



Hellenic Ministry of Education  
and Religious Affairs



**Greek Chairmanship**  
Council of Europe  
May – November 2020

**Présidence de la Grèce**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2020



## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **Background information**

Within the framework of the Greek Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, **an informal Conference of Ministers of Education will take place in the morning of 29 October 2020, and a Meeting of Experts on 30 October 2020.**

**Both meetings will be held digitally.**

### **Informal Ministerial Conference (29 October)**

**The first session will focus on** the COVID-19 pandemic, as a major global challenge that requires a co-ordinated and decisive response by all countries. The aim of the Conference will be to endorse **a Declaration** on the education response to COVID-19, prepared by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE) of the Council of Europe.

**A second session** will focus on the role of education in raising awareness of cultural heritage protection at risk by climate change. The aim of the Conference will be to provide elements for the Chair's conclusions, acknowledging the need to promote awareness of the role of education in the issue, building on prior work of the Council of Europe on cultural heritage, climate change and education and linking this to the Council of Europe work on Competences for Democratic Culture.

Ministers will also be updated on the establishment of an Observatory on History Teaching, further to the informal Ministerial Conference held in Paris under the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in November 2019.

### **Meeting of Experts (30 October)**

**On 30 October**, the informal Conference of Ministers of Education will be immediately followed by a Meeting of Experts, focusing on the same themes as the Ministerial Conference, providing decision makers with a unique opportunity to share views and experiences, further develop the issues raised in the COVID-19 Declaration endorsed by Education Ministers with a view to formulating recommendations.

The Meeting of Experts will further consider the topic of cultural heritage education and develop recommendations on raising awareness of the importance of climate change and cultural heritage protection in the context of the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

## **Programme**

### **29 October 2020 Ministerial Conference**

**(10:00 – 14:00 Athens time; 09:00 – 13:00 Central European time)**

#### **Session 1:**

“The education response to the COVID-19 crisis: the right to quality education in times of a pandemic and its challenges”

**Session 1** will focus on how States Parties to the European Cultural Convention address the need to ensure the right to quality education under the pandemic and how the Council of Europe’s education programme could be adapted to the COVID-19 and post-COVID situation.

Particular reference will be made to the challenges faced in promoting distance learning during the pandemic in order to secure quality education for all.

The discussion could focus on:

- Strengthening democracy through education;
- Innovating the ways in which we learn and teach;
- Assessing and recognising qualifications;
- Ensuring the right to education for the most vulnerable students.

#### **Session 2:**

“Utilising education as a tool for promoting awareness of cultural heritage at risk from climate change in a culture of democracy”

**Session 2** will focus on educating young people and raising awareness among them as well as among education professionals on topics relevant to the access to, participation in and enjoyment of cultural heritage

The discussion could focus on:

- Empowering children and young people in becoming aware of and defending their right of access to, and enjoyment of cultural heritage;
- Promoting young people’s participation in discussions and activities related to cultural heritage and its protection from climate change;
- Providing stakeholders (public authorities, professionals, civil society, etc.) with effective tools to disseminate shared components of cultural heritage both online and offline;
- Exploring the relationship between cultural heritage, climate change/sustainable development and Competences for Democratic Culture.

## **Objectives**

### **Theme 1 - Session 1 (29 October) –**

“The education response to the COVID-19 crisis: the right to quality education in times of a pandemic and its challenges”

Safeguarding democracy becomes particularly important in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic requires alertness and inventiveness, as to how our education systems will ensure the right to education in the face of the pandemic challenge, and how they will manage to adapt to new needs, while ensuring that education at all levels develops students’ competences and encourages their democratic participation.

### **Theme 2 - Session 2 (29 October) –**

“Utilising education as a tool for promoting awareness of cultural heritage at risk from climate change in a culture of democracy”

Cultural heritage is a key factor in determining the identity of a country and ensuring its historical continuity. It is also a key component of European and global citizenship.

This session, in light of and in line with the special initiative presented by Greece to the United Nations in September 2019 (<https://ccich.gr/pre-climate-action-summit-event-cultural-heritage-partnership-to-enable-ambitious-climate-action/>), will focus on the need to be aware, from an early age, of the importance of cultural heritage and, at the same time, the right of every generation to participate in this heritage and appreciate its richness. This right goes hand in hand with the obligation to pass on this heritage from generation to generation, and to protect it from the effects of climate change.

Every state and every society must invest in a timely, organised and dedicated effort to mitigate the effects of climate change on cultural heritage, which, at the same time, must not impede the right of every future generation to enjoy and be proud of its cultural heritage, and also be a responsible citizen of the world. And this raises the question: How can we enjoy our respective national heritage without closing it to others? What is the relationship between national and European cultural heritage?

Raising awareness about cultural heritage and the need for protection from climate change and human activity through integrated educational strategies, including digital competences development, is the key objective of the Session.

### **Outcomes of the Ministerial Conference**

1. **The endorsement of a political declaration on the education response to COVID-19, with a view to ensuring the right to education in times of crisis;**
2. **A set of Chair's conclusions, highlighting the states' determination to promote education on cultural heritage** in view of the challenges of climate change and underlining the link to Competences for Democratic Culture.

### **Extra – Ministerial Conference deliverable**

An art competition among Greek schools with a view to hosting the best works of art on a digital platform of the Council of Europe, and on the websites of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Sport.