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## **European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025**

Launch Conference

# **EMPOWERING LEARNERS FOR A DEMOCRATIC FUTURE: LAUNCH OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

CONCEPT NOTE & CALL FOR APPLICATION

**23 – 24 January 2025**

Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The digital environment and technologies provide unprecedented means and opportunities for people to express themselves in different ways, to discover, learn and create, and to communicate and socialise. But they also bring new challenges.

Amidst the challenges exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the advent of disruptive technologies like ChatGPT, the challenging issues that Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) seeks to address such as **disinformation, cyberbullying, online hate speech and the misuse of personal data** have become more prominent. This underlines the urgent need for increased efforts and investment in DCE to empower learners of all ages to face the challenges created or amplified by digital technologies and harness the benefits to thrive.

The Council of Europe is launching the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 (European Year 2025) to give a new impetus to the development and promotion of digital citizenship education in all member states.

The European Year 2025 stands as a unique opportunity **to enhance the visibility and impact** of digital citizenship education and reaffirm its value. This designated year should provide **a strategic platform** for key stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors **to work together, set common goals and share sense-making practices**. It will provide a concise yet impactful space for measuring achievements and collectively defining a road map for the future of digital citizenship education. Through streamlined efforts, this initiative is expected to propel DCE forward, ensuring its resilience and effectiveness in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The European Year 2025 will also

- raise public awareness of the importance of DCE in enabling learners of all ages to live in a digitally enriched world;
- increase understanding of the importance of competences for a democratic culture, and ways that they can be developed online;
- promote the uptake of DCE and define a road map for its future;
- link the work of the Council of Europe with that of other organisations, in particular UNESCO and the EU, on digital education, digital literacy and on the use of emerging technologies (including Artificial Intelligence) in education;
- motivate key stakeholders in education from public, private and civil sectors to work together towards a shared vision and common goals.

The Council of Europe will organise four international events in the framework of the European Year 2025. These events will aim to:

- promote global and local discourse and cooperation on digital citizenship education; and
- highlight and disseminate innovative practices and successful models in digital citizenship education in different regions.

Date	Place	Title/Focus
23 – 24 January 2025	Strasbourg, France	<b>Empowering Learners for a Democratic Future: Launch of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education</b> Deepening the understanding of digital citizenship education and further promoting the take-up by member states
27 – 28 May 2025	Strasbourg, France	<b>Digital Citizenship Education Forum</b> Enhancing international collaboration and stakeholder engagement in formal, informal and non-formal education settings
10 – 11 September 2025	Valetta, Malta	<b>International Conference on Media Literacy and Digital Divide</b> Exploring innovative pedagogical solutions to address the gap in related competencies and skills
18 – 19 November 2025	Ljubljana, Slovenia	<b>Closing conference “DCE - The Way Forward”</b> Defining new priorities and agreeing on the road map for the future of the digital citizenship education in Europe and beyond

## 2 BACKGROUND ON DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The Council of Europe launched its Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) initiative during the 25th session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in April 2016. Mandated by the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), this initiative aimed to establish a conceptual model for fostering responsible, informed participation in the digital age.

### 2.1 Key milestones in the development of DCE

#### 2016 – Launch of the intergovernmental project

During the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, the Council of Europe initiated a project on Digital Citizenship Education (DCE). This project aimed to redefine the role of education in equipping young people with the competences needed for responsible and active participation in democratic society, both online and offline.

#### 2017 – Conceptual framework development

A comprehensive conceptual model for DCE was developed and introduced at the Working Conference in September 2017. This model laid the foundation for understanding and promoting digital citizenship across Europe.

#### 2019 – Adoption of key policy instruments

The Committee of Ministers adopted [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)10](#), offering guidelines for policy makers to integrate DCE into educational systems.

The [Digital citizenship education handbook](#) was published, providing educators, parents, and policy makers with tools and practices for fostering digital competences across ten domains.

## **2019 – Establishment of the DCE Promoters Network**

This network was created to connect education professionals and support the implementation of DCE at local, regional, and national levels.

## **2019 – Ministerial Declaration on Citizenship Education in the Digital Era**

Ministers of Education from States Parties to the 1954 European Cultural Convention reaffirmed their commitment to DCE by adopting the declaration under the French Presidency.

## **2022 – Artificial intelligence and education: Launch of a new intergovernmental programme**

Publication of the report: "*A critical view through the lens of human rights, democracy and the rule of law*".

## **2023 – Designation of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025**

At the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, member states officially designated 2025 as the "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education," marking a renewed focus on enhancing the visibility and impact of DCE.

## **Ongoing – Development of resources and awareness campaigns**

Educational materials, such as lesson plans, the Digi-Nauts video series, and online courses, continue to expand the reach of DCE. Initiatives include capacity-building workshops, social media campaigns, and international conferences to engage diverse stakeholders and amplify the impact of DCE.

## **2.2 26th Session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education**

The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution<sup>1</sup> and decided to designate the year 2025 as the "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education" at its 26th session on 29 September 2023.

The resolution acknowledges the Council of Europe's work on digital citizenship education and the policy instruments, guidelines, educational and awareness-raising resources that were developed within that framework. It reaffirms the importance of setting digital citizenship education as a priority for policy makers in the field of education and higher education.

In this context, Ministers of Education invited the governments of member states to:

- promote the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education at the national and international level and create targeted campaigns on a national scale, with support and guidance from the Council of Europe and other major institutions;
- provide the necessary means and resources including funding through voluntary contributions to support the preparations for and implementation of the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education;
- involve all relevant stakeholders including education professionals and learners in the design, implementation and evaluation of digital citizenship education activities throughout the year, including through the provision of appropriate resources and training;
- pursue and encourage co-operation at the national level in designing and implementing strategies, initiatives, projects and events to promote and develop digital citizenship education and the use of digital technologies in education;

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1. Resolution 5 on the establishment of a European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025 in all Council of Europe member States.

- share on an ongoing basis sense-making practices, pedagogical innovations and educational resources to support digital citizenship education throughout 2025 and beyond.

This was reflected in the [Education Strategy 2024 – 2030](#)<sup>2</sup> under the third pillar “Advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation” and included in the [Programme and Budget 2024 – 2027](#).<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3 Reykjavik 4th Summit Declaration – United around our values – 2023

The Reykjavík Declaration highlights the transformative role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in education, while addressing the risks and ethical challenges they pose. In line with the Council of Europe's commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, it prioritises a human-centred approach to digital literacy and the integration of AI in education systems. Principle 12 of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy emphasises **"investing in a democratic future by ensuring that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes"**. It prioritises education on human rights, pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability. The planned activities during the **European Year of Digital Citizenship** and the further integration of digital literacy and AI in education in the Education 2025 programme directly support this principle in the following ways:

1. **Enabling informed participation** and engagement: Digital literacy equips learners with the critical skills needed to navigate and participate in democratic processes online. By tackling disinformation, ensuring access to reliable information and promoting media literacy, it strengthens the foundation for informed civic engagement.
2. **Promoting ethical awareness** and responsible use of technologies: Educating learners about the ethical implications of digital technologies promotes accountability and transparency, two core tenets of democratic governance emphasised in Principle 12.
3. **Strengthening human rights education**: By integrating human rights principles into **digital citizenship education** and AI-related curricula, education systems prepare individuals to uphold democracy and the rule of law and safeguard these values in the face of technological challenges.

This focus underlines the Council of Europe's commitment to a democratic future in which digital technologies and AI enhance rather than undermine human rights, transparency and inclusion.

## 3 LAUNCH CONFERENCE

The Launch conference will take place on 23-24 January 2025 in Strasbourg, France at the Palais de l'Europe.

The working languages will be English and French (interpretation will be provided).

### 3.1 Conference focus

The conference will launch the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 and present the Council of Europe's work and achievements since the launching of the intergovernmental project in 2016. It will also discuss the value of digital citizenship education in empowering learners of all ages to overcome the challenges that have emerged or been amplified by digital technologies and harness the benefits to thrive in a digitally enriched world.

The main objectives of the launch conference are:

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2. Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030 “Learners first – Education for today's and tomorrow's democratic societies”, <https://rm.coe.int/education-strategy-of-the-council-of-europe-2024-2030/1680aee0c4>.  
 3. <https://rm.coe.int/programme-and-budget-2024-2027/1680aee0c3>.

- to promote the take-up of the European Year 2025 by all member states of the Council of Europe and other relevant stakeholders, and
- to set the scene for the development of a roadmap for the future of digital citizenship education.

## 3.2 Programme topics

### Day 1

#### *The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025*

This session will present concept and key objectives of the European Year 2025 and inform the participants about the planned activities and resources.

#### *State of Digital Citizenship Education*

This session will present the findings from the Review of the implementation of the CM Recommendation on Digital Citizenship Education in member states and examples of good practices.

#### *Digital Citizenship Education: Sharing An Integrated Approach*

This session will look into understanding of the digital citizenship education concept from the perspective of various target groups, such as parents and carers, youth, academia, policy makers, education sector, etc.

#### *Digital Citizenship Education: Integration of DCE in Education and Training*

This session will discuss the role of the education sector in ensuring safe learning environment as all as into ways of addressing challenges in integration of DCE in curricula.

#### *Digital Citizenship Education: Stakeholders Roles and Perspectives*

This session presents various approaches to the concept of digital citizenship education presented by the partners of the Council of Europe.

### Day 2

#### *Addressing Challenges: Communication*

This session will discuss the ways of addressing challenges in communication on DCE, specifically from cultural, political and practical perspectives.

#### *Addressing Challenges: International Cooperation*

This session will explore opportunities for improving lack of coordinated action between the main stakeholders of DCE (including global initiatives).

#### *Frame for Action: Concept and the Strategic Objectives of the Road Map*

This session will discuss strategic objectives and the structure of a road map for digital citizenship education for the next 10 years.

## 3.3 Participants

The conference will provide an opportunity for a diverse range of key stakeholders to come together including government experts from member states, representatives of international organisations, professional associations, civil society organisations, private sector companies active in the field, and educators and academics working on digital citizenship education or in relevant fields.

## 3.4 Call for application

Please apply [here](https://forms.office.com/e/qxFede27B4) (<https://forms.office.com/e/qxFede27B4>) before and no later than 4 December 2024 (midnight).

To ensure a balanced and diverse participation, the Conference organising committee will evaluate applicants based on their professional background and interest, relevant work outputs, their potential to meaningfully contribute to discussions on advancing the digital citizenship education.

The selection process will give priority to applicants who are able to make a valuable contribution to the conference. Once the committee has completed the selection procedure, we will inform the selected participants during the **week of 9 December 2024**.

Should you require further information, including practical details, updates about the conference and background documents, please do not hesitate to visit the Conference webpage.