

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (83) 4

### OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF AN AWARENESS OF EUROPE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 April 1983  
at the 358th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the European Cultural Convention (1954) which underlines the need for education for European understanding ;

Recalling its Resolution (64) 11 on "Civics and European Education" ;

Having regard to the findings of the Council for Cultural Co-operation's Project No. 1 on secondary education, "Preparation for life" (1978-82) ;

Having regard to the Council of Europe's Second Medium-Term Plan (1981-86), and in particular to :

i. Objective 10.1 — the encouragement of an awareness of the cultural identity of Europe in its diversity and the recognition of possibilities of dialogue and mutual understanding with other parts of the world ;

ii. Objective 11.3 — the enhancement of the contribution of national education systems to public awareness of Europe and the stimulation of active co-operation and communication among Europeans ;

Noting the Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 18th Session (Paris, 19 November 1974),

Recommends the governments of member states :

a. to take account, in the implementation of their policies for secondary education, of the principles set out in the Appendix to this recommendation, or to draw them to the attention of the competent bodies concerned, so that they can be considered and, where appropriate, taken into account ;

b. to ensure that this recommendation is distributed as widely as possible among all persons and bodies concerned with the promotion of an awareness of Europe among pupils and teachers.

**Principles for the guidance of those drawing up educational programmes  
for the promotion of an awareness of Europe in secondary schools**

**1. Aims**

1.1. Programmes to promote an awareness of Europe in secondary schools may have a wide variety of content which will be determined by the needs and interests of individual countries, regions and schools.

1.2. In spite of any differences of content, these programmes should encourage all young Europeans to :

- i. show respect for, and solidarity with, peoples of other nations and cultures ;
- ii. see themselves not only as citizens of their own regions and countries, but also as citizens of Europe and of the wider world.

1.3. All young Europeans should be helped to acquire :

- i. a willingness and ability to preserve and promote democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms ;
- ii. the knowledge and skills needed to cope with life in an interdependent world, characterised by diversity and by constant and rapid change ;
- iii. an understanding of their common cultural heritage, its contribution to other civilisations, and the debt which it owes to those civilisations ;
- iv. an awareness of the institutions and organisations set up to promote European co-operation and a willingness to support their ideals and activities.

**2. Approaches**

It is possible to teach about Europe in secondary schools through separate subjects, or through interdisciplinary courses. While schools must be allowed freedom to choose those approaches which best suit their particular situations, care should be taken to :

- i. build on what will have been learned about Europe during the earlier years of schooling ;
- ii. ensure that what is taught about Europe has an overall coherence. Fragmentation of knowledge and understanding can be avoided by careful planning and by cross-referencing (that is, co-ordination) between subjects.

**3. Content**

3.1. In teaching about Europe, secondary schools should seek to give pupils a full understanding of the following key concepts :

- i. democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms ;
- ii. tolerance and pluralism ;
- iii. interdependence and co-operation ;
- iv. human and cultural unity and diversity ;
- v. conflict and change.

3.2. These concepts can best be illustrated by themes and topics which demonstrate the need for international understanding and co-operation, such as :

- i. the prevention of war and the non-violent solution of conflict ;
- ii. the conservation of the European cultural heritage ;
- iii. the impact of migration ;
- iv. the preservation of ecological balance ;
- v. the best use of energy and natural resources ;
- vi. changing needs in communications and trade ;
- vii. relations with the developing countries.

3.3. It is obvious that modern languages, history, geography and social studies have a vital contribution to make to the promotion of an awareness of Europe in secondary schools. But due attention should be paid to the contribution which can be made by science and technology, artistic activities, music and indeed of almost all subjects in the secondary school curriculum.

#### **4. Methods**

4.1. The diversity of school systems in member states inevitably leads to differences in classroom practice. Nevertheless, in implementing programmes designed to increase an awareness of Europe, many teachers will wish to :

i. use methodologies which are active, investigational and discovery-based ; use projects which involve personal research and interviewing ; exploit local and national links with other countries ;

ii. give young people opportunities for active participation, decision-making and responsibility within the school community in order to prepare them for life in a free democratic society ;

iii. encourage pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities with an international dimension, for example participation in the European Schools Day competition, UNESCO Clubs and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project, the establishment of European clubs in schools, school correspondence and exchanges, visits to the European institutions and events linked to town twinnings ;

iv. encourage pupils to take an informed and critical interest in coverage of international events by the mass media ;

v. make use of primary sources and material from other countries and from international organisations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental.

4.2. As European society is becoming increasingly multicultural, schools should actively involve people from other cultural backgrounds in the learning process, wherever possible. This would help pupils to develop truly tolerant attitudes and a realisation that—despite differences of colour, creed and customs—all share a basic common dignity and basic common needs.

#### **5. Teacher training**

The success of programmes to develop an awareness of Europe in secondary schools depends, to a large extent, on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those who teach them. It is, therefore, essential to provide appropriate courses of both pre-service and in-service education, not only for practising teachers, but also for senior administrators, inspectors, advisers and school principals. Furthermore, teachers and other educators should be encouraged to avail themselves of opportunities for studies in, and exchanges with, other European countries.

#### **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

In order to avoid duplication of effort and to make the best possible use of resources, there should be careful monitoring and evaluation of programmes to promote an awareness of Europe in secondary schools in member states. This would ascertain the extent to which :

i. the aims and objectives of the programmes are being achieved ;

ii. the interests and needs of the learners are being satisfactorily met.

Such evaluation could also lead to a sharing of experiences among member states and to the identification and dissemination of good practice.