

Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education

20th Session - "Educational policies for democratic citizenship and social cohesion: challenges and strategies for Europe", Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000

Resolution on results and conclusions of the completed projects in the 1997-2000 medium-term programme

The European Ministers of Education, meeting in Cracow for their 20th session,

DRAWING ATTENTION to:

- the adoption at their 19th session, in Kristiansand (1997), of a medium-term work programme comprising three projects: Education for Democratic Citizenship, Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20th Century, and Language Policies for a Multicultural and Multilingual Europe;
- the decision at the same session to set up permanent dialogue on educational reform with a view to democratic security and social cohesion;
- the Legislative Reform Programme in Higher Education and Research, launched in 1992 in order to meet the needs of the new member states in this field;

Having discussed on that occasion the conclusions of the three projects and the Legislative Reform Programme in Higher Education and Research at the present session:

1. STATE first of all that the themes chosen are, in the present European context, still essential factors in the development of policies aimed at achieving democratic security, mutual understanding, tolerance, pluralism and harmonious and peaceful relations within the member states and throughout Europe;
2. NOTE with satisfaction that at the Strasbourg Summit (1997) and the Committee of Ministers session in Budapest in 1999 on the occasion of the Organisation's 50th anniversary, the main components of the medium-term programme were endorsed as matching the Council of Europe's general lines of action and priorities;
3. CONSIDER that the three projects are positive examples of multicultural co-operation as they concern all educational systems beyond national specificities and CONGRATULATE the Council of Europe on having completed them within the agreed time and in compliance with the objectives that were set;
4. WELCOME the quality of the results, which have made it possible to conduct:
 - detailed study of the chosen themes and adaptation of them to new circumstances;
 - preparation of proposals and guidelines for education policies which serve member states as a reference for their educational reforms;

- production of teaching materials and resources which can be used directly for both formal and non-formal education;
 - introduction of innovative working methods in keeping with the new requirements resulting from the greater diversity of situations in an enlarged Council of Europe.
5. WELCOME the conduct of these projects in co-operation and synergy with various Council of Europe bodies as well as with other international organisations, in particular Unesco and the European Union and non-governmental organisations;
6. STRONGLY RECOMMEND that the results and conclusions of these projects be widely disseminated by all appropriate means, not only to government bodies but also to all players in the education system;
7. REQUEST that these results be taken into consideration in future in the drawing up, implementing and adjustment of national educational reforms;
8. OBSERVE that the results obtained strengthen their belief that such intergovernmental and pan-European projects provide the necessary basis for responding to assistance and requests for advice from states or regions that are encountering particular difficulties;
- a. as regards the Education for Democratic Citizenship project**
9. NOTE that the project has developed a common approach to education for democratic citizenship, responding to the needs of today's Europe from the standpoint of concept, approach, practices and methods, and in particular, has:
- enlarged today's understanding of democratic citizenship in the education dimension as well as the ethical, political, legal, cultural, socio-economic and psycho-sociological dimensions;
 - shown how education for democratic citizenship can contribute to social cohesion through learning to participate in the life of society, to assume responsibility and to live together;
 - identified methods of learning, training, teaching, and school organisation which are in keeping with participative education strategies and non-formal education;
 - analysed and networked a number of practical experiments (citizenship sites) illustrating innovative approaches in action;
 - produced studies, teaching materials and new educational tools (Internet sites, a compendium of good practices and so on);
 - identified the elements of the common guidelines for education for democratic citizenship (appended to this resolution), laying down a comprehensive, integrated approach to policies and practices in this field;
10. RECOMMEND that the Council for Cultural Co-operation's Education Committee:

- finalise and disseminate the draft common guidelines for education for democratic citizenship as an instrument for framing education policy;
- prepare in accordance with the Budapest Declaration a draft Committee of Ministers' recommendation based on the achievements of the project and especially on the appended draft common guidelines (see the Appendix);
- ensure that the results are disseminated by all appropriate means, in particular through an interactive Internet site and a European campaign promoting democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities;
- apply the results in implementing support and partnership activities in response to special situations or needs;
- develop the networks of citizenship experiments and sites;
- strengthen co-operation in this field with other international organisations, non-governmental organisations and regional initiatives such as, in particular, the enlarged Graz Process;
- accentuate, in their future work in this area, aspects more directly linked to educational policy and practice;
- in this context, further develop in elements linked to organisation, content and methods of both formal and non-formal human rights education provision.

b. as regards the Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20th Century project

11. REAFFIRM that history teaching, a constant concern of the Council of Europe since it was founded, is a key factor in the development of democratic citizenship;
12. POINT OUT that the aim of the project is not to replace national approaches but to enrich them by strengthening the European aspect of history teaching and establishing a basis for dialogue and joint examination of mutual concerns or moments of shared history;
13. NOTE that the project has:
 - made significant progress towards a pluralist and tolerant conception of history teaching, in particular through development of the individual's research skills and critical thinking;
 - highlighted innovative teaching methods that make appropriate and effective use of the new information technologies and the new sources available;
 - developed examples of open approaches to sensitive issues in 20th century European history, approaches that take different conceptions and points of view into consideration;
 - set out the principles and methods of a new approach to basic and further training of history teachers;

- made a practical contribution to study of the Holocaust and development of methods of teaching about it;
14. UNDERTAKE to take the achievements and outcomes of the project into account in their national education policy;
15. WELCOME the fact that the thinking and concrete results of this project have already provided the basis for schemes to reform history teaching and textbooks in a number of European countries and regions;
16. RECOMMEND that:
- the Education Committee use the results so far and the conclusions of the project's final conference, which will be held in Bonn in March 2001, to draft a Committee of Ministers recommendation on history teaching with particular emphasis on teacher training;
 - the Council of Europe arrange for dissemination of the project's results, through the appropriate use of the information and communication technologies and in particular hold a series of national and/or regional seminars over the next two years;

c. as regards the Language Policies for a Multilingual and Multicultural Europe project

17. REITERATE their firm belief that the development of language learning in the present European context is also an integral part of developing a civic development and training approach that accommodates everyone's local, regional, national and European allegiances;
18. NOTE that the project has:
- discussed and developed practical instruments for encouraging mutual understanding, mobility and social cohesion in a multilingual Europe;
 - finalised a Common European Reference Framework which is an invaluable tool for developing language policies and takes account of the multilingualism and cultural diversity within European countries and in Europe as a whole;
 - developed the criteria for preparation and validation of a European language Portfolio;
 - developed instruments which can be used in national language policy reforms, including those for the promotion of regional, minority or less widely spoken languages;
 - given concrete illustrations of the links between language policies, education for democratic citizenship and social cohesion;
19. ADOPT a resolution on the European Language Portfolio.
20. RECOMMEND that the Education Committee:

- conduct a European Year of Languages in 2001, jointly with the European Union and with the support of Unesco, and assess its results with a view to future promotion of language learning;
- take the appropriate steps, during and after the European Year of Languages, to disseminate the Common European Reference Framework and the European Languages Portfolio and promote their use;
- continue its activities to assist member states in framing and implementing language policies that aid communication and co-operation between individuals and groups with differing linguistic and cultural identities;

d. as regards the Legislative Reform Programme in Higher Education and Research

21. POINT OUT that over the past decade, the new central and east European member states have had the tremendous challenge of transforming their higher-education systems in order to make themselves more democratic and become full members of the European family;
22. ARE PLEASED TO NOTE that the Legislative Reform Programme in Higher Education and Research has made an appropriate, constructive and effective contribution to meeting these challenges and that the project was carried out with financial and professional support from all the member states;
23. WELCOME the shared intention of the Higher Education and Research Committee and the Education Committee to use the experience acquired as a basis for a common strategy of partnership for development of education policies and practices in areas for which the Council of Europe has immediate responsibility;
24. INVITE the Education Committee and the Higher Education and Research Committee to incorporate this aim into their bilateral and multilateral actions, and STRESS that financial contributions by member states are essential to the continued success of this action;
25. particularly URGE the Council of Europe, through bilateral and multilateral action regionally as part of the Bologna Process and in co-operation with other European partners, to help consolidate convergence of the various systems needed to create a European area of higher education;
26. WELCOME the fact that the programme has highlighted and validated the mission of higher education in the development of democratic society, one presupposing high standards as regards accessibility, equal opportunity, professionalism, international-mindedness and development of a participatory and tolerant spirit;
27. OBSERVE with satisfaction that this project has aided the emergence of European consensus on the general principles for organising and managing a higher education system founded on the common values of freedom of speech and academic independence as referred to in the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1989 Magna Carta of European Universities;
28. NOTE with interest that the programme has identified a list of functions and responsibilities specific to the various tiers of the system;

29. RECOMMEND that, in association with the Observatory of Fundamental Values and Rights of Universities set up by the Conference of European Rectors under the Bologna Process, the Higher Education and Research Committee continue its work on standards for organising and managing higher education systems.