

Education

In brief: the Council of Europe's added value

Policy framework

The Council of Europe is Europe's oldest institution, with 47 member states. Its core values and priorities are human rights, democracy and the rule of law. **The European Cultural Convention** provides all its parties (which includes the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and Belarus, the Holy See and Kazakhstan) with an opportunity to take part in the **intergovernmental activities** of the Council of Europe in the **field of education**, focusing on the following areas: higher education reform; language policy; education for democratic citizenship and human rights education; teacher training for intercultural education and multiperspective history teaching. The Pestalozzi Programme for the training of education professionals aims at developing the competences that education professionals need to promote human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding. The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is a separate Partial Agreement open to all Cultural Convention States as well as to others. Currently 31 countries are members of the ECML.

Based upon the political priorities of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE, while the intergovernmental programme covers all 50 countries-signatories of the European Cultural Convention, co-operation programmes are focused on the regions of South East Europe and the countries of the Eastern Partnership and Russia. In addition, following the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, May 2005), the CoE committed itself to a new dialogue between Europe and its **neighbouring regions** – the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia. Since then, the **promotion of intercultural dialogue** has been a major political priority of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Methodology and implementation capacity

The activities of the Council of Europe in the field of education are guided by the work of the **Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE)**, a committee under the direct responsibility

of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE. This committee is composed of national representatives from the 50 member states of the European Cultural Convention. National representatives form an important resource network of the Council of Europe, which allows the organisation to remain close to its beneficiaries, carry out needs analysis in the countries concerned and provide effective solutions.

The working methods rely upon the tools and practical methodology already applied successfully in different member states of the Council of Europe. Comparison of research findings and regular discussions enable ministry officials and representatives of relevant non-governmental organisations to **identify wide-reaching challenges** which need to be addressed through inclusion in the Council of Europe's work programme, adopted by the Committee of Ministers. The **theoretical model for action** is tried out through **pilot projects**. The results are then moulded into either a CoE Convention or a series of **policy recommendations adaptable by member states to their own conditions**. The whole process, the costs of which are shared by the participating countries, lasts usually between three and five years. **No country on its own** could possibly carry out such wide and thorough research at such low cost to itself and obtain such reliable results in such a short time.

The External Presence of the Council of Europe has been established in order to maximise the effectiveness of the Council of Europe's action and enhance its visibility. This will be achieved through the reinforced project-management capabilities at the Council of Europe Offices, better identification of needs *in situ* for capacity-building and increased mobilisation of extra-budgetary financial resources for co-operation programmes, in line with the growing trend for decentralised assistance of the European Union and other major donors.

In the pursuit of common goals, the Council of Europe and EU have already developed a number of **Joint Programmes**. The majority of Joint Programmes are country-specific, but there are also regional and multilateral thematic projects (see <http://jp.coe.int>).

A provision is entered into the Council of Europe Programme of Activities 2012-2013 to **co-finance new Joint Programmes**. The Council of Europe's project

management is subject to the Council of Europe **internal, as well as external, evaluation and auditing.**

Background: education in the overall Council of Europe policy framework

The concept of **democratic culture** was introduced by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe at their Third Summit in Warsaw in May 2005. **The role of education for democratic culture** is emphasised in the Action Plan adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe at their Third Summit in Warsaw in May 2005.

In 2007, in Istanbul, the European Ministers of Education focused on **inclusive education.**

The Recommendation 'On the public responsibility for Higher Education and Research' adopted in 2007 identified multiple purposes of education as preparation for employment; preparation for democratic citizenship; personal development; the development of a broad, advanced knowledge base. It also identified the main areas of public responsibility for higher education.

In 2008, the **White Paper on intercultural dialogue: living together in equal dignity** was developed and approved by the Committee of Ministers. The White Paper identifies education as one of the key areas for the success of intercultural dialogue.

In June 2009 the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1880 (2009) on *History teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas* was adopted.

In May 2010 the **Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education** was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Charter is the reference point in Europe for promoting democratic citizenship and human rights education. Comprehensive document, including the youth field.

It was developed after a decade of intergovernmental co-operation and has been translated into 19 languages

At their meeting in Ljubljana on 4 and 5 June 2010, the Ministers of Education of the 50 states parties to the European Cultural Convention examined the **role of teachers in enhancing sustainable democratic societies in Europe.**

In 2011, a Recommendation on *intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching* was adopted.

The Report of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe '**Living Together: Combining diversity and freedom in Europe in the twenty-first century**' also gives a prominent place to education and calls on Member States of the Council of Europe to develop 'intercultural competencies' as a core element of school curricula, and to 'facilitate the mobility of students and education staff at all levels as an important means to promote intercultural education'.

A Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy was adopted in June 2012.

The Council of Europe policy in education finds its practical implementation in a number of key areas of the education programme, namely:

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) are closely interrelated and mutually supportive. They differ in **focus and scope** rather than in goals and practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.

Democratic citizenship is not limited to the citizen's legal status and to the voting right this status implies. It includes all aspects of life in a democratic society. Democratic citizenship is therefore related to a vast range of topics such as **sustainable development, participation of people with disabilities in society, gender mainstreaming, prevention of terrorism and many other areas.**

History and history teaching have been a focus for the Council of Europe's work on education since its inception. From the start and as stated in the European Cultural Convention, the Council of Europe recognised the importance of history as a basis for the education of the citizens of Europe and its role in

bridging differences and bringing people together by establishing mutual understanding and confidence between the peoples of Europe.

Language Policy programmes provide a platform for co-operation between language education policy-makers and aim at promoting plurilingualism and linguistic diversity. All languages in education are addressed: foreign languages, languages of schooling, minority and regional languages, etc.

Activities relating to the particular competences in languages of schooling necessary for successful learning and social inclusion are developed.

Initiatives addressing the linguistic integration of adult migrants include research, instruments, surveys and a dedicated website to help member states to respond to needs of both the host country and migrants in the field of language education and evaluation.

Higher Education and Research:

The work of the Council of Europe in the field of higher education and research focuses on issues related to the recognition of qualifications, public responsibility for higher education and research, higher education governance as well as other fields relevant for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Within the EHEA the Council of Europe has been a consistent voice for linking structural reform to a broader consideration of the overall purposes of higher education, including developing citizenship and the ability and will of learners to engage in intercultural dialogue.

The Council of Europe cooperates with the US Steering Committee of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy as well as with the European Wergeland Centre and the International Association of Universities on including values and standards for democracy and intercultural dialogue into higher education policies and practice.

Some other **examples of the Council of Europe's multidimensional approach** to education include:

The *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* is a cross-disciplinary tool designed to encourage people to think about and learn from encounters with people from different backgrounds thereby developing their intercultural competences.

Explore and Act for Human Rights: This project intended to enable European secondary school students to become familiar with the key principles of European law relating to human rights and to understand how the European Court of Human Rights and other important Council of Europe monitoring bodies function.

Training of Education Professionals (Pestalozzi Programme): The Pestalozzi Programme is the Council of Europe training programme for the professional development of teachers and education actors.

Education for Roma children is also an important part of the Council of Europe programme. In 2009 a Recommendation on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe (Rec CM (2009)4) was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Comparative advantages and added value

In the field of education the Council of Europe has developed a number of effective legal instruments, which ensure standard-setting in education in the beneficiary countries.

While the the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) establishes an overall framework for the Council of Europe intergovernmental activities in the field of education, culture and youth, other instruments are more specific for different education fields.

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165) is the only legally binding text of the European Higher Education Area and is among the ten top active Council of Europe conventions, having been ratified by 53 countries (including non-member states of the Council of Europe).

The Council of Europe *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*, which was adopted in 2010 is an important reference point for all of Europe and will be used as a basis for the Council of Europe's future work in this field in the coming years

Reference instruments are developed to enhance the quality of language programmes and the transparency/comparability of language qualifications such as the *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) – available in 38 languages. The *European Language Portfolio* (ELP), a personal tool for learners, is based on the CEFR as are EU programmes such as the *European Indicator of Language Competence*

The Council of Europe legal instruments provide an important basis for its co-operation activities, based on promotion of the Council of Europe standards in the beneficiary countries.

Standard-setting and policy work enable the Council of Europe to set up high-level networks of experts in specific fields. These experts are then called upon for use in the co-operation activities.

For example, in the field of democratic citizenship and human rights education, the CoE supports a **network of EDC/HRE co-ordinators** appointed by the Ministries of Education as well as **regional networks on EDC/HRE**. The results of this work are policy tools and a rich array of materials for teachers.

The Council of Europe also has **privileged contacts with the Ministries of Education** through its standing conference of Education Ministers and Steering Committee, thereby being able to ‘work within the system’ and also to deal with **politically-sensitive subjects**.

Geographic contextualisation

South Eastern Europe and Turkey

The Council of Europe has been actively working in South-Eastern Europe for many years, both through intergovernmental work, as well as through the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Projects.

The Council of Europe has supported a South East Europe network for democratic citizenship since 2007 and more recently, a regional Summer Academy was established in 2012 in Montenegro in co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre. Further information is below about its sister academy in Poland.

A joint programme on Regional Support for Inclusive Education in the Western Balkans is due to start in late 2012, as well as a project on higher education in BiH.

Joint projects in the field of **democratic citizenship and human rights education** have been carried out in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (2005-2008 and 2009-2011) and **Serbia**, resulting in revised materials – some of which are now used in other parts of Europe - and trained teachers. The CoE also played a key role in development of new history textbooks in BiH, adopted by all Ministers of Education. which were later on adopted by all Ministers of Education. As a result of the adoption of the Guidelines training activities for textbook authors were organised and the new history textbooks were adopted in 2007.

The joint EU/CoE project ‘**Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Turkey**’ started in 2011 and has already developed a new curriculum for secondary school on democracy and human rights

A multifaceted project composed of seven policy areas – including education for democratic citizenship, history training, Roma education, language policy, legislation, teacher training and higher education – was carried out in Kosovo¹ (2008-2011)

The Council of Europe has also been active in Cyprus since 2004 in order to strengthen conflict transformation and peace building processes through history teaching. It has managed to bring history teachers from both major communities together in cooperation around common goals. The result was the first trilingual (English, Greek and Turkish) supplementary interactive teaching pack introduced at the highest political level in 2011.

Eastern Partnership and Russia

The Council of Europe has built up considerable expertise in supporting educational reforms in the countries of the Eastern Partnership, through the organisation of numerous bilateral and regional activities, seminars and training workshops in those countries.

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

From 1999 to 2004 the Council of Europe implemented the Black Sea Initiative on history teaching, which resulted in the preparation of the first teaching pack on the history of this region.

In the field of citizenship and human rights education, the Black Sea and Baltics network² was set up in 2007, with the aim of facilitating cooperation among the countries of the region in the field of EDC/HRE.

In 2010 the Polish Ministry of National Education, the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) and the Council of Europe launched an initiative of the Warsaw Summer Academy on "Democracy at School". The Summer Academy is a concrete vehicle for closing the gap between policy and practice. The Summer Academy took place in Poland in 2010 and 2011 with great success, reaching out to participants from countries of the Eastern Partnership Programme, as well as from Russia, Poland and Nordic countries. It has high level of support in the Council of Europe member states.

In the field of higher education the Council of Europe has been providing support in the development of national qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, university governance and student participation.

The joint EU/CoE project '**Minorities in Russia: developing languages, culture, media and media society**' was successfully carried out in the Russian Federation (2009-2012).

Council of Europe neighbourhood

In 2010 Kazakhstan became Party to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe (CETS No. 018). The Council of Europe also advised Kazakhstan prior to its accession to the European Higher Education Area.

The upcoming joint EU/CoE project '**Supporting educational policies in democratic citizenship and human rights education**' in Kazakhstan, which is due to start in 2012 will contribute to the implementation of recently adopted National Human Rights Action plan and its extension.

Kazakh authorities also expressed their interest to have the Council of Europe involved in the work on the issues of linguistic and cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

² The following countries are part of the Black Sea and Baltics network: Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are signatories to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165), also known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

There is not yet active co-operation with other countries of the Council of Europe neighbourhood in the field of education.

Websites:

1. Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education:

www.coe.int/edc

2. History

www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/historyteaching

3. Language Policy

www.coe.int/lang

www.coe.int/portfolio

www.coe.int/lang-migrants

www.coe.int/t/DG4/autobiography

4. Higher Education

www.coe.int/higher-education

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