8 member States in the following year.

Integrated conceptual model

A key aim of the Policy Development Guide will be a presentation of an integrated conceptual model of digital citizenship education. Aimed at policymakers, the Guide will draw together the main elements of digital citizenship education as previously set out in the review of relevant literature[4] and in the *Digital Citizenship Education Handbook,*[5] detailing its key implications for policy implementation.

As outlined in the Digital Citizenship Education Handbook, digital citizenship is the active, positive and responsible engagement with digital technologies in course of participating in contemporary society. Digital citizenship encompasses a wide range of activities in a constantly evolving digital environment which means that acquiring the necessary competences is a lifelong process. The conceptual model for digital citizenship (Figure 2) builds on the Council of Europe's foundational competences for

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4. Frau-Meigs, D., O'Neill, B., Soriani, A., Tomé, V. (2017). *Digital Citizenship Education: Overview and new perspectives*. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.
5. Richardson, J., Milovidov, E. (2019), *Digital citizenship education handbook,* Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

democratic culture[6] which provides an overview of the competences which citizens need to acquire if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy. According to this model, five pillars provide the essential framing structure that supports the whole process of digital citizenship development.

Figure 2 – The Council of Europe model of digital citizenship
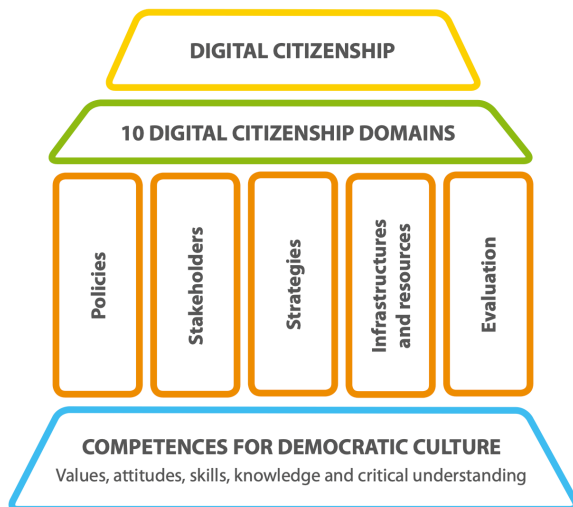
In the above model, the competences for democratic culture[7] lay the foundation for digital citizenship with five constructs emerging as essential for developing digital citizenship practices. These are presented as five pillars within a temple-like structure (Figure 1) which uphold the whole structure of digital citizenship development. *Policy* and *Evaluation* constitute the two framing pillars of the model. Indeed, progress in education-related fields is, to a large extent, shaped by policy and good practice and this can only really be analysed and eventually replicated using effective monitoring and evaluation methodology. *Stakeholders* encompass diverse actors such as teachers, educationalists, learners, industry and policymakers all of whom have active interests and responsibilities in supporting digital citizenship. *Strategies* act as the guiding frameworks which guide activities and initiatives undertaken for the purposes of nurturing and developing digital citizenship. Strategies lie at the centre of the model and act as a focal point and key indicator of a country's level of DCE development. *Infrastructure and resources* provide the necessary conditions, technical and other educational resources/supports to support the ongoing development of digital citizenship activities.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education[8] urges governments to review their legislation, policies and practices, including learning frameworks, and to put in place enabling frameworks that support the adoption and implementation of digital citizenship education policies. Accordingly, the Policy Development Guide will include a set of indicators to support the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 and to provide a set of reference points for the assessment and evaluation of member States' progress.

See the Appendix for a sample set of indicators.

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6. Competences for democratic culture – Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies (2016). Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

7. Council of Europe. (2016). Competences for Democratic Culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies (No. 9789287182371). Council of Europe.

8. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.

APPENDIX – SAMPLE INDICATORS

Digital citizenship development initiatives are defined and shaped by five pillars specified in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on digital citizenship education which are reference points for member States to keep track of their progress.

1. **Contextual** activities / initiatives
2. **Regulatory** activities / initiatives
3. **Informational** activities / initiatives
4. **Institutional** activities / initiatives
5. **Co-operation** activities / initiatives

1. Contextual activities / initiatives

This pillar includes activities that are considered as "preconditions" for digital citizenship. It covers roughly *Being online* that comprises three digital domains related to the competences required to access the digital society and to express oneself safely and freely within the meaning of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The three domains are: a) access and inclusion, b) learning and creativity and c) media and information literacy. The following activities / initiatives are to be taken in order to achieve a contextual foundation for DCE.

1.1. The ratio of internet usage in the country is high.

1.2. Individuals have good knowledge on how to access, read, download and post information online.

1.3. There is equal access to digital tools and to digital competences development.

1.4. All stakeholders participate at every stage of DCE including decision-making, implementation, maintenance and evaluation process.

1.5. The ratio of schools, libraries and public institutions having internet access is high.

1.6. All students have access to digital devices without discrimination.

1.7. Basic functional and digital literacy skills are taught in primary and secondary schools.

1.8. Basics of networking are taught in primary and secondary schools.

1.9. Cybersecurity is taught as a basic course in primary and secondary schools.

1.10. All students are aware of ICT-related threats and know how to manage them effectively.

1.11. Resources are made available for quality participation in a digital world.

1.12. Participation is accessible to sensitive groups including children with disabilities, migrants, and minority groups.

1.13. There is a cybersecurity culture in the society. Citizens are aware of cybersecurity and its benefits in mitigating online risks and potential harms to the users.

1.14. A list of principles and good practices was prepared and distributed for the safe, legal and ethical use of digital information technologies in schools and other public institutions.

1.15. DCE is designed for children to understand the nature, risks and benefits of the internet.

1.16. DCE is designed to empower children to cope with online bullying, spam links and harmful comments.

2. Regulatory activities / initiatives

These activities/initiatives cover all necessary legal and administrative arrangements that regulate DCE. A regulatory framework covers not only legislative activities but also administrative arrangements including National Cybersecurity Strategy documents/policies, National Artificial Intelligence Strategies and other policy documents. These regulations set a framework on which DCE can be developed. The primary goal is to have sufficient regulation in place in order to build a DCE ecosystem based on ethics and civic education including the inclusion of children's views, cybersecurity education, cyber peace education, human rights education and democratic citizenship education.There are frameworks/policy papers for application/adoption of DCE standards.

2.2.   The country has strong cybersecurity legal regulations.

2.3.   There are national legal measures in place to ensure child protection online.

2.4.   There are national laws on combatting cyber-crimes.

2.5.   National cybersecurity strategy documents are in place.

2.6.   There is clear reference to DCE/digital civic education in the National cybersecurity strategy documents.

2.7.   A national AI policy document is in place.

2.8.   DCE/digital civic education is mentioned in the National AI policy documents.

2.9.   National regulations ensure that digital platforms and mobile providers remove fake news, as well as violent and inappropriate content from the digital space.

2.10. All stakeholders are active in designing regulations on DCE.

2.11. The participation of children is promoted in the development of public policies that concern them through processes of consultation.

2.12. There are national legal/administrative regulations on metaverse.

2.13. There are national legal measures on offences related to racist and xenophobic online materials.

2.14. Right to Access to Internet is regulated by national laws.

2.15. Right to be forgotten is accepted by national laws.

3. Informational activities / initiatives

They are intrinsically linked to the competences necessary for a democratic culture model and cybersecurity culture or cyber peace. It corresponds to Digital domains of *Rights Online* that refers to four competences related to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in complex and diverse societies within the digital context: a) active participation, b) rights and responsibilities, c) privacy and security and d) consumer awareness. Informational activities/initiatives are about knowing one's human rights online and acting responsively in a digital society. These activities require a citizenship that actively participates, that is aware of his/her rights and responsibilities, including the right to privacy and security and be aware of the rights of other members of digital society.

3.1.   DCE is mainstreamed in curricula, teacher training and student assessment to give citizens more clear knowledge of their rights and responsibilities while being online.

3.2.   Human rights standards, norms, principles and values are integrated into DCE curricula areas.

3.3.   There is a democratic school system in place around the country.

3.4.   Schools create an offline environment where students develop ethical values, attitudes, and behaviours towards the use of digital tools.

3.5. DCE is designed to raise awareness of discrimination on gender stereotypes and their effects on cyberspace.

3.6. DCE aims to protect and develop all the rights and freedoms specified in international human rights instruments.

3.7. DCE is devised so as to ensure the protection and development of democratic values.

3.8. DCE is designed to protect privacy and personal data.

3.9. DCE gives freedom to individuals, provides them with freedom of thought and speech, prepares an environment for the full development of an individual's personality and avoids indoctrination.

3.10. Students learn how to respect privacy and freedom of expression in the digital world.

3.11. Students learn to assert one's rights and are informed in clear and tailored language and a way that is adapted to their age and capacity for understanding.

3.12. Schools are required to adopt non-discrimination policies protecting all members of the school community.

3.13. Good practices related to responsible social interaction are being disseminated and expanded for the use of ICTs.

3.14. DCE is integrated into quality assurance standards for schools.

3.15. Opportunities are created for students to understand other cultures by communicating with teachers and students from other cultures with digital technology tools.

3.16. DCE teaches children to respect personal data and not to share any information that could harm family and friends and to be "good digital friends".

3.17. DCE makes children aware of the techniques used to capture their attention, to induce them to disclose certain information, to adopt certain purchasing behaviours and to offer them personalised content.

4. Institutional activities / initiatives

This pillar is related to the personal and institutional capacity building of education stakeholders. In general, it covers activities that help to develop capacity building of educational institutions and its stakeholders namely teachers, school leaders, administrative staff and citizens in general. Capacity building includes raising awareness and knowledge through formal, informal and non-formal education, trainings, campaigns and other related activities. It links *Well-being online* that comprises three domains that can help users to engage positively in a digital society: a) ethics and empathy, b) health and well-being and c) e-presence and communication.

4.1. Schools and every formal, informal and non-formal educational activities are redesigned to include digital literacy and citizenship.

4.2. Education staff are provided with appropriate training, tools and other opportunities in teaching practice.

4.3. All staff and managers are sensitized to children's DCE, understand its importance and understand the need for commitment to DCE.

4.4. Staff are able to express their views on DCE and have their opinion taken into consideration in DCE documents/decision-making processes.

4.5. Publications on ethical behaviour standards are provided for educators, families and students on digital platforms.

4.6. Teacher education curricula include knowledge about DCE.

4.7.   Teachers are trained and empowered to teach digital literacy and DCE.

4.8.   Teachers are trained to use metaverse instruments and platforms in education.

4.9.   Higher education institutions such as academia and universities are engaged in DCE activities.

4.10. Universities conduct research and generate resources on digital citizenship pedagogy and education.

4.11. There is support for ready-to-implement, non-prescriptive lesson plans that meet curriculum requirements.

4.12. Digital citizenship education is taught as a lifelong process.

4.13. Student assessments level include knowledge and understanding of DCE.

4.14. There are public awareness activities/campaigns/projects/news on DCE.

4.15. There are DCE programs/campaigns/trainings by the private sector

4.16. There are DCE programs/campaigns/trainings by NGOs

4.17. There are DCE programs campaigns/ trainings by regulatory authorities

4.18. There are public awareness campaigns targeting elderly people and persons with special needs.

4.19. Families are educated and empowered on the use of technology and digital media and extended to parental commitment that respects the interests and privacy of the child.

4.20. Citizens learn to act sincerely and ethically while using ICTs.

4.21. *Digital citizenship education handbook* (https://rm.coe.int/168093586f) and Internet Literacy Handbook (https://rm.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook/1680766c85) is made accessible and available to every citizens.

4.22. The DCE recommendation, including the guidelines contained in the appendix, is translated and disseminated as widely as possible among competent authorities and stakeholders through accessible means, modes and formats of communication.

5. Co-operation activities / initiatives

Internet is a global network and home of a global digital society. In order to build up a safe and free cyberspace, we need cooperation among all-stakeholders at the national and international levels. A peaceful digital society requires a multi-stake holder approach that includes government-private sector equitable partnership, inter-governmental cooperation both at bilateral and multilateral levels, global forums that comprises states, international organizations, private companies, education institutions, regulatory authorities and NGOs. In order to accomplish these goals, the following activities/initiatives need to be achieved.

5.1.   There are multilateral international regulations/instruments on DCE.

5.2.   There are bilateral regulations/instruments on DCE cooperation with other countries.

5.3.   There is participation in international forums/events on DCE.

5.4.   There is co-operation and exchange of experience with other Member States of the Council of Europe on DCE.

5.5.   The national DCE framework is compatible with relevant European and international standards.

5.6.   There is a framework for co-operation between public, private sectors, NGOs and education institutions on DCE in line with the Guidelines to support equitable partnerships between education institutions and the private sector by the Council of Europe.

5.7.   Exchanges of information and sense-making practices among stakeholders takes place frequently.

5.8.   There are inter-institutions partnerships/agreements among different governmental bodies in relation to DCE.

5.9.   There are national common platforms that bring all stakeholders (Education institutions, educators, companies, data protection authorities, NGOs, students, families etc) together for DCE.

5.10.   Private Sector tries to create a child-friendly environment in digital domain.

5.11.   A national framework exists to support partnerships between business enterprises and educational institutions.

5.12.   Business enterprises play a significant role in DCE by creating the appropriate conditions for digital citizenship through safe and secure access to information, digital platforms and services.