
1532nd meeting, 18 June 2025

7 Education and culture

7.1 Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)

a. Abridged report of the 7th plenary meeting (Strasbourg, 17-19 March 2025)

Item to be considered by the GR-C at its meeting on 3 June 2025

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) held its 7th plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 17-19 March 2025, with Marie-Anne Persoons (Belgium) in the Chair.

The agenda of the meeting is contained in Appendix I. The full list of decisions including the list of participants and the working documents of the session are available at MyCloud.

Items for decision of the Committee of Ministers

1. The CDEDU approved the draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)... of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Qualifications and Linguistic Competences of Refugees in Europe and mandated the Secretariat to submit the document to the Committee of Ministers for adoption and the explanatory report for information.

Items for information of the Committee of Ministers

2. The CDEDU took note of the communication from Matjaž Gruden, the Director for Democracy, on the political context, in particular regarding the development of a New Democratic Pact for Europe, announced by the Secretary General. This Pact presents a crucial opportunity to enhance the visibility of the CDEDU within the Council of Europe, as education will play a pivotal role in this initiative.

3. The CDEDU welcomed the 2024 Education Department Activity Report and the information provided by the Head of Department Villano Qiriazzi on the priority actions to be carried out until the end of the year.

4. The CDEDU took note of the progress made by the working group of the European Space for Citizenship Education and encouraged the Secretariat to continue to consult key stakeholders as part of the development process of the preparation of the European Space for Citizenship Education.

¹ This document has been classified restricted until examination by the Committee of Ministers.

5. The CDEDU welcomed the progress made by the expert group on the integration of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in Vocational Education and Training (VET). The project of RFCDC and VET is a first in Europe, and it created high expectations in the field, which motivated the elaboration of a second publication in a second phase of the project. The new publication analyses in more depth the implementation of the RFCDC in VET in specific areas, such as curriculum; assessment and quality; teacher training; in-company training; implementing the RFCDC in VET schools; inclusion; the role of social partners; and learners' voice and participation. The CDEDU endorsed the continuation of the project in its third phase, notably by the preparation of a future CM Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.

6. The CDEDU endorsed the Draft Guidance Document "Applying the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture to Education for Sustainable Development" and asked the Secretariat to proceed with its publication. Part of the Council of Europe's Education Strategy 2024-2030 ("Learners First"), this initiative supports Pillar 1, "Renewing the democratic and civic mission of education", reinforcing ESD's role in citizenship education. Aligned with the Reykjavík Declaration, the guidance document promotes democratic competences—such as critical thinking and co-operation—to empower learners in addressing sustainability challenges while ensuring inclusive, quality education.

7. The CDEDU endorsed the Education Resilience Toolbox aiming at ensuring the right to education in times of emergency (EDURES) for publication. The EDURES – Education Resilience Toolbox was developed to help education systems uphold the right to quality and inclusive education during emergencies and crises, building on six resilience principles co-developed with member states. Based on piloting experiences in Albania and Italy, EDURES provides strategic guidance for assessing and strengthening education system resilience, supporting broader international commitments and the Council of Europe's initiatives on education in crisis situations. The CDEDU expressed gratitude to Albania and Italy for their commitment and support.

8. The CDEDU endorsed the Toolkit for a Democratic and Inclusive School Culture, noting the practical nature of the toolkit, grounded in a rights-based approach in view of building up a democratic culture. Conscious of the many quality materials supporting inclusive education and democratic school culture developed through Council of Europe co-operation programmes over the past two decades, the CDEDU launched this initiative in 2024 to value these materials and to decontextualise them for all member states. The intention was to create a practical and operational toolbox to guide policy makers, school management and teachers, students, parents and the wider community to create a democratic and inclusive school culture. The toolkit will contribute to Pillar I of the Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030 "Renewing the democratic and civic mission of education". Over 65 resources developed within Council of Europe-supported projects were mapped, a structure decided upon with the following topics:

- Tackling discrimination and exclusion in the context of disability.
- Democracy and competences for democratic culture
- Tackling discrimination based on ethnic background
- Living with controversy
- Improving engagement and participation of pupils in schools
- Addressing violence and bullying in schools

9. The CDEDU took note of the latest developments within the Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED). The CDEDU welcomed the report with the results of the survey 'Student Perception and Awareness of Fraud in Education' and endorsed it for publication. The report presents findings from a Europe-wide survey developed by the ETINED Platform, with responses from 5,333 higher education students across 40 countries. Launched in July 2024 and aligned with Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering education fraud, the study explores higher education students' knowledge, experiences, and perceptions related to education fraud. It examines key themes such as prevention and protection strategies, the role of technology, and the importance of community engagement. The report highlights the need to raise awareness, promote ethical decision-making, and foster a culture of transparency and integrity to prevent and combat education fraud and safeguard the quality of education in member States.

10. The CDEDU endorsed the report “Open School Data in European Education Systems” for publication. The report explores how member States are developing and implementing open school data initiatives, offering a snapshot of current practices, innovations, and challenges across Europe. Produced jointly by UNESCO’s IIEP and the Council of Europe’s ETINED Platform, it provides lessons and guidance for promoting transparency, improving educational governance, and combating fraud through effective open data policies. The CDEDU instructed the ETINED platform to hold in-depth discussions on the study’s key recommendations at the upcoming ETINED plenary in November 2025 in Malta, with a view to the development of policy guidelines on open school data.
11. The CDEDU took note of the state of play of the project “Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud” as presented by the Secretariat and of the call for voluntary contributions. The CDEDU welcomed the voluntary contribution of Italy to this project.
12. The CDEDU endorsed the project proposal on “Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications” and adopted the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications and mandated the Secretariat to establish the Working Group. The project is aimed at understanding and addressing the intersection of AI with higher education credential evaluation. The programme will equip stakeholders with tools and knowledge to integrate AI responsibly; set global standards for AI in qualifications recognition aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and foster collaboration across sectors to address the ethical, technical and social dimensions of AI in education.
13. The CDEDU took note of the progress of the project on Democratic mission of higher education and of the report on the Conference on Academic Freedom in Action which took place in November 2024. The Conference was held to address the growing threats to academic freedom and its essential role in maintaining democracy. The event gathered scholars, policymakers, human rights defenders, students, and legal experts, offering a platform for rigorous debate on the status of academic freedom across Europe. Five panel discussions explored the erosion of academic freedoms, legal frameworks, the role of universities in democratic societies, and the impact of external pressures on academic institutions. Discussions also included judges from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Scholars at Risk, and university representatives, emphasising the intersections of human rights and academic freedom. A key outcome of the conference was the recognition that academic freedom is not merely an institutional privilege but a core pillar of democracy. The event stressed the need for the strengthening of legal protections, university autonomy, and mechanisms for countering external threats, including political interference, online harassment, and market-driven constraints on research.
14. The CDEDU took note of the preliminary draft programme of the Global Forum on Higher Education 2025 “Renewal of Democratic Mission of Higher Education” scheduled to take place in Prague on 3 and 4 June 2025 and thanked the Czech authorities for hosting this event. The Global Forum marks the eighth instalment of a collaborative effort between the Council of Europe and the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy.
15. At their last ministerial session, the Ministers of Education committed to advancing democratic citizenship education by embedding student rights in policy frameworks and education governance. This marks a significant step toward codifying principles that safeguard students' rights across Europe and ensuring their meaningful participation in educational governance and democratic life. In this context the CDEDU took note of the conclusions of the overview study of existing instruments at international, regional and national level relating to students' rights.
16. The CDEDU approved the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on the Council of Europe’s Student Rights Charter and mandated the Secretariat to establish it, ensuring broad representation and expertise. The CDEDU requested the Working Group to present progress updates, with a first draft of the Charter expected by the end of 2025 and the final proposal for adoption by the end of 2026.

17. The CDEDU took note of the state of play of the project on Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications and of comments of delegations. The ad hoc working group on automatic recognition, established by the CDEDU in 2023, conducted a feasibility study, held multiple consultations with key stakeholders, and recommended the development of a legally binding convention to strengthen and build on the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Following the group's enlargement and extended mandate until 2026, the CDEDU is preparing a formal proposal, based on the group's work, to seek authorisation from the Committee of Ministers to launch negotiations for the new legal instrument. The CDEDU agreed to hold an in-depth discussion at its next plenary session in September 2025, on a concrete draft text outlining the building blocks of a future legal instrument, with a view to deciding on the type of instrument to be developed. The CDEDU noted that should the option be taken of preparing a binding legal instrument, draft Ad Hoc Terms of Reference granting the CDEDU the role of negotiating and drafting the text of the legal instrument should be prepared by the next plenary session of the CDEDU.

18. The CDEDU welcomed and took note of the progress made on the Language Education Policy Profile Self-evaluation Tool and the decision to pilot it in up to four member States, as well as the proposed format and structure of the Policy Toolbox. They took note of the draft revised Romani guidelines and of the update on the Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation Project in Greece, Slovakia and Slovenia.

19. The CDEDU took note of the results of the 2024 European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) programme of activities. They reiterated the support to the ECML activities and the fruitful co-operation between the Language policy intergovernmental programme supervised by the CDEDU and the programme of the ECML.

20. The CDEDU took note of the progress and main developments within the Intergovernmental Programmes on History Education and the Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity. They welcomed the preparation of the Fourth Forum for History Education entitled "Reaffirming the role of history education in the XXI century: Where learners meet history", which will take place at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Hungary on 11-13 June 2025, and noted the request to designate participants to the Forum.

21. The CDEDU endorsed the draft outline for draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2025).. of the Committee of Ministers to member States on history education in the digital age and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with its preparation. The new recommendation will address the evolving challenges and opportunities of the digital age, building on the foundations laid by Recommendation Rec(2001)15 on history teaching in twenty-first century Europe and the outcomes of the Second Annual Forum on History Education. Developed under the guidance of the GT-HIST Working Group, the Recommendation will aim to promote high quality history education while responding to contemporary issues such as historical distortion, technological impact and the misuse of history. The CDEDU supported the development of this initiative, which would further promote the place of history education in democratic societies in an increasingly digital world.

22. The CDEDU welcomed the results of 2024 programme of activities of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE).

23. The CDEDU welcomed the provisional report of the Launch conference of the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education and took note of its recommendations. The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 was officially opened at a launch conference held in Strasbourg on 23-24 January 2025. The European Year 2025 aims to give new impetus to the development and promotion of digital citizenship education in all Council of Europe member states. The specific objectives of the conference were to deepen the understanding of the integrated approach to digital citizenship education, to promote the take-up of the European Year by all member States and to enhance strategies to address the challenges of effective implementation from a political, educational and cultural perspective. The conference was attended by around 110 participants, including government representatives, experts, education practitioners, media, technology industry representatives, youth representative bodies, parents' associations, young people, parents and carers, and other stakeholders in the field of digital education.

24. The CDEDU approved the Draft report of the Review of the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education. The review was conducted through extensive desk research and an online validation survey. The desk research covered national, European and international sources to map the relevant policies, actions and co-operation frameworks implemented at national and international level in the field of digital citizenship education. The findings of the desk research at national level were then validated through an online survey with national authorities who are part of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), as well as Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) Promoters' Network.

25. The CDEDU endorsed the outline for draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2025).. of the Committee of Ministers to member States on artificial intelligence literacy and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with its preparation. The development of a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on AI literacy aims to ensure that education addresses the impact of AI on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, while promoting the active participation and agency of teachers and learners, as outlined in the Education Strategy 2024–2030. The CDEDU emphasised the need for a balanced approach that reflects both the challenges and opportunities of AI, grounded in fundamental rights and the Council of Europe's values. The draft outline paper proposes that AI literacy — encompassing technological understanding, responsible use, and societal impact — should be the cornerstone of the recommendation, advocating for an inclusive, ethical, and human-centric approach to education about AI.

26. The CDEDU took note of the Feasibility study and supported the proposal to develop a European Reference Framework for the Evaluation of Educational Technologies in education systems. The Feasibility study examines current practices in the evaluation and governance of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) systems and their alignment with the Council of Europe's core values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. It maps key trends, risks, and stakeholder needs while analysing existing evaluation frameworks and identifying structural gaps. The study highlights areas requiring safeguarding, such as cognitive development, human oversight, digital citizenship, and democratic participation. Ultimately, it explores potential models for a European Reference Framework for the Evaluation of Educational Technologies (Framework), proposing harmonised standards and governance mechanisms to ensure ethical, transparent, and effective AI integration in education.

27. The CDEDU agreed to make a proposal for the establishment of a Committee of Experts on Artificial Intelligence and Education (EDU-IA).

28. The CDEDU took note of the revision of the Preliminary draft recommendation of the CDENF on age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

29. The CDEDU mandated the Secretariat to explore with the Council of Europe Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) the modalities of co-operation on the drafting of the Recommendation on Peace Education in Youth Work.

30. The CDEDU took note of the major events that UNESCO HLSC on SDG4 is planning to organise in 2025 and asked the Bureau and the Secretariat to explore the contribution of the Council of Europe in the International Teachers Conference to be organised in Chile in 2025.

31. The CDEDU agreed to make a proposal aiming to modify its Terms of Reference for the 2026-2027 biennium.

32. The CDEDU re-elected Marie-Anne Persoons (Belgium) as the Chair of the CDEDU and Mélanie Lizé (France) as the Vice-Chair of the CDEDU.

Other observations

33. The CDEDU decided to hold its next plenary meeting from 23 to 25 September 2025, in Strasbourg.

APPENDIX 1 – DRAFT AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Political context – update on events since the previous Plenary session
3. Report on the 2024 activities
4. CDEDU Terms of Reference and key deliverables for 2026-2027
5. Renewal of the Civic Mission of Education
 - 5.1. European Space for Citizenship Education
 - 5.2. Guidance document with recommendations on applying the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in specific areas
 - 5.3. Guidance document on applying the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- 6.1. Education in Times of Crisis and Emergencies
- 6.2. Toolkit on an Inclusive and Democratic School Culture
7. Higher Education
 - 7.1. Draft Recommendation CM/Rec(2025).. of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Valuing the Qualifications and Linguistic Competences of Refugees in Europe
 - 7.2. Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)
 - 7.3. Project proposal on “Artificial intelligence and Recognition of qualifications 2025-2027” and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group
 - 7.4. Democratic mission of higher education
 - 7.5. Project Proposal on “Students Rights Charter 2025-2027” and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group
 - 7.6. Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications
8. Language policy
 - 8.1. Language Education Policy Profile – Self-evaluation Tool and Policy Toolbox
 - 8.2. Draft revised guidelines on Romani language – Implementation of the Romani Language Policy experimentation in Slovakia, Slovenia and Greece.
 - 8.3. European Centre of Modern Language (ECML) – Highlights of the results of 2024 programme of activities
9. History Education
 - 9.1. Proposal on a Draft recommendation CM/Rec(2025).. of the Committee of Ministers to member States on history education in the digital age
 - 9.2. Intergovernmental programme on history education and Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity – latest developments
 - 9.3. Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) – Highlights of the results of 2024 programme of activities
10. Digital Transformation in education
 - 10.1. Digital Citizenship Education (DCE)
 - 10.2. Artificial Intelligence and Education
11. Co-operation with the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

12. Transversal co-operation and co-operation with UNESCO/SDG4
14. Any other business
15. Adoption of the list of decisions
16. Date and place of the next CDEDU plenary Session