

# EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

2025



## Key Activities, Programmes and Highlights

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# Foreword

The year 2025 marked an important moment for the Council of Europe's Education Department, as our work increasingly translated long-standing principles into concrete policy, legal and operational advances for education systems across Europe.



**G**uided by the **Education Strategy 2024–2030 “Learners First”**, the Department's activities throughout 2025 were structured around three interlinked priority pillars: renewing the democratic and civic mission of education; enhancing the social responsibility and responsiveness of education; and advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation. Together, these pillars provided a coherent framework for action across all levels and sectors of education, from early childhood to higher education, and from policy development to practical implementation.

A defining achievement of the year was the further consolidation of the **European Space for Citizenship Education**, whose three pillars — shared principles, a quality framework, and strengthened cooperation — moved decisively from concept to co-creation. Through extensive engagement with member states, expert networks, civil society and learners themselves, this initiative is laying the foundations for a genuinely European space that respects national diversity while reinforcing common democratic values.

A particular highlight of 2025 was the **European Year of Digital Citizenship Education**, which provided a strong political and operational framework to consolidate and

advance the Council of Europe's long-standing work in this field. Throughout the Year, digital citizenship education was firmly positioned as a core democratic competence, encompassing not only digital participation, online wellbeing, and rights and responsibilities in digital environments, but also digital and artificial intelligence (AI) literacy.

The Year also reinforced coherence with the Council of Europe's broader work on artificial intelligence and education, including the launch of structured intergovernmental reflection under the newly established **Committee of Experts on Artificial Intelligence and Education (EDU-IA)**. By mobilising member states, practitioners, learners and civil society, the European Year created lasting momentum, feeding directly into the **Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education** and anchoring AI literacy and democratic governance of digital technologies more firmly within national education systems across Europe.

In higher education, 2025 was marked by the publication of the **Report on the Erosion of Academic Freedom in Europe** which provided a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of threats facing academic communities today, while offering concrete policy responses to ►

*This Activity Report [...] reflects a shared ambition: to ensure that education in Europe remains firmly anchored in democracy, human rights and the rule of law, while being equipped to respond to the challenges of the present and the uncertainties of the future.*

safeguard institutional autonomy and academic freedom. At the same time, the proposal of CDEDU for a new legally binding instrument on **automatic recognition of higher education qualifications** signalled a major step forward in strengthening trust, transparency and mobility within the European Higher Education Area, building on the legacy of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The Department's work on ethics, transparency and integrity in education also gained renewed momentum. Through the ETINED Platform, new evidence and guidance addressed education fraud, open school data and student awareness, reinforcing the links between integrity, public trust and quality education. A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of the **Centre for the Prevention and Countering of Education Fraud**, established in cooperation with CIMEA (Italy), which provides a dedicated European platform to strengthen coordination, capacity-building and policy coherence in the fight against education fraud.

Equally significant in 2025 was the expansion of the Department's normative and analytical output, accompanied by major advances in knowledge access and dissemination. **The Education Department Publications Catalogue 2025** reflects the breadth and depth of this work, ranging from digital citizenship education and artificial intelligence to language policy, history education, competences for democratic culture and academic integrity. This publication effort was complemented by the launch of the **Education Knowledge Hub in 2025**, which now brings together **more than 4,000 curated resources**, as well as a **new E-Learning Catalogue** designed

to facilitate access to training and capacity-building opportunities. Together, these tools and publications are conceived as living resources to support member states, practitioners and institutions in translating Council of Europe standards and principles into concrete action.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the sustained commitment of member states, the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), our governing bodies and expert groups, as well as the many partners and stakeholders who contribute their expertise and experience. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who have supported and shaped our work throughout the year.

This Activity Report provides an overview of the Education Department's key activities, achievements and partnerships in 2025. It also reflects a shared ambition: to ensure that education in Europe remains firmly anchored in democracy, human rights and the rule of law, while being equipped to respond to the challenges of the present and the uncertainties of the future.

**Villano QIRIAZI**

**HEAD OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**



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# THREE PRIORITY PILLARS

## PILLAR 1

# RENEWING THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION OF EDUCATION

### Democratic Mission of Higher Education

The Council of Europe's Education Department has renewed its focus on the **democratic mission of higher education**, reinforcing academic freedom as a fundamental pillar of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This work builds on longstanding Council of Europe standards, including the Education Strategy 2024–2030 Learners First, the 2023 Reykjavik Summit and the **New Democratic Pact**. Launched in 2024, the Democratic Mission of Higher Education project aims to **strengthen legal and policy frameworks** supporting academic freedom and fundamental values of higher education, enhance monitoring mechanisms, **build trust between the public and the institutions**, and provide practical tools to help member states and higher education institutions address current challenges. Its central strand of action is **Academic Freedom in Action**.

### Learner Rights & Engagement

Support initiatives that enable learners' **democratic participation** in formal and non-formal settings, safeguarding students' rights, including **equitable access to education, privacy, and freedom of expression**, thereby fostering active citizenship and critical thinking.

### Democracy and Citizenship Education

**Put democracy at the heart** of education systems by enhancing citizenship education, fostering **democratic and intercultural competences**, and encouraging **dialogue and cooperation** based on shared democratic values across Europe.

### Inclusive Education

Prioritise the areas of **Vocational Education and Training (VET)** and **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**, ensuring that education promotes inclusivity, sustainable practices, and **effective partnerships across all levels**.

### Educational Integrity and Competence Development

**Enhance educators' skills** in promoting participation, inclusion, and sustainable development through ethical, transparent, and plurilingual approaches, while upholding **academic freedom** and integrity within educational institutions.

## PILLAR 2

# ENHANCING THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION

## Inclusion, Equity, Diversity

Enhance the social dimension of education by promoting inclusion, equity, and diversity across all education levels. **Implement whole-school approaches that value diversity**, support marginalised learners, and facilitate language learning. **Develop curricula** that foster learner autonomy, confidence-building, and competences for democratic culture.

## Ethics, Transparency, Integrity

Ensure **equal access to education** for all learners, emphasising ethics, transparency, and integrity as foundational to quality education and quality assurance. Build a **culture of trust and accountability** among education stakeholders and member states, while providing academic **support to learners** and **raise awareness about education fraud**, especially during emergencies and crises.

## Internationalisation & Global Engagement

Support teacher training for inclusive education, enhancing teachers' ability to **work with diverse student populations**. Strengthen language support for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees, and **promote the internationalisation of schools** and higher education institutions, with attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion, thus reinforcing the principles of the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, which works towards a European-wide, unified approach to higher education reforms.

## PILLAR 3

# ADVANCING EDUCATION THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

## Digital Literacy & Access

Strengthen digital citizenship education as an ongoing journey to navigate digital advancements. Ensure that all learners have **equal access to digital tools and technologies** in educational settings and are equipped with relevant digital skills. Emphasise the importance of **digital citizenship education**, democracy, and the rule of law, fostering learner's autonomy and a joint approach across member states.

## Partnerships & Standards

**Foster partnerships** between educational institutions, the private tech sector, and civil society that adhere to national and international standards. These collaborations should aim to **innovate** while ensuring equitable **quality education**, leveraging digital technologies to benefit all learners.

## Responsible Innovation & Tech Ethics

Promote ongoing **professional development for educators** to responsibly integrate emerging digital technologies, including AI into teaching. Encourage the **development and use of digital educational resources through European cooperation**, enhancing transparency, and accountability in education systems to prevent fraud and uphold quality standards.

# ACTIVITIES OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BODIES

## CDEDU

The Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) oversees the Council of Europe's programmes in the field of education and advises the Committee of Ministers on education issues.

**The overall aim of the Education Programme is to support member states** in developing their policies, legislation, and practice in view of promoting democratic, quality, inclusive and corruption-free education systems. At school level, particular focus is placed on the promotion of the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). **The CDEDU focuses on Council of Europe priority areas and covers all levels and strands of education.**

The CDEDU has 48 members (countries), 16 observer organisations, and one observer country (Israel). **The CDEDU counts several representatives from civil society organisations among its observers.** The membership of observers in terms of number of member organisations, the number of countries represented, and the standing of member organisations in their respective national education systems are of particular importance to the CDEDU.

### MAIN TASKS



#### Develop Recommendations and Legal Instruments

Draw up recommendations to help states develop education policies aligning with organisational principles and standards.



#### Reference Framework for Democratic Culture

Provide a framework to assess learners' achievements in citizenship, human rights, and intercultural dialogue.



#### Policy Advice

Provide advice to policy-makers and education professionals in implementing education policies.



#### Exchange Ideas and Practices

Exchange ideas, information, and good practices among members on educational issues.



#### Promote Education Reforms

Promote reforms in education systems and policies to enhance democratic competences and develop the European Higher Education Area.



#### Promote Quality Education

Promote quality education to foster safe learning environments, social inclusion, gender equality, and anti-discrimination.



#### Promote Co-operation and Understanding

Facilitate cooperation and understanding between member states.



#### Right to Education for All

Develop actions to ensure the right to education for all, especially for vulnerable groups.

# CDEDU PLENARY SESSIONS

## Language Education Programme

The CDEDU welcomed the online launch of the Self-Assessment Tool (lower secondary) for policy makers to support the implementation of CM/Rec(2022)1, endorsed the provisional content of the revised policy guidelines on Romani following the successful completion of the Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation initiative (RPPE) and took note of the plan to submit the full package of the policy guidelines, pedagogical guidelines and the report on the results of the RPPE to the plenary session in March 2026.

## Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications

The Committee endorsed a three-year Programme on Artificial Intelligence and Recognition of Qualifications, setting up a Working Group of Experts that would explore the implications of AI in recognition of qualifications through the lens of the Council of Europe values, draft guidelines and a White Paper to ensure that AI integration aligns with ethical and operational standards and develop capacity building tools, such as self-learning modules, to equip credential evaluators, admission officials and other relevant stakeholders with the skills to navigate AI-driven workflows.

## CDEDU OUTCOMES 2025

### 19 MARCH – Key Outcomes of the 7<sup>th</sup> CDEDU Plenary

- 01 Approval of a draft recommendation on the qualifications of refugees
- 02 Progress on the development of a Student Rights Charter
- 03 Advancements in work on academic freedom
- 04 Developments related to artificial intelligence in higher education
- 05 Progress on the recognition of qualifications
- 06 Strengthened cooperation within the ENIC-NARIC framework

### 25 SEPTEMBER – Key Outcomes of the 8<sup>th</sup> CDEDU Plenary

- 01 Launch of the drafting process for a new convention on the automatic recognition of qualifications
- 02 Progress on the development of the Student Rights Charter
- 03 Developments related to the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- 04 Continued work on ethics and integrity in higher education
- 05 Ongoing efforts on the recognition of refugees' qualifications



## The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)

The CDEDU approved, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the Recommendation on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe, which builds on ongoing Council of Europe Education projects in the field of refugee integration through education, especially on the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) as well as the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants programme.

The Recommendation presents a promising step towards a comprehensive approach to recognising and valuing the qualifications and language skills of refugees across Member States. Recommendation aims at establishing transparent recognition procedures in the member states and, therefore, encourages the establishment of easily accessible, efficient, flexible, and transparent procedures to rapidly assess the academic qualifications including linguistic skills obtained through non-formal and informal learning. In highlighting the importance of the academic, professional, and linguistic integration, the text also honours the broader contributions of displaced persons to their host countries.

## Ethics, Transparency and Integrity

The Committee welcomed the draft report on the survey “Student Perceptions and Awareness of Education Fraud” and endorsed it for publication, as well as the Council of Europe and UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) report on “Open School Data in European Education Systems,” recognising its importance for strengthening transparency, informing data policies and fostering dialogue among stakeholders.

It instructed the **ETINED Platform** to hold in-depth discussions on the study’s key recommendations at its plenary in November 2025 with a view to developing policy guidelines on open school data. The Committee took note of the state of play of the project “Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud” and the call for voluntary contributions, stressing the importance of ensuring its European scope and complementarity with the wider mandate of ETINED. The Committee also approved the extension of the **ETINED Terms of Reference** for the period 2026–2027.

# Members of the CDEDU Bureau 2025

## CHAIR

**Ms Marie-Anne PERSOONS**  
Advisor International Policy  
—  
Flemish Department of Education and Training  
*Belgium*

## VICE CHAIR

**Ms Mélanie LIZÉ**  
Deputy Head of the Department for the EU and Multilateral Organisations  
—  
Ministry of National Education  
*France*

## ACADEMIC COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**Mr Giuseppe RONISVALLE**  
Department of Pharmaceutical and Health Sciences  
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University of Catania  
*Italy*

**Ms Pil Maria SAUGMANN**  
Vice-President  
—  
EURODOC

## MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

**Ms Laura LIMPERK-KÜTARU**  
Councillor of Education and Science  
—  
Ministry of Education and Research  
*Estonia*

**Mr Guðni OLGEIRSSON**  
Senior Advisor, Department of Education  
—  
Ministry of Education and Children  
*Iceland*

**Until July 2025**  
**Mr Bernard WICHT**  
Head of International Affairs  
—  
Swiss Conference of Cantonal Education Directors (CDIP)  
*Switzerland*

**Until July 2025**  
**Ms Natia NATSVLISHVILI**  
Head of International Relations and Strategic Communication  
—  
National Centre for Teacher Professional Development  
*Georgia*



**Since September 2025**  
**Ms Isabella BRUNELLI**  
Deputy Head, Higher Education Policy  
—  
Unit State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SEFRI)  
*Switzerland*

## GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEUR

**Ms Snježana Prijić SAMARŽIJA**  
Rector  
—  
University of Rijeka  
*Croatia*

## NGO REPRESENTATIVES

**Ms Claude VIVIER LE GOT**  
—  
Federation for European Education (FEDE)

**Until July 2025**  
**Ms Iris KIMIZOGLU**  
President of ESU

**Since September 2025**  
**Mr Arno SCHROOYEN**  
Vice President of ESU

# ECML

The Governing Board is the Centre's executive organ, composed of one representative from each member state in the **European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)**. The Board defines and adopts the medium-term programme, monitors its implementation and the management of the Language Centre's resources and forwards a report on the Centre's activities to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

## MAIN DECISIONS 2025

- ↳ The introduction of a second annual Governing Board meeting, to take place online, to discuss key topics of interest in relation to language education.
- ↳ The extension to 2026 of the invitation of Ukrainian language professionals to participate in large-scale ECML programme activities funded by the Centre's budget.
- ↳ The continuation of a 'reserve fund' established for financing translations into other languages (in addition to English and French) in 2026, underpinning the Board's decision to further promote the plurilingual nature of the ECML's work.
- ↳ The National Contact Points provide support for the establishment of Wikipedia pages on the ECML in national languages by translating/proofreading the dedicated page in their national languages.
- ↳ The ECML statutory bodies take on the role of a stakeholder group within the preparation of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Foreign Language Assessment in 2033.
- ↳ The ECML becomes a partner of the European School Education Platform, based on the Centre's ongoing cooperation with the European Commission and the alignment of priorities between both organisations in language education.
- ↳ The reintroduction of formalised partnership agreements between the ECML and the members of the INGO Professional Network Forum - to afford the cooperation higher visibility and status within the respective associations/institutions as well as ensuring greater sustainability.
- ↳ The election of 4 new members to the Bureau of the Governing Board for the term 2026-27: Panagiotis Passas (Greece) as Vice-chair, and Matthias von Gehlen (Germany), Nataša Perić (Montenegro) and Eva Tučková (Czech Republic) as Bureau members.



↖  
ECML website

# Governing Board's Bureau

## CHAIR

**Ms Pille PÕIKLIK**  
Chief expert  
since 2025  
—  
Ministry of Education  
and Research  
*Estonia*

## VICE-CHAIRS

**Mr Matthias VON GEHLEN**  
since 2024  
—  
Sprache und Bildungspolitik,  
Goethe-Institut  
*Germany*

**Mr Eyjólfur MÁR SIGURÐSSON**  
since 2025  
—  
*Iceland*

## BUREAU MEMBERS

**Lourdes BALLESTEROS-MARTIN**  
*Spain*

**Mr Panagiotis PASSAS**  
Head of General Directorate ·  
since 2022  
—  
Ministry of Education  
and Religious Affairs  
*Greece*

**Ms Nataša PERIĆ**  
Advisor · since 2024  
—  
Bureau for Education Service  
*Montenegro*

**Ms Wendoline TIMMERMAN**  
Senior policy advisor  
since 2024  
—  
Ministry of Education,  
Culture and Science  
*Netherlands*

## BUREAU OBSERVER

**Ms Ursula NEWBY**  
former Chair · since 2023  
*Austria*

# OHTE

The Governing Board is the Observatory's decision-making body, composed of one representative from each member state. The Board defines and adopts the medium-term and annual programmes, monitors their implementation and the management of the Observatory's resources. It meets at least once a year.

## MAIN DECISIONS 2025

- ↘ The election of the new Chair of the Governing Board, two Vice-Chairs and three new Bureau members for a two-year term. The Governing Board awarded the honorary title of Founding President of the OHTE to Mr Alain Lamassoure, in recognition of his outstanding leadership and contribution to the establishment and development of the Observatory.
- ↘ The members of the Governing Board also welcomed the accession of two new member states to the OHTE: the Slovak Republic as of January 2025 and Montenegro as of March 2025.
- ↘ The election of eight new members to the Scientific Advisory Council, selected for their diverse backgrounds and relevant professional expertise. They began their two-year term in June 2025, joining the four members already in office.
- ↘ The approval of the 2024 report on OHTE activities and the instruction to the Secretariat to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for consideration.
- ↘ The approval of the annual programme of activities for 2025 and the directive to the Secretariat to carry out the workplan accordingly and in line with available budgetary resources.
- ↘ A welcome to the update on the preparation of the ad hoc study on the abolition of the death penalty in history education, and guidance on the future research to be undertaken for the next OHTE general report on the state of history teaching in Europe.



## Governing Board's Bureau

In 2025, the OHTE Governing Board held its annual meeting on 27 February in Strasbourg, which included an exchange of views with Mr Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on how the Observatory can contribute to the ambition of the New Democratic Pact for Europe.

### CHAIR

**Mr Dimitris P. SOTIROPOULOS**  
Greece

### VICE CHAIR

**Mr Suren MANUKYAN**  
Armenia

**Mr Mychailo WYNNYCKYJ**  
Ukraine

### MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

**Mr Semih AKTEKIN**  
Türkiye

**Ms Mária HARMAŇOŠOVÁ**  
Slovak Republic

**Mr Vojko KUNAVER**  
Slovenia

**Ms Helena RAMOS GARCIA**  
Spain

**Ms Luisa UCHA**  
Portugal

# THEMATIC ACTIVITIES 2025



## Formal and non-formal Education

The Council of Europe has accelerated the co-creation of the European Space for Citizenship Education, an initiative that promotes democratic values and principles through quality citizenship education across Europe. The aim is to launch the European Space for Citizenship Education at the 27<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference of Education Ministers in December 2026.

**T**he three pillars of the European Space for Citizenship Education — principles, quality, and co-operation — have been further developed. The working group identified ten principles for education in democratic citizenship, based on almost thirty years of CoE acquis, but also addressing future issues. Given the diverse education systems in Europe, these principles are designed to allow for a variety of approaches and practices – for instance, not a homogeneous European curriculum, but a shared European space. To ensure these principles are implemented, a Quality Framework has been developed, consisting of self-evaluation and the sharing of good practices. The co-operation pillar will facilitate collaboration among member states to bring the European Space to life.

The **Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN)**, through its annual meetings with specialised networks and civil society continues to play a key role in the co-creation process of the European Space for Citizenship Education. This year, EPAN met twice, bringing together 37 countries.

A major **conference** is also held annually to contribute to the co-creation of the European Space, supported by German financing. This year, it took place in **Montenegro** from 13 to 14 October 2025. It was opened by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, and involved policymakers, school directors, teachers, teacher educators, civil society organisations and students. The European Space for Citizenship Education was also presented and discussed at the **World Forum for Democracy** on 6 November 2025.

As part of the Council of Europe's ongoing efforts to develop a culture of democracy in Europe, the Education Department has focused on three projects to complement the activities of the European Space for Citizenship Education. In addition, eleven large-scale cooperation programmes, funded from external sources, complement the intergovernmental programme and demonstrate how a culture of democracy can be put into practice.

### STATISTICS

**37** Member States and institutions engaged in the two EPAN meetings.

**8** Member States and 10 projects in total.

**Total number of participants:**  
**10,247**

### Vocational Education and Training (VET)

In vocational education and training (VET), the work continues on the crucial role of VET in shaping informed, engaged and responsible citizens, both for employment and for active citizenship in democratic societies – a first for Europe.

Following the publication of a guidance document, an anthology entitled **Learning Democracy in Vocational Education and Training in Europe** was released, offering an in-depth analysis of how competences for democratic culture can be incorporated into VET systems. Around 100 examples of policies and practices from across Europe were collected and published on a dedicated web page, addressing key topics such as curriculum development, assessment, in-company training, teacher training and continuing professional development, implementation of the RFCDC in VET schools, the involvement of social partners, inclusion and learners’ participation.

Building upon this work, a group of experts is developing a **new legal instrument** which will provide policy recommendations and further explore the themes covered in these publications, incorporating new aspects such as artificial intelligence in VET.

### Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Recognising the importance of nurturing a culture of democracy from an early age, and in light of the lack of attention given to this age group on this subject, the Council of Europe has launched a new project covering the years from birth to compulsory school age, with the aim of incorporating this work into the European Space. This will involve adapting the principles and quality elements of democratic citizenship for ECEC.

As a first step, a small working group has developed a concept note exploring seven important subject areas in relation to preschool age, which need to be considered when translating the principles into the ECEC field. These areas include agency, socialisation and participation.



Examples of policy and practice in VET

### Education for Sustainable Development

A guidance document on applying the **Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)** to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was published based on the two-year project. This publication helps policymakers and educators to connect learning about sustainability with democratic participation and human rights by using the RFCDC’s competence model.

Education for sustainable development is at its most powerful when it enables learners to think critically, act responsibly and participate peacefully in democratic life. This guidance demonstrates how to establish this connection within curricula, classrooms, and communities.

The Education Department has also contributed to the new Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, an initiative launched in response to the Reykjavik Declaration, and this contribution is included in the Strategy’s Action Plan.

### Toolkit on an Inclusive and Democratic School Culture

A toolkit was prepared to promote a democratic and inclusive school culture, which will be published in early 2026. Over 65 resources developed within Council of Europe cooperation projects were mapped, decontextualised and upgraded, and a structure was decided upon with a small group of consultants.

The publication will cover five essential topics for creating a democratic and inclusive school culture: addressing violence and bullying (including cyberbullying) in school; combatting discrimination based on ethnic background and disability; developing competences for democratic culture and encouraging student engagement and participation.

### EDURES Toolkit and piloting results

Grounded in the Six Principles of Resilience for Education adopted by European education ministers in 2023, EDURES combines theory, practical tools, and self-assessment instruments to support policymakers, education authorities and school leaders in designing resilience-based strategies using participatory and evidence-informed approaches. In this perspective, the toolkit supports educational stakeholders from member states to foster school governance by providing guidance and practical tools.

This includes fostering preparedness for educational systems, informing strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation for more sustainable, fair, and inclusive education systems through engaging in a participatory process for developing, implementing, and maintaining resilience strategies for education.

Piloted in member states including Italy and Albania, the results were presented at the 2025 World Forum for Democracy as a practical, forward-thinking framework that helps education systems prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics. The toolkit also contributes to broader international efforts to transform education in crisis contexts, aligning with the commitments of the UN’s Transforming Education Summit and a specific initiative «Education in Crisis Situations: A Commitment to Action».

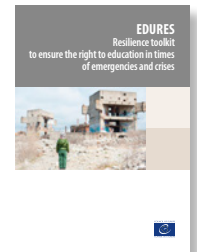
### Gender Equality in Education Scorecard

In September 2025 at the plenary session of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), the Council of Europe Gender Equality in Education Scorecard (Scorecard) was launched. The aim of this Scorecard is to provide member states with a concrete tool that will help them to transform their commitments into measurable and comparable actions over time in terms of gender mainstreaming in education, thereby having a positive impact on various educational institutions and civil society as a whole.

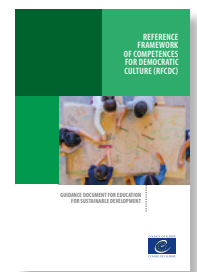
This initiative is part of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in education and a specific task of the CDEDU to develop an operational tool to measure this gender mainstreaming in education systems in partnership with the Commission for Equality between Women and Men (GEC).



EDURES Toolkit



Guidance Document for Education for Sustainable Development



### TOOLKIT ON AN INCLUSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE



Addressing violence and bullying in schools



Tackling discrimination based on ethnic background



Tackling discrimination and exclusion in the context of disability



Democracy and Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC)



Improving the engagement and participation of students in schools

# Higher and Further Education

The Higher Education programme of the Council of Europe addresses the areas of academic freedom, artificial intelligence, ethics, transparency and integrity in education, and the recognition of qualifications, including the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC). We bring together key stakeholders from member states and international experts to develop projects and policy recommendations. Regular meetings and events serve to discuss and monitor implementation processes. The work in the field of higher education is overseen by the Sub-Group on Higher Education Policy, which includes 25 members from education ministries in charge of higher education, as well as from academia and international NGOs. The Sub-Group reports to the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU).



## Recommendation on Qualifications and Linguistic Competences of Refugees in Europe

The Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)6, adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on July 9, 2025, provides guidance to member states on recognising and valuing the qualifications and language competences of refugees and displaced persons.

It emphasises fair, transparent, and inclusive procedures for credential recognition, even in cases where full documentation is unavailable. The recommendation also highlights the importance of supporting refugees' linguistic integration to enhance access to education, training, and employment. It outlines policy measures and cooperative approaches that member states can adopt to strengthen recognition systems and promote equitable participation in European societies.



← Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)6 on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe



## Report on the Erosion of Academic Freedom in Europe

A major output of the Democratic Mission of Higher Education project is the **Report on the Erosion of Academic Freedom in Europe**, released on 25 November 2025. Prepared by independent experts within the work of the Expert Working Group of the Democratic Mission of Higher Education, the report provides the first consolidated analysis of current threats to academic freedom across Europe. It addresses, inter alia, political and legislative interference, legal intimidation including SLAPPs, censorship and self-censorship, online harassment, and pressures arising from foreign interference and transnational repression.

Beyond documenting current trends, the report proposes concrete measures to strengthen protections, including improved legal safeguards, better monitoring and early-warning mechanisms, and enhanced support for institutions and scholars. It will serve as a reference document for continued policy development under the Democratic Mission of Higher Education project and the New Democratic Pact.



↖  
The Erosion of  
Academic Freedom  
in Europe

## Academic Freedom Insights Series

Complementing the report, the **Academic Freedom Insights series** comprises ten concise policy briefs. Each brief addresses a priority theme identified by the Expert Working Group and aims to support policy development, awareness-raising and capacity-building among public authorities, higher education institutions and civil society partners. The full series will be made available on the Academic Freedom Insights web page.

### 10 TOPICS OF THE SERIES

- 01 POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN ACADEMIC FREEDOM
- 02 SLAPPS AND LEGAL THREATS AGAINST ACADEMICS
- 03 ACADEMIC FREEDOM: A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE
- 04 TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND THREATS TO SCHOLARS
- 05 SELF-CENSORSHIP IN ACADEMIA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES
- 06 FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ACADEMIA
- 07 ONLINE HARASSMENT
- 08 RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
- 09 THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR REGARDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM
- 10 MISUSE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### THE PUBLICATION OF THE ACADEMIC INSIGHTS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY TWO WEBINARS

01

02

## Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)

The convention is the main legal instrument for the recognition of qualifications in Europe. It promotes fair recognition of academic qualifications, and, it has, to date, been ratified by 57 states.

The LRC is based on a set of principles, which derive from the Council of Europe's *acquis* and include clarity and accessibility, inclusivity and flexibility, co-ordination and co-operation, supportive integration and portability and continuity.

The Convention Committees sessions are convened at least every three years. Between sessions the Work Programme is implemented by the LRC Bureau. The tenth session of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee took place on 22 October 2025 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The Committee adopted the new Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education. TNE refers to educational programmes or services in which learners are located in a different country from the one where the awarding institution is based. The revised Code addressed emerging challenges, including education fraud, artificial intelligence ethics, and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Looking ahead, the Bureau announced plans to develop a new text on digital and AI-enabled recognition, building on the Council of Europe's new three-year programme on AI and recognition and aligned with both the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

The Committee also agreed to contribute to the drafting of new guidance under the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, helping to clarify the relationship between global and regional legal instruments on recognition.

A forthcoming survey on national practices related to "substantial differences" will inform recommendations to promote fairer and more transparent recognition practices across the regions.



↖  
**Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region**



↖  
**Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education**



↖  
**UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education**

### ENIC and NARIC Networks

The European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC), jointly run by the Council of Europe and UNESCO, works closely with the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) network, established in 1984, with the European Commission.

Together, the ENIC and NARIC networks form a unique professional community dedicated to recognition of qualifications. Over the years, the centres within the networks have developed a shared language, common practices, and a strong foundation of mutual understanding.

The Joint **ENIC-NARIC Charter** of Activities and Services, which sets out the shared principles and quality standards for the Networks, was updated and formally adopted in 2025 by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. Governance of the Networks is ensured by the ENIC Bureau and NARIC Advisory Board.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> annual joint ENIC-NARIC meeting was held in Tirana, Albania, from 25 -27 May 2025 in Tirana, Albania, with financial support of the Council of Europe. This major gathering brought together more than 150 representatives from the ENIC and NARIC networks and served as an important forum for exchanging best practices and enhancing cooperation in the field of recognition of qualification. The extensive **programme** included a plenary session and 12 parallel workshops, addressing a wide range of topics. This interactive format offered participants valuable opportunities to work together on common challenges and explore innovative solutions in the field of recognition of qualifications.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> annual joint ENIC-NARIC meeting will take place on 24-26 May 2026 in Athens (Greece).

### Automatic Recognition

The Committee has decided to launch the formal drafting process of a new Convention, provisionally titled the Convention on the Conditions of Transparency and Quality Assurance for Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications. Its primary aim is to establish the enabling conditions and obligations that will make automatic recognition feasible across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The new Convention will promote the right to qualifications holders for automatic recognition and will lay down the essential foundations of transparency, trust, and quality upon which mutual automatic recognition can be built. This represents a major step forward in overcoming persistent barriers caused by a lack of mutual trust in the quality of higher education systems and enhance the implementation of the Bologna Process tools.

In 2025, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications, set up by the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Education (CDEDU) in 2023, held three meetings and continued consultations with the relevant stakeholders. During its 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session in September 2025, the CDEDU approved a text proposal for a legally binding instrument and recommended that the Committee of Ministers authorise the drafting of a binding legal instrument – a Council of Europe Convention on the Conditions of Transparency and Quality Assurance for Automatic Recognition of Qualifications.



↖  
**More information on the ENIC-NARIC networks**



**AI and Recognition of Qualifications**

A new Programme on Artificial Intelligence and Recognition was launched in 2025. The Working Group established under this Programme held its first meeting in Autumn 2025. As its first activity, the Working Group members developed a survey designed to explore the usage of AI tools by accreditation centres, Higher Education Institutions and ministries. The survey aims to map current practices, emerging needs and potential challenges related to the integration of AI in the processes of recognition of qualifications.

**PILLAR 2** ENHANCING THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION

**Development of the Council of Europe’s Student Rights Charter**

In 2025, the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), advanced its work on the development of the Council of Europe Student Rights Charter by approving the proposal to form a dedicated drafting working group. The drafting of the European Student Rights Charter will be co-led by the Council of Europe and the European Students’ Union (ESU), with extensive consultation involving a wide range of stakeholders.

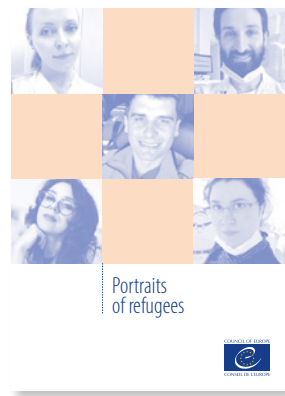
A call for nominations was subsequently launched, and the Group was formed on the basis of proposals from both the CDEDU and ESU. The Working Group held its first meeting in Paris in July 2025. Initial findings were presented to the CDEDU in September 2025. Namely, the Group agreed that establishing a European Student Rights Charter would enable the Council of Europe to ensure that a core set of student rights — including access to affordable education, academic freedom, and meaningful student participation in governance — are recognised, guaranteed, and protected across all member states.

Throughout the second half of 2025, a series of targeted stakeholder consultations helped refine expectations and clarify priorities. These consultations highlighted that the development and endorsement of a European Student Rights Charter would strengthen the consistency

and protection of student rights across Europe, further advancing the democratic principles and human rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The CDEDU, the Working Group, and the Secretariat have now begun the concrete conceptualisation and drafting process, with the objective of consolidating and safeguarding students’ rights across Europe. This work aims to ensure that every student—regardless of background or country of residence—has access to quality education, is empowered to participate democratically in their academic community, and can contribute to societal change in accordance with the Council of Europe’s values and standards.

The work will continue throughout 2026, with the aim of presenting the draft for first reading at the CDEDU in autumn 2026.



## The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)

The Council of Europe has been running the **European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)** since 2017, an initiative aiming to facilitate the recognition of refugees' qualifications in the absence of full documentation.

**T**he EQPR is a standardised and portable document that explains the qualification(s) a refugee is likely to have based on the available evidence. Although this document does not constitute a formal recognition act, it summarises and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency.

By 2025, 24 countries have joined the EQPR: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Spain (joined in 2025) and the United Kingdom.

More than 100 credential evaluators from 24 participating ENICs are now trained on the interview-based EQPR methodology. To date, over 1000 EQPRs have been issued.

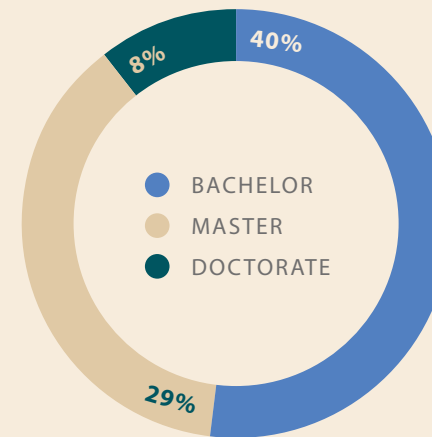
In 2025 the Council of Europe conducted a **survey** on the use of the EQPR, gathering responses from 336 passport holders representing more than 40 nationalities. Most respondents came from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Cameroon, representing a highly educated population: 40% hold bachelor's degrees, 29% master's, and 8% doctorates. The survey confirmed that the EQPR is a practical and effective tool for inclusion in higher education and the labour market. According to the findings, 59% of respondents used their EQPR, most often

in the country where it was issued. 65% of students said the EQPR directly helped them access higher education, while 59% of employed respondents credited it with improving their job opportunities. Over 60% now work in their original field of qualification, demonstrating the EQPR's capacity to turn academic recognition into real opportunities. Furthermore, high satisfaction rate—95% of participants would recommend the EQPR—reflect the programme's success. The survey also shows that more than 60% of EQPR users in work or study hold a language certificate at B2 level or higher, underscoring how language proficiency reinforces employability and integration.

The publication "Portrait of refugees", published on UNHCR World Refugee Day, is a collection of lived experiences of the EQPR. Each narrative of the seven interviewed persons reveals a unique journey of continuing education and resuming professional careers in host countries. From healthcare professionals offering critical services to communities, to young students pursuing their dreams of higher education, these individuals showcase the profound impact of recognition, trust, and support. The portraits are a just a glimpse into the ways in which—and extent to which—the EQPR and other Council of Europe initiatives have benefitted those who had to leave their home countries.

### PARTICIPATION & SCALE

#### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS



24

Participating countries joined by 2025

336

EQPR holders surveyed

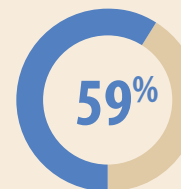
100+

Credential evaluators trained from 24 participating ENICs

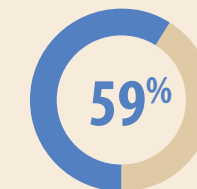
1,000+

EQPRs issued to date

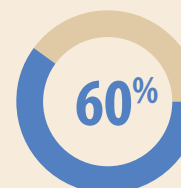
### EQPR USAGE & IMPACT



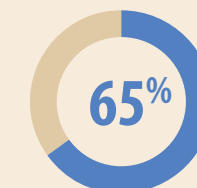
Of respondents used their EQPR.



Of employed respondents said the EQPR improved their job opportunities.



Now work in their original field of qualification.



Of students said the EQPR directly helped them access higher education.

### SATISFACTION RATE

95%

WOULD RECOMMEND THE EQPR



## Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)

**ETINED** is a network of specialists appointed by member states of the Council of Europe and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention.

Since its launch in 2015, the ETINED Platform has been dedicated to promoting a culture of ethics and integrity within the education sector. The Platform has produced guidelines aimed at ensuring ethical practices in the teaching profession and has developed targeted recommendations on academic integrity based on assessments and exchanges with stakeholders in the field.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the ETINED Platform, held on 5–6 November 2025 in Valetta, brought together

representatives of states parties, NGOs and experts from across Europe to address key challenges in promoting integrity and transparency in education.

The plenary included an in-depth exchange on open school data, exploring how transparency initiatives can empower communities while safeguarding privacy and equity. Discussions also focused on innovative approaches to preventing and countering education fraud, including the use of artificial intelligence to support academic integrity and legal measures against degree mills, contributing to the work of the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud. The meeting concluded with a forward-looking exchange on ETINED's future priorities, reaffirming the platform's commitment to co-operation, knowledge-sharing and strengthening trust in European education.

### ETINED PLATFORM STATISTICS

# 50+

Participants attended the 9<sup>th</sup> ETINED Plenary, both online and in-person

# 30+

Participants took part in the workshop "Spotting the Fakes: Navigating Education Fraud in a Digital" hosted by the ETINED Platform during the annual ENIC-NARIC meeting in Tirana, 27 May 2025

# 100+

Online participants were counted at the EduTalk@CoE on Transnational Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Academic Integrity and Quality Assurance, April 2025.



### Launch of TNE Online Series

Following the EduTalk in April 2025, a co-authored article titled “In addressing TNE governance challenges, students are key” featuring contributions from UNESCO, ENQA, CIMEA, TNE Hub and the Council of Europe, was published in University World News, highlighting the need for robust quality assurance, cross-border cooperation, and the protection of student interests. To complement the article, a series of short expert video clips have been published on the Education Department’s dedicated LinkedIn page, addressing key questions about TNE, including its risks, opportunities, and governance challenges.

### Spotting the Fakes: Addressing Education Fraud in a Digital Age

The ETINED Platform offered a workshop at the 32<sup>nd</sup> ENIC-NARIC annual meeting in May 2025. It focused on ETINED’s relevance for ENIC-NARIC centres, the economic and societal impact of diploma mills, and emerging trends in rogue credential evaluators and fake accrediting bodies.

### EduTalks@CoE

In April 2025, the ETINED Platform hosted an online moderated talk - EduTalks@CoE - Ensuring Quality and Integrity in Transnational Education” (TNE). The EduTalk explored how institutions can maintain academic integrity and quality while expanding transnational education opportunities in an increasingly globalised world.



← In addressing TNE governance challenges, students are key



← Ensuring Quality and Integrity in Transnational Education

# Implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on Countering Education Fraud

## Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud

The Centre was launched under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and CIMEA (Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence) in June 2025. The Centre is intended to function as a shared operational mechanism open to all Council of Europe member states, addressing a wide range of fraudulent practices including diploma mills, forged qualifications, and academic misconduct. It will offer guidance tools, data analysis, and technical support to national authorities and education stakeholders.

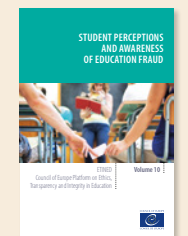
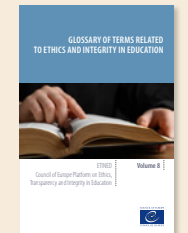
## New Publication: Student Perceptions and Awareness of Education Fraud

Based on a Europe-wide survey of over 5,000 higher education students across 40 countries, the report – developed in partnership with CIMEA (Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence) and the ETINED Platform – sheds light on how students perceive, experience, and understand education fraud.

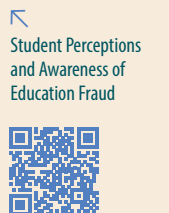
## New Publication: Open school data in European education systems

The report - developed in partnership with UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) - explores how open school data is developed and implemented across States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. Aimed at policymakers, education officials, civil society, and international partners, the report reviews types of public data, governance models, impacts, best practices, and barriers to open school data.

## ONLINE RESOURCES



## EDUCATION INFORMATION NOTES



## TRANSLATIONS



**Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on countering education fraud**  
English · French · Georgian · Dutch · Hungarian · Italian



**Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)9 on fostering a culture of ethics in the teaching profession**  
English · French · Georgian



# Language Policy and Practice

2025 marked the second year of the complementary 4-year programmes of both Language Policy and the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). It was also the concluding year of the **Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation initiative** (RPPE) which began in 2022.

The first phase of the new Self-Assessment Tool to help member states gauge their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the implementation of the **CM/Rec Recommendation (2022)1** on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, focusing on lower secondary, was successfully completed. Work is now underway to finalise the French version of this tool, renamed as “A Survey Tool for Planning and Reflection” and to launch a promotional campaign to encourage member states to use the tool both to gauge the state-of-play of language education at national level but also to share inspiring examples of the levels of policy, teacher education and classroom practice. A total of fifteen entries for the accompanying Policy Toolbox has been drafted on topics ranging from home languages to assessment; once finalised, these will act as evidence for the European Language Education Profile and to Strategic Dash Board and as the first port-of-call for member states looking for advice and guidance to better align their language education systems with the 2022 Recommendation.

The successful conclusion of the RPPE initiative was marked with a 1-day event in Bratislava which brought together the teachers from all ten schools from the three participating countries (Slovak Republic, Greece and Slovenia), the national coordinators, the academic coordinator of the initiative and the Secretariat. Discussions focused on the impact, dissemination and sustainability of the RPPE and included a webinar for the wider public which provided an overview of the initiative and presentations of inspiring examples of using Romani

language and culture to support the educational inclusion of Roma pupils in primary education.

The web pages on the thematic area on language policy have gone through a restructuring under the website of the Education Department to update the information, disseminate new publications and make different language versions of various publications and tools available. In that scope, the English, French, Turkish, and Italian versions of the **linguistic support to migrants (LSM) Toolkit** from 2024 and the accompanying guide; the English, French and Dutch versions tools and other materials developed under the **Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM) project**; and the guidelines produced under the **RPPE** can be found on the dedicated pages of the website. In addition, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was also updated to include the new translation versions of the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and of the Collated representative samples of descriptors for young learners (Ages 7-10) and Collated representative samples of descriptors for young learners (Ages 11-15) were also added to the **CEFR website**.

A **joint inform** was developed with the European Migration Network (EMN) of the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on ‘Language and literacy support measures for adult beneficiaries of international protection’ to which the Language Policy programme contributed specifically with the guidelines and tools to provide linguistic support to migrants.

2025: European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)

This second year of the new programme – language education at the heart of democracy – saw a flurry of activity in relation to the eight development projects launched in 2024, bringing a total of 216 language professionals from across Europe and beyond to Graz to take part in network meetings and in project workshops focusing on a range of themes including pluriliteracies for global citizenship, democratic culture for younger learners, educational opportunities in sign languages; 21<sup>st</sup> century competences and the use of AI.

A total of 48 In-country capacity building activities (ECML Training and consultancy) took place in 29 countries and the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the highly successful ECML summer academy for language teacher educators, co-funded by the European Commission attracted 30 participants from 28 European countries.

In order to increase its outreach and impact, the ECML organised a series of webinars on key topics such as home languages, AI, mediation, supporting multilingual classrooms, language in the workplace for adult migrants, throughout the year, attracting a total of around 4,000 followers.

In February, the Centre welcomed a high-level Turkish delegation led by President of the Board of Education (BoE) Cihad DEMİRLİ and other government officials and experts. The study visit, organised within the scope of the European Union and Council of Europe joint project

on Enhancing Foreign Language Education Quality in Türkiye, followed on from the delegation’s two-day visit to the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg. The Graz leg of the visit focused on providing the visitors with an insight into the history of language education at the Council of Europe and the important contribution of the ECML, as well as on learning from the experiences of implementation of the CEFR and its Companion Volume at national level presented by experts from Austria, Slovenia and Lithuania. At the conclusion of the visit the President of the Board of Education confirmed Türkiye’s strong interest of in the work of the Centre and the intention to initiate procedures to become a member state of the ECML Enlarged Partial Agreement.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the European Day of Languages on September 26<sup>th</sup> was marked with a strong political endorsement of the importance of languages and language education from the Secretary General in his EDL Statement:

*“The teaching and learning of multiple languages is not a cultural luxury, but a political necessity – a vital means of bringing the European ideal to life and reinforcing the pluralistic, inclusive, and forward-looking values at the heart of the European project.”*

The motto ‘Languages open hearts and minds’ generated exceptional interest in the European Day of Languages (EDL), with over 8,000 entries submitted to a poster competition illustrating the motto, and thousands of pupils contributing to and performing a truly multilingual rendition of the anthem ‘Voices of Europe’, created for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EDL. The impressive results can be seen on the EDL website.

Promoting the teaching and learning of multiple languages beyond English is the objective of the ECML’s new Motivation Manifesto, launched on EDL. The Manifesto is the result of an ECML\_EC working group which investigated the range of factors that can influence learner motivation. It outlines the need for a motivational ecology that insists on the equal value of all languages and depends on the mutually supportive efforts of a wide range of stakeholders. The full Manifesto is available in English and French and the flyer in 27 languages.

The year concluded with a colloquium on Regional and Minority Languages (RMLs), as part of the ECML’s Cooperation Agreement with the European Commission. Through keynotes, panel discussions, group work and video testimonials, the colloquium, attended by 50 people in person and several hundred online, explored the impact of demographic changes on the vitality of RMLs in secondary education. It examined how evolving policy frameworks shape RML instruction and investigated the factors likely to motivate newcomers to learn these languages. This event was followed by the annual meeting of the Professional Network Forum which brought together 16 INGOs working in the field of language education to share knowledge and important developments with one another and with the ECML.

And just in time to celebrate the festive season, Italy announced its adhesion to the Centre, bringing the total number of member states to 37, the highest ever.

STATISTICS

163 000+

ECML resources downloaded

1 750+

Professionals participated in development programmes

4 000 Additional attendees via webinars

4.3M Visitors on the website in september + 5,2% compared to 2024

1100 Events registered in the EDL calendar



www.coe.int/edl

#coeEDL

## PILLAR 1

RENEWING THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION OF EDUCATION

## PILLAR 2

ENHANCING THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION

2025 marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, highlighting the vital role of the Council of Europe's programmes on history education in fostering peace and mutual understanding in Europe. Against this symbolic backdrop, the activities of the History Education Division focused on the enduring relevance of history teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the context of a rapidly evolving digital world and continued threats to democratic stability, history education remains an essential foundation for developing learners' critical thinking and strengthening their commitment to multiperspectivity and human rights.

## Intergovernmental Programme on History Education and Holocaust Remembrance

2025 saw the conclusion of the Council of Europe's sixth Intergovernmental Programme on History Education. Over the course of the year, work continued on a new draft recommendation on history education in the digital age as a key outcome of the programme.

**T**he recommendation aims to ensure that history education is reaffirmed as a cornerstone of cultivating democratic values and understanding across the member states, providing guidelines that take into account the particular opportunities and challenges of the digital age.

The fourth Annual Forum for History Education, focusing on the theme "*Where Learners Meet History: Reaffirming the Role of History Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*", was held on 11-13 June 2025 in Budapest. The event brought together public authorities, teachers, learners, researchers, and associations, who examined the conditions, innovations and frameworks needed to ensure high-quality and inclusive history education.

With regard to work on Holocaust remembrance and the prevention of crimes against humanity, the Division took part in several meetings and events of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), representing the Council of Europe as a Permanent International

Partner of the IHRA. At the first plenary meeting under the 2025 presidency of Israel, held virtually 23-26 June, the committee of education discussed issues such as training for educators and new challenges related to artificial intelligence. The Division was also present at an IHRA conference co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic on 22-23 October in Lety, Czech Republic, dedicated to the remembrance of the Roma genocide.

Throughout 2025, the Secretariat also continued to contribute to commemorations related to Holocaust remembrance across the member states, including the key date of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January. 2025 also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official recognition of 2 August as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. At the Council of Europe, this day was commemorated during a ceremony on 24 July with the participation of the Presidency of Malta and Roma civil society.

## Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE)

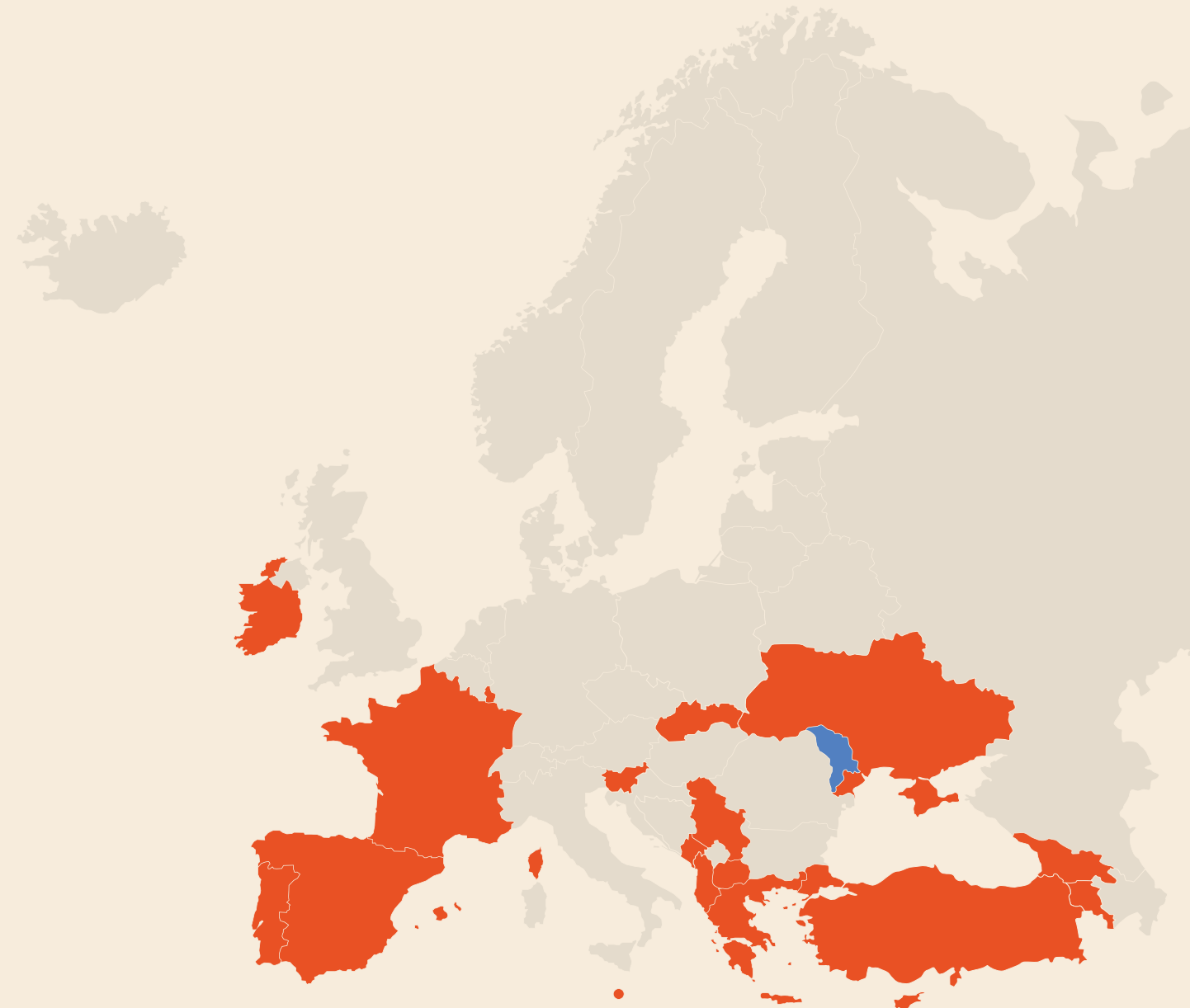
In 2025, the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe concentrated on two interconnected priorities: the future of democracy in Europe and the transmission of historical memory.

Marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the Observatory contributed to commemorations that highlighted the role of education and remembrance in fostering democracy. Two symbolic initiatives – a working visit to Kyiv on Victory in Europe Day and an intergenerational event at the former Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in Alsace with the Council of Europe’s Secretary General – highlighted the enduring importance of history education in times of conflict and democratic fragility.

2025 was important for OHTE’s strategic positioning within the Council of Europe’s broader vision for the future of democracy. With the accession of two new member states (the Slovak Republic and Montenegro), the Observatory broadened its perspective, strengthened its role, and actively contributed to discussions around the

New Democratic Pact for Europe, exploring how history education can support democratic resilience and civic engagement among young people. OHTE also ensured that young people were active participants in all its events, in line with the Education Department’s “Learners First” Strategy, which places learners at the centre of education.

Key activities during the year included the publication of a thematic report on Economic Crises in History Teaching during the 5<sup>th</sup> OHTE Annual Conference, the launch of the research for the next general report, and the preparation of an ad hoc study on the abolition of the death penalty as reflected in history education. Alongside these initiatives, communication efforts – including an innovative data visualisation project – further strengthened OHTE’s visibility and impact, helping to support informed, evidence-based history education for young people.



- MEMBER STATES
- OBSERVER STATES

## Advancing History Education through Research, Data and Innovation

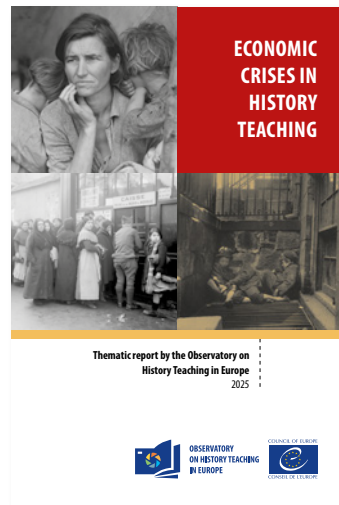
### New OHTE Thematic Report “Economic Crises in History Teaching”

The publication of the second OHTE Thematic Report on Economic Crises in History Teaching marked a significant milestone in the OHTE’s work in 2025 - officially released during OHTE’s 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. The report shows that understanding these events from a historical perspective helps students respond better to similar challenges today and in the future. Learning about economic crises goes beyond learning facts and dates, but helps students develop essential skills and competences necessary for a democratic culture, such as the ability to think critically, empathy for those who lived through hardship, tolerance of ambiguity and resistance to scapegoating narratives.

### Histolab Digital Hub

The Histolab Digital Hub – launched in 2024 under the Joint Project of the European Union and the Council of Europe – is a unique European platform fostering co-operation and innovation in history education. Its network of over 250 members in the HISTCONNECT database and nearly 500 newsletter subscribers reflect a strong and sustained interest in history teaching across Europe.

At the heart of the Hub is the Resource Hub, featuring more than 235 carefully curated materials from across the field of history education. Members also contribute to the event calendar and bulletin board by sharing events, research opportunities, and new initiatives. All of these are compiled into a monthly newsletter, primarily reaching teachers, and are regularly showcased across Social Media channels.



### Data visualisation – fulfilling OHTE’s mission visually

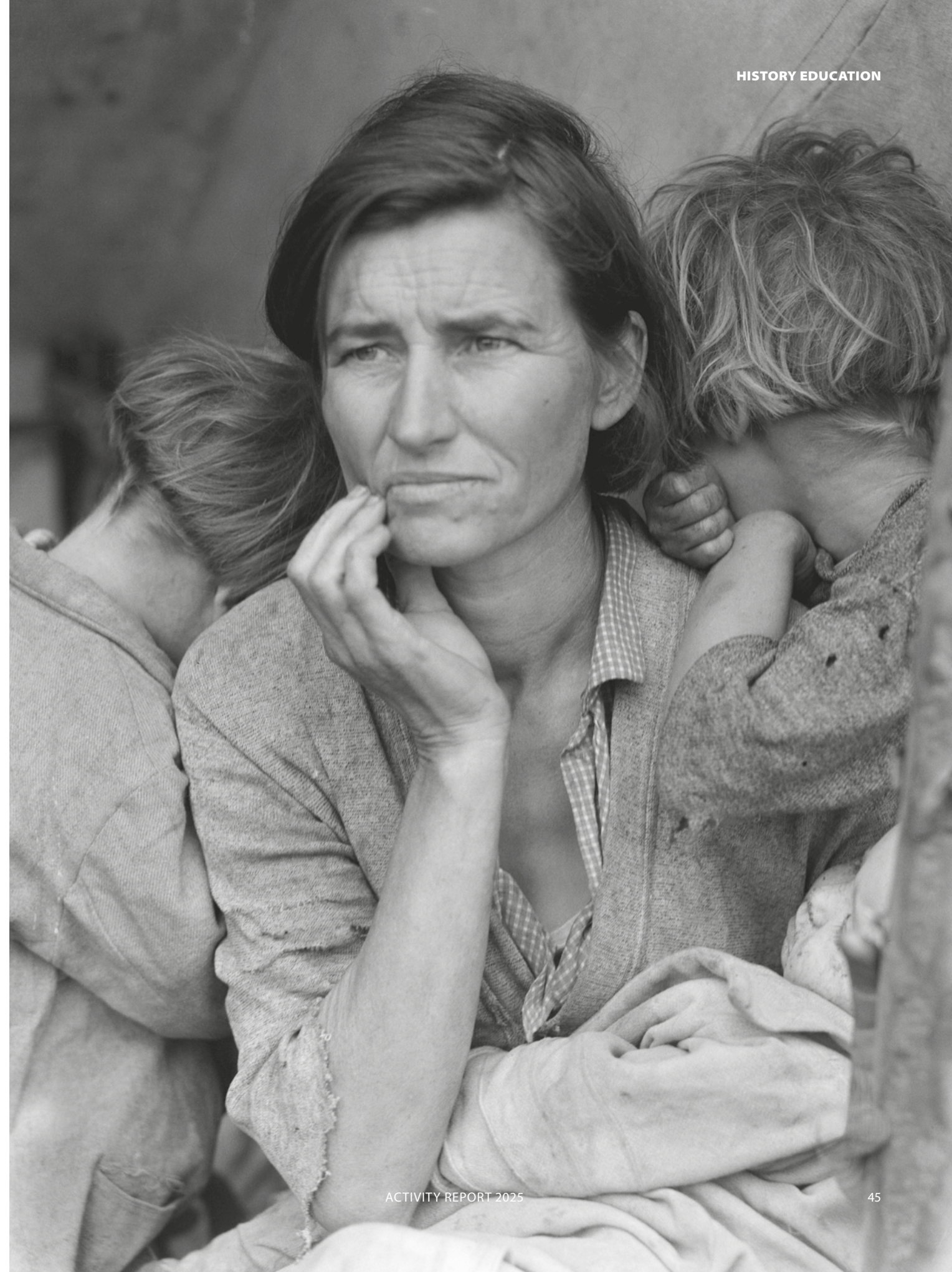
Together with the release of the new thematic report, the OHTE launched its very first Tableau dashboard presenting the report’s findings visually. The OHTE Data Visualisation project makes the mission of the Observatory very concrete: it provides an overall picture of the state of history teaching in Europe, based on the data collected through general and thematic reports. The tool is designed primarily for researchers, journalists, civil society organisations, teachers and governments that are looking for niche, per country information on the way history is taught in Europe. It is best adapted for desktop use and allows complete transparency and download of datasets for any purposes. Throughout 2026, dashboards presenting previous OHTE reports will be made available on OHTE’s website.



Thematic report by OHTE 2025



10 KEY FINDINGS



# Digital Transformation of Education

## European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 stood as a unique opportunity to enhance the visibility and impact of digital citizenship education and reaffirm its value.

This designated year provided a strategic platform for key stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors to work together, set common goals and share sense-making practices. The European year 2025 also provided a concise yet impactful space for measuring achievements and collectively defining a road map for the future of digital citizenship education. Through streamlined efforts, it was aimed to propel digital citizenship education forward, ensuring its resilience and effectiveness in the ever-evolving digital landscape. From this perspective, it reinstated the urgent need to take

action to make DCE a policy priority, to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and to facilitate access of all the learners to quality resources and opportunities to learn, connect and engage positively. The European Year 2025 served as a showcase of all the resources and knowledge material that has been developed across wider Europe so far. It also appealed for co-ordinated and targeted actions of all the stakeholder groups, including youth, policy makers, parents and carers, experts and researchers as well as education sector and civil society.

*“The digital world is not a future to prepare for, it is our shared present. And the ability of individuals of all ages to engage ethically, effectively, and responsibly in this digital world – must be at the core of our collective democratic agenda.”*

**AMB. FRANCESCA CAMILLERI VETTIGER OF MALTA** DELIVERING OPENING REMARKS OF THE DCE FORUM

### 3 MAJOR EVENTS ORGANISED DURING THE EUROPEAN YEAR 2025

01

#### The launch conference of the European Year 2025

The launch conference of the European Year 2025 (23-24 January 2025, Strasbourg) discussed outstanding challenges such as communication about DCE, international cooperation, coordinated efforts by the stakeholders and integration of digital citizenship in education and training. One of the recommendations of the launch conference was the development of a strategic document for the future of digital citizenship education, for “the way forward”.

02

#### The European Digital Citizenship Education Forum

The European Digital Citizenship Education Forum (27-28 May 2025, Strasbourg) focused on enhancing multistakeholder collaboration for tangible results and defined key strategic objectives of the future road map. The DCE Expo organised within the Forum showcased more than 100 print and digital resources for enhanced learning and competence building.

03

#### “The Way Forward” closing conference

“The Way Forward” closing conference of the European Year 2025 (18-19 November 2025, Ljubljana) provided a platform for the partners to share some of the achievements in advancing DCE during 2025 as well as allowed for the first validation of the draft Road map for 2027-2031 in a multistakeholder environment.

19 member states have presented action plans with 203 activities to be implemented as part of the European Year 2025 through the DCE Promoters’ Network. Activities are grouped in several thematic topics: policy and curriculum development (14), teacher education and training (34), project development and implementation (19), awareness raising and dissemination (117), M&E or impact assessment (3) and research (16).

### Council of Europe Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education 2027-2031

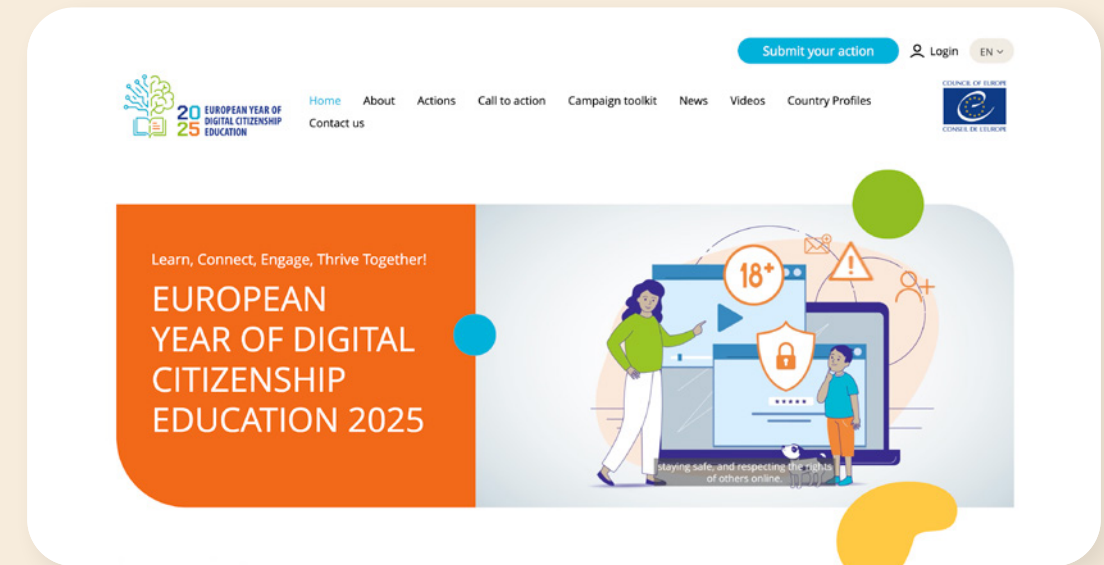
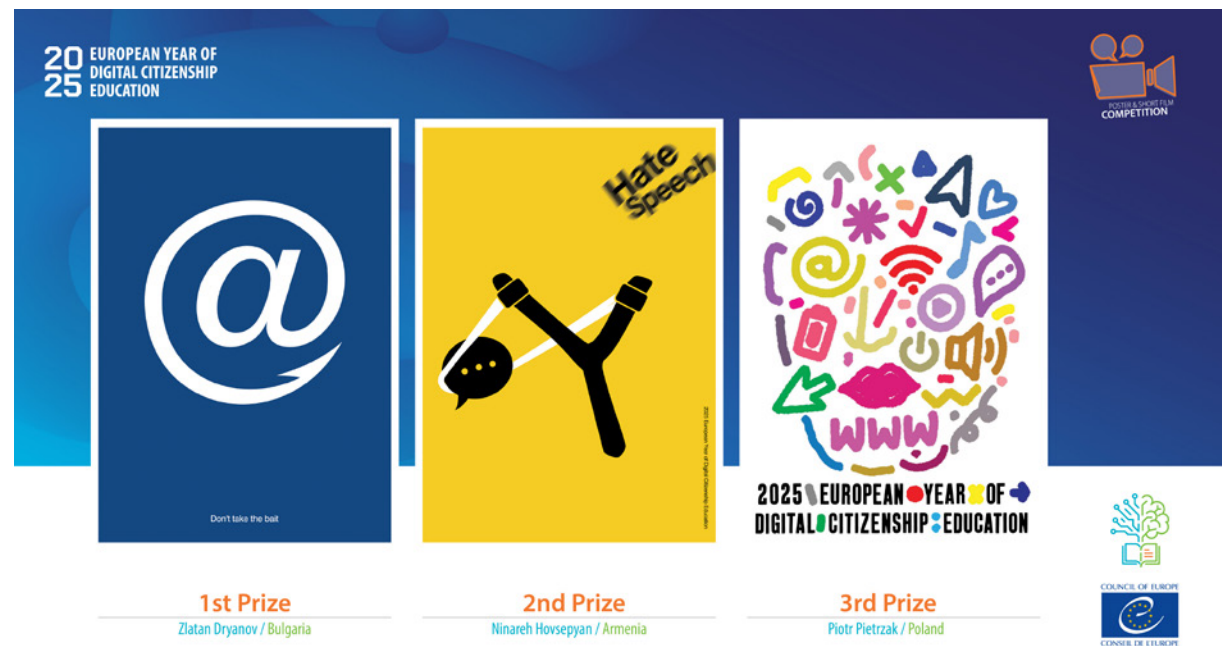
In line with the strategic objectives of the European Year 2025, the Education Department started developing a road map establish digital citizenship education as a long-term policy priority. The proposed road map is a five-year plan of policy initiatives and programmatic activities that seek to empower learners across Council of Europe member states as active, responsible, and ethical digital citizens. The road map puts forward the following vision to guide its development and implementation:

*Learners in Europe are empowered to act as active, responsible, and ethical digital citizens. They engage in safe, inclusive, and democratic digital environments, equipped with the skills to critically navigate technologies, build trust, and co-create a resilient digital society across generations.*

#### SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBLE ACTORS ARE DEFINED UNDER THE FOUR STRATEGIC PATHWAYS AS FOLLOWS

- 01 POLICY ADVANCEMENT FOR DCE
- 02 COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING
- 03 EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- 04 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The road map and its implementation are structured across four phases, covering policy initiation, capacity expansion, consolidation, and future-proofing.



#### European Year 2025 website

A dedicated website has been created to promote the EuropeanYear2025. It features the main events, a campaign toolkit including the visibility (including logos, brand guidelines and banners), action submission form and a label generator that allows users to show their support for the European Year 2025 on social media. The website showcases the actions submitted and implemented by the member states and other stakeholders. It will be maintained in 2026 and gradually transformed to virtual hub for collaborating on the implementation of the road map 2027-2031.

#### Poster and short film competition

A creative poster and short film competition was launched to promote awareness and action around the critical challenges of digital life. Creative minds from across Europe got stuck in, explored these themes, and produced posters that reflect the values and goals of digital citizenship education.

A selection of the posters will be on display in margins of the second Digital Citizenship Education Forum, which will take place in Strasbourg in May 2026. This exhibition aims to engage educators, policy makers, and the public in shaping a safer and more respectful digital future.

#### KEY ACTIVITIES DURING THE EUROPEAN YEAR 2025

- 01 Development of the draft Road Map for 2027-2031
- 02 Launch of the DCE Planner as a practical tool to embed digital citizenship in education
- 03 Dedicated website (in English and French) of the European Year 2025 with news, country profiles and activity mapping
- 04 Communication strategy, social media campaign and the label of the European Year
- 05 International Poster and Short Film Competition on Digital Citizenship
- 06 "Understanding Digital Citizenship" MOOC
- 07 New Digi-Nauts episode on privacy and security, Activity book vol. 2 and situation cards for 2 age groups of learners (5-9 and 10-18)
- 08 200+ activities dedicated to the European Year by the DCE Promoters' Network

## Review of the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10

In its Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 to member states on developing and promoting digital citizenship education adopted on 21 November 2019, the Committee of Ministers recommends that the governments of member states: “Examine the implementation of this recommendation, including the guidelines contained in its appendix, within the Committee of Ministers at least every five years and, if appropriate, at shorter intervals...”

In line with the above mentioned provision, the Education Department commissioned a desk research and a survey in the last quarter of 2024. The Review aimed at assessing the state of implementation of the Recommendation in 46 member states. The Review revealed that many member states, despite not referring directly to the DCE Recommendation of the Council of Europe, have national strategies, action plans, roadmaps, national agendas or programmes, implemented through legislation, revisions of the learning frameworks, funding programmes and soft-law measures. They all pertain to topics of digital education, digital skills, media literacy, online safety, digital citizenship, or digitalisation in general.

There are notable efforts from the member states to use diverse strategies to encourage stakeholder participation in the DCE policies design phase, such as public consultations, working groups with diverse representation, and feedback channels from educators, parents, and students. However, there is a lack of evidence on specific mechanisms to ensure equitable representation and meaningful participation from diverse stakeholders. The Review highlights that many member

states integrate collaborative elements into their wider digital strategies, often involving public entities, the private sector and civil society through various initiatives, in compelling instances of effective DCE implementation. Co-operation in the field of DCE extends beyond national borders, with international organisations and initiatives playing a significant role in supporting and promoting DCE implementation.

Evidence on the use of teacher training to promote DCE is limited, though there are positive examples in several member states. Some have integrated these principles into formal programmes, offering both initial and ongoing training for educators. Others are developing targeted initiatives through professional development structures or broader digital education strategies. Many countries are still in the process of refining their approaches, with plans to expand training efforts in the coming years. Country profiles of 38 member states are presented on the European Year 2025 website.

**Five Member States - Belgium, France, Iceland, Malta and Moldova make explicit reference to the DCE recommendation or DCE principles of the Council of Europe in policy documents or curriculum.**

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION CM/REC(2019)10 ON DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION



The Education Department organised seven online consultation sessions on 5–6 May 2025, bringing together over 80 stakeholders to provide feedback on the forthcoming Draft Recommendation on AI Literacy for Human Rights, Democracy and Social Agency. Participants reviewed the Council of Europe’s proposed concept and human-centred principles for AI literacy and contributed views through an anonymous poll. 120 in-person participants were engaged in interactive sessions during the conference days.

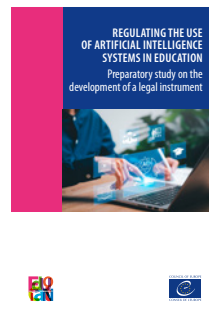


## Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education

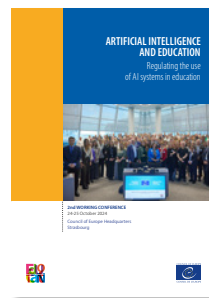
On 8-9 October, the Council hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Conference on AI in Education, entitled “Ensuring Quality Education in the AI Era – Introducing the Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education”, bringing together government-nominated experts, academia, and civil society to refine the initiatives undertaken by the Education Department.

**T**he Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education aims to translate Council of Europe standards into concrete action. It will offer structured guidance to help member states, education institutions, teachers, students, and private sector actors implement responsible, ethical, and human-centric uses of AI in education, in line with the principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The Compass will help member states in setting common goals to avoid fragmentation and show the directions and links between them.

PREPARATORY STUDY 2024



2<sup>ND</sup> WORKING CONFERENCE



## Four Essential Principles for AI Integration in Education

Four cardinal points emerge as being essential in ensuring that the integration of Artificial Intelligence in education promotes and protects human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, while empowering learners, educators, and institutions through responsible, human-centric, and value aligned use and understanding of AI technologies.

### 01 — Regulation and Governance

This point concerns setting appropriate safeguards before AI systems are used in education and putting in place democratic governance to ensure education priorities prevail over technology integration. A **preparatory study** (2024) and the **2<sup>nd</sup> Working Conference** (Oct 2024) laid the groundwork for a draft legal instrument regulating AI use in education. The Policy Toolbox on AI and Education (under development) offers strategic and practical support for policymakers, education providers, school leaders and administrators, and teachers. Structured around three domains — Governance, Education, and AI Literacy — it provides tools that help stakeholders address concrete challenges posed by AI in education.

### 02 — Education About AI

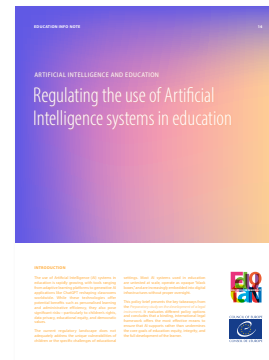
This point refers to «education, training and awareness raising» and mainly focuses on AI literacy which should be understood as comprising three dimensions: technological (how Artificial Intelligence works and how it might be developed), practical (how Artificial Intelligence can be used effectively), and human (the impact of AI on humans, human rights, democracy and the rule of law). The rarely fully considered human dimension is central to the proposed AI literacy, for three reasons: (i) to ensure that AI literacy addresses the Council of Europe's core values, (ii) because rarely is sufficient emphasis given to it, and (iii) because AI technical knowledge and practical

skills quickly become outdated. A Draft Committee of Minister Recommendation on AI Literacy has been drafted and presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting of the CDEU in September 2025.

### 03 — Education With AI

This point concerns the development of guidelines and practical resources and tools to support educators in evidence-based and responsible use of AI in education. On 8–9 October 2025, the Council of Europe held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Conference, “**Ensuring Quality Education in the AI Era – Introducing the Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education**,” which officially launched the Compass for AI and Education. Bringing together government experts, academia, and civil society, the conference advanced shared learning, policy dialogue, and practical planning for implementation. With 120 participants on site, discussions highlighted the need for human-rights-anchored, education-specific, and capacity-orientated regulation aligned with international standards. Participants highlighted the need for a common framework for AI in education to prevent fragmented standards, address inequalities and commercial pressures, and strengthen trust, innovation and cross-border compatibility, while noting challenges such as digital divides, the evolving role of teachers and limited resources. Discussions stressed that AI literacy should build on existing digital and media-literacy efforts, avoiding duplication and curriculum overload, and that

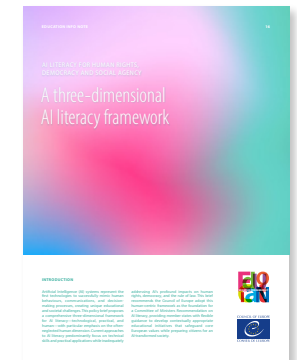
## EDUCATION INFORMATION NOTES



REGULATING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS IN EDUCATION



A CRITICAL VIEW THROUGH THE LENS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND THE RULE OF LAW



AI LITERACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL AGENCY: A THREE-DIMENSIONAL AI LITERACY FRAMEWORK



regulating AI in education should be grounded in human rights norms and supported by the implementation of existing instruments such as the Framework Convention on AI, the AI Act and GDPR. The conference reaffirmed that Europe aims not to control technology but to shape its use through shared values, that education must remain a public good rather than a testing ground for algorithms, and that meaningful innovation depends on trust, transparency, inclusion and strong cross-sectoral cooperation.

Next steps for 2026–2027 include establishing the EDU-IA committee; finalising the Policy Toolbox and AI literacy framework; advancing the zero draft of the recommendation; developing the European Reference Framework for evaluating educational technologies;

preparing the proposal for a legal instrument; initiating work on guidelines for education data and data analytics; and drafting a white paper on the teaching profession in the digital age.

### 04 — Research and Evidence

This point concerns evaluation of educational technologies before they are introduced in public education systems and studying and assessing their impact after their use. A **feasibility study** conducted in 2025 recommended a European Reference Framework for evaluating educational technologies, including AI, to ensure rights-based, coherent, and equitable assessment practices across member states.

# COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES



# Albania

The project “Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania” is being implemented by the Council of Europe and funded by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) and will run until 2026. A total budget of 2,259,700 € was provided.



In 2025, the project transitioned from capacity development to high-level policy alignment, digital integration, and education system resilience. In line with the Council of Europe’s Education Strategy 2030, and in support of the implementation of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education and SDG targets 4.7, 16.7, and 16.a, Albania—through the project’s support and assistance—launched its first National Action Plan

on Digital Citizenship Education and celebrated National Citizenship Day on 16 November. The project continued to provide support to the Albanian authorities and educational stakeholders with a view to embedding the competences for democratic culture into the national curriculum and strengthening the institutional preparedness for crises.

## KEY PILLARS & ACHIEVEMENTS

01

### Policy Support & Institutional Resilience

#### Curriculum Modernisation

The Citizenship subject was overhauled to align with the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). New content integrating Digital Citizenship Education and media literacy for grades 1, 6, and 10 was officially endorsed in October 2025.

#### Higher Education

A policy paper was developed to support the integration of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) and ethical standards into university strategies.

#### EDURES Pilot (Crisis Preparedness)

The Education in Times of Emergencies and Crises Toolkit was piloted with over 100 stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, People’s Advocate, Durrës Municipality, National Civil Protection Agency, Albanian Red Cross, and 10 schools. The pilot demonstrated strong operational engagement but highlighted financial fragility, resulting in a roadmap for sustainable state financing. Findings were presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg.

02

### Democratic School Governance

#### School Network

Expanded the democratic governance network to 75 schools across 23 cities, applying the School as a Community Centre model.

#### Democratic Culture Labs (DCLs)

Established DCLs in 17 pilot schools as incubators for student governance, participation, and safe online engagement.

#### Youth-Led Initiatives

“Never Violence”: Engaged 2,900 students in anti-bullying efforts, supported by the newly developed Professional Guide for Anti-Bullying Teams. “Learning from the Past”: Partnered with AIDSSH to promote human rights learning through history, including student visits to memorial sites such as Spaç Prison.

03

### Teacher Professional Development

#### Institutionalisation

Further to active co-operation within the project framework, guidelines were issued by the educational authorities to Local Education Directorates to formally establish the Network of Teachers for Democratic Culture (TeacherNet), thus ensuring its long-term sustainability.

#### Capacity Building

The TeacherNet community of 400+ educators remained active, with more than 500 professionals trained to integrate competences for democratic culture into daily instruction.

## TOTAL BUDGET

# 2,259,700 €

## STATISTICS

PROFESSIONALS TRAINED	<b>500+</b>	Educators and administrators trained in competences for democratic culture.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT	<b>2,900</b>	Students directly involved in “Never Violence” anti-bullying actions.
HISTORICAL EDUCATION	<b>350</b>	Students participated in “Learning from the Past” site visits.
INFRASTRUCTURE	<b>17</b>	Democratic Culture Labs established.
NETWORK REACH	<b>75</b>	Total schools implementing democratic school governance standards.



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

The “Quality Education for All – Bosnia and Herzegovina” initiative is part of the Council of Europe and European Union’s joint programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye.”

**R**unning from January 2023 to December 2026, it aims to improve the quality of education by integrating democratic culture and combating discrimination. With a total budget of 810,000 €, the project plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive and democratic education and embedding the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in the education system, schools and their

wider communities. The project helps align the country’s education policies with European standards and seeks to foster coordination among the relevant ministers of education and stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through collaboration with the EU, UN and OSCE, the project contributes to the development of programmes on quality education in 2026 - 2036.

“ Through sustained political commitment, strengthened coordination between education authorities at all levels, and targeted capacity-building for schools and teachers, the Council of Europe supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in translating inclusive education policies into concrete, high-quality learning environments for all learners. ”

## High-Level discussions to improve the quality of education

In September 2025, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) discussed and adopted the Information (Report) on the level of implementation of the Policy Recommendations with a Roadmap for Improving Inclusive Education for 2024. The Council of Ministers of BiH urged key education authorities to intensify their efforts in implementing the Roadmap, reaffirming the country’s commitment to advancing education quality and strengthening inclusive education policies. Prior to these discussions, the project organised a capacity-building session for education authorities to enhance their ability to effectively monitor the Roadmap’s implementation. The Council of Europe continues to bring together state, entity, cantonal and Brčko District education authorities, fostering dialogue and coordination, and ensuring sustained commitment to improving the quality of education for all learners.

## Resource centres for democratic school culture as multipliers of good practices

Five Resource Centres for democratic school culture have been established across BiH. They are intended to function as training hubs that promote quality education through peer-to-peer mentoring between schools. They also act as multipliers of good practices within their communities by supporting the development of small and medium-scale projects jointly implemented by school staff and students, addressing key challenges and creating tangible, positive changes in their schools and the wider community.

## Continued capacity building of teachers

The Council of Europe continued the capacity building sessions for teachers from diverse communities, who were equipped with essential tools for promoting democratic culture within their schools and wider communities. A series of comprehensive, in-depth capacity-building sessions, including a Training of Trainers, have been conducted to consolidate teachers’ understanding of the RFCDC and to increase the capacity of the schools to become efficient Resource Centres for democratic school culture.

TOTAL BUDGET

**810,000€**

# Georgia

The second phase of the project “Democracy Starts in Schools – Engaging School Children in Decision-Making Processes in Schools and Communities” was launched in January 2024 within the Council of Europe – Georgia Action Plan 2024 – 2027. The project, funded through the voluntary contribution of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) of 1,500,000 €, supports student participation in decision-making processes in schools and communities and the development of competences for democratic culture, in line with the Council of Europe standards and Georgia’s education policies.

## Support to schools to implement democratic school governance

In 2025, the Council of Europe continued to support 61 schools across Georgia to implement democratic school governance and enhance student participation. A series of on-line coaching sessions tailored to the schools’ individual needs were organised to support the implementation of individual school action plans on student participation.

Based on data collected through monitoring and evaluation tools, since March 2025, a total of 345 student projects and activities were implemented in the 61 schools. Of these, 111 were community-based projects, providing students with opportunities to engage in broader decision-making processes beyond the school setting. Students actively contributed to community dialogues, ecological awareness activities, and joint initiatives with local stakeholders and developed such competences as social responsibility and civic engagement, including cooperation with community representatives, participation in debates, and stronger communication skills to voice ideas in public contexts.

To reflect on this experience, peer learn and peer exchange, a working conference with 120 representatives from 44 participating schools was organised on 19 – 20 July 2025 in Tbilisi. The conference included a mix of interactive sessions and thematic workshops covering such key topics as student participation and student initiatives, media literacy, project management, parental engagement, alignment of school action plans on student participation with national standards, resource mobilisation, and new action planning.

## Youth civic competences and participation

The Council of Europe partnered with the Research-Intellectual Club “Dialogue of Generations” (RICDOG) NGO which implemented two rounds of Civic Education Champions camps to strengthen young people’s civic participation. 254 young people from 12 municipalities of Imereti Region enhanced their competences for democratic culture by designing and implementing 235 initiatives and 705 activities in their schools and communities and thereby gaining practical experience in leadership, civic engagement, and cooperation with local stakeholders.

## Professional development and resources to support democratic school governance

The Council of Europe initiated the development of a series of resources to support schools apply into practice specific aspects of the democratic school governance. Four key thematic areas were identified based on surveys and discussions with school representatives: student engagement, community partnerships, parent and inclusive practices and digital resource development. The resources are being developed through a participatory process by working groups made up of Council of Europe experts and school representatives, which ensures their relevance, ownership and sustainability. The resources will be disseminated to schools in Georgia nationwide.

In addition, the Council of Europe launched the development of a training programme on democratic school governance based on the whole-school approach. The programme integrates professional development for both principals and teachers and will be aligned with Council of Europe standards in democratic school governance and competences for democratic culture. The programme will be piloted in early 2026 and will be disseminated as an on-line training course with numerous multimedia resources.

**TOTAL BUDGET**  
**1,500,000€**



# Moldova

Since 2023, the Council of Europe implements Phase II of the project “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova” within the Council of Europe – Republic of Moldova Action Plans for 2021 – 2024 and 2025 - 2028. The project is funded through the voluntary contribution of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) of 1,400,000 €. It helps strengthen the capacity of Moldova’s education system to prepare students to become engaged citizens who embrace common European values in the context of the country’s EU integration efforts.

## TOTAL BUDGET

**1,400,000€**

### “The values that unite us” - first lesson of school year 2025 - 2026

At the request of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Europe supported the development of lesson plans and information materials for the first lesson of the 2025-2026 school year entitled “The Values that Unite Us”. Online training workshops for about 3,000 teachers and school managers were also organised. Delivered in all primary and secondary schools of Moldova on the first day of the school year, the lesson encouraged the students to reflect on the Council of Europe values – democracy, human rights, diversity, solidarity, and on how these values can be applied in the school environment.

### Integration of competences for democratic culture in education policies and practice

Following the launch of a new curriculum reform process in late 2024, the Council of Europe has supported the ministerial working group which will draft the new

curriculum of the citizenship education subject, in line with the Council of Europe competence-based approach. Many of the national experts trained by the Council of Europe on the RFCDC participated in the first two phases of the curriculum development process - the development of the national curriculum framework and assessment methodology, and the review and evaluation of current subjects. In parallel, the Council of Europe continued to support the transversal integration of the RFCDC in different school subjects. Draft methodological guidelines including around 500 interdisciplinary topics aligned with all curricular areas for the primary and secondary education levels were developed and discussed with teachers during on-line focus groups. The guidelines provide a valuable tool for educators seeking to enrich their teaching practices with a focus on democratic culture, making the RFCDC a living, classroom-ready resource.

Finally, the Council of Europe helped develop the methodology of assessment through descriptors of the “Personal Development” subject based on the RFCDC. The methodology was officially approved by



## STATISTICS

PROFESSIONALS TRAINED	<b>3,000</b>	Teachers and school managers trained through online workshops.
CURRICULUM REFORM	<b>+500</b>	Interdisciplinary curriculum topics developed.
INFRASTRUCTURE	<b>41</b>	Schools supported across Moldova.
CLOSING CONFERENCE	<b>100</b>	Participants at the closing conference (school directors, teachers and students).
NETWORK REACH	<b>100%</b>	Of secondary schools implementing the new “Personal Development” assessment descriptors.

the Ministry of Education and Research, and was rolled over in all secondary schools in Moldova. To support its implementation, the Council of Europe trained over 5,000 teachers and school managers across Moldova, thereby strengthening the democratic and competency-based education across the country.

### Support to schools to implement democratic school governance

The Council of Europe continued to provide tailored support to 41 schools across Moldova to implement democratic school governance policies and practices, in

line with the methodological guidelines developed by within the previous phase of the project. The Council of Europe partnered with the Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC) NGO, which provided support to schools over two years through online workshops, customised mentoring and reflection sessions on community-based student-led projects for the schools. A closing conference was organised in November 2025 with 100 school directors, teachers and students from the participating schools to reflect on the project results, lessons learned and impact, as well as on the ways in which the established practices can be sustained further within the schools.

# Montenegro

Through two complementary projects, the Council of Europe supports Montenegro in strengthening inclusive, democratic and safe education systems, addressing both structural reforms and urgent challenges such as academic integrity, digital citizenship, inclusion of vulnerable learners and the prevention of bullying and violence in schools. Implemented within the framework of the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye and through targeted bilateral support, these initiatives combine policy development, capacity building, research and awareness-raising to promote quality education for all learners, reinforce resilience across the education system and ensure safe, ethical and participatory learning environments.

## STATISTICS

TOTAL BUDGET	<b>€1,35 M</b>	Total combined budget : €850,000 – Quality Education for All €500,000 – Prevent Bullying and Violence in Schools
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION	<b>169,000+</b>	People reached through a nationwide awareness-raising campaign.
RESEARCH & EVIDENCE	<b>6,000+</b>	respondents on a nationwide study on bullying, cyberbullying and peer violence.
INNOVATION	<b>2</b>	Youth innovation initiatives: <b>Equal Hack:</b> Code for Equality <b>SafeHack:</b> Code for a Space Without Violence (upcoming / implemented)
MEDIA AWARENESS	<b>20</b>	Journalists trained on responsible reporting on school violence

## PROJECT N° 1 Quality Education for All

## TOTAL BUDGET

# 850,000€

The “Quality Education for All” project in Montenegro, implemented within the joint European Union and Council of Europe programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye,” is implemented from 2023 until 2026. The project’s goal is to promote non-discriminatory quality education for all learners in Montenegro by fostering inclusive, democratic, and ethical principles. The project also focuses on enhancing emergency response mechanisms at both pre-university and higher education levels.

### Integrity in Academia

Significant progress was made in consolidating academic integrity frameworks within higher education. The University of Montenegro finalised key governing documents, ensuring stronger alignment with both institutional and national regulations, primarily the law on academic integrity. In parallel, a Training of Trainers programme on academic ethics was launched in cooperation with UNESCO and IRAFPA, equipping educators with advanced tools and methodologies to promote integrity and ethical standards across higher education institutions.

### Promoting Inclusive and Digital Citizenship Education

The project helped advance inclusive and democratic competences across school communities through interactive capacity-building activities involving educators, parents and students from various regions. These efforts strengthened the understanding of media literacy, misinformation, peer violence, and safe digital engagement, encouraging whole-school approaches and community dialogue. A nationwide awareness-raising campaign promoting inclusive education and responsible digital behaviour reached over 169,000 people, predominantly through social media channels. The initiative generated strong engagement through visual storytelling and messages grounded in human rights, contributing to public understanding of equitable and ethical education.

### Empowering Students with Special Educational Needs and Promoting Equality

In 2025, the Council of Europe advanced its support for students with special educational needs by preparing two new awareness-raising initiatives in higher education—one dedicated to promoting inclusive support services, and another focused on academic integrity. The two initiatives are being implemented, with concept notes approved and tenders published. These efforts reinforce ongoing cooperation with universities to improve accessibility, strengthen equality, and ensure that students from marginalised groups can participate fully in academic life. The Inclusive Day continued to highlight equality and participation in education, while youth-orientated innovation activities—such as “Equal Hack: Code for Equality” and the upcoming hackathon “SafeHack: Code for Space Without Violence”—further encouraged cooperation, fairness, and safer school communities.

### Building Resilience and Strengthening Education

The work on enhancing school resilience progressed with the finalisation of the national analysis on building school resilience in emergencies, which will support more effective preparedness across Montenegro’s schools. Capacity-building activities also strengthened the ability of educators and school staff to apply inclusive principles and democratic competences, helping communities to foster safe, participatory, and supportive learning environments.

**PROJECT N° 2 Prevent Bullying and Violence in Schools**

The “Prevent Bullying and Violence in Schools” project funded by Germany began on 1 December 2024. It will run for 24 months with a 500,000€ budget to enhance systems protecting children from bullying and peer violence. The project fosters collaboration, strengthens policies, and builds capacity through expert consultations, stakeholder meetings, and visits to schools and social centres. A roadmap for short, mid, and long-term actions will ensure a lasting impact, promoting a safe and supportive school environment for all.

**TOTAL BUDGET 500,000€**

**High-level project launching**

The project was officially launched in Podgorica on 30 January 2025. More than 60 participants - representatives of relevant ministries and state institutions, Parliament, diplomatic corps, and international and non-governmental organisations, attended the event. The event was addressed by the Minister of Education, Science and Innovation of Montenegro, the Head of the Council of Europe Education Department and other high level officials, highlighting the importance of the topics tackled by the Council of Europe.

**Desk analysis on violence in schools**

A mapping of stakeholders, existing research, analyses, findings, reports and other relevant documents on the topic of violence in schools in Montenegro was completed. The analysis identified activities undertaken in this area, as well as prioritising initiatives for the next period and project implementation.

**Cross-sectoral cooperation**

To strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation, a broader working group was established consisting of representatives from relevant institutions and organisations. Its first meeting was held on 11 April 2025, during which the findings of the desk analysis were presented and the launch of the national research preparation was announced. The meetings of this working group will serve to exchange information and experience, as well as to agree on joint actions for the prevention of violence in schools.

**Enhanced data for preventing bullying and violence in schools**

A nationwide study on bullying, cyberbullying and violence in schools in Montenegro was conducted. Its objective was to assess the prevalence, forms, and determinants of bullying, cyberbullying, and peer violence among students in Montenegro’s primary and secondary schools. It covered over 6,000 respondents and will serve as the basis for evidence-based policy

and guidelines to prevent violence. Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted, involving primary and secondary school students, their teachers and parents, as well as representatives from relevant institutions and organisations. The process involved the development of a comprehensive methodology, as well as six regional meetings with directors and coordinators from all schools in Montenegro.

**Inclusion Day celebrated in Podgorica**

The Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica, in cooperation with the Assembly of the Capital City of Podgorica, and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation and the NGO Parents Association, celebrated Inclusion Day. For the occasion, a panel was organised on the topic of peer violence in schools and how it excludes children from their school and social environments. The goal was to draw attention to the growing presence of this phenomenon in schools and their surroundings, and to emphasise the importance of joint efforts in combating it. The phenomenon was discussed from different perspectives, and various solutions and recommendations were jointly considered for further steps in the prevention of and response to violence. The event was organised in synergy with the HF project “Quality education for all”.

**Strengthened media capacity to report on violence**

Around 20 journalists from Montenegro were trained to report on topics of peer and school violence. The training aimed to provide media representatives with clear guidelines on how not to endanger children’s rights through their work, but also on how to report adequately so as not to further incite violence and wrongly influence the development of children’s personalities.

**Using technology, online space and creativity to reduce violence**

Ten teams of high school students from Montenegro participated in the Hackathon: “SafeHack: Code for a Violence-Free Space”. Through teamwork and creativity, the students developed innovative digital and other solutions that promote positive behaviour and create violence-free schools. In this way, young people contributed to building communities where everyone feels safe, respected and free to express their opinions without fear of violence or harassment. The activity was implemented in partnership with the HF project “Quality education for all”.



# North Macedonia

The project “Quality Education for All – North Macedonia” with a total budget of €800,000 is funded by Germany. In 2025, The Council of Europe continued to advance democratic, inclusive and multicultural education in line with national reforms and Council of Europe standards. Building on the Mapping Report, the project provided targeted support to the development of the new National Education Strategy 2026–2032, offering expert recommendations on democratic school governance, non-discrimination, curriculum, and teacher development. These contributions were discussed and adopted with national stakeholders during the second national workshop in November 2025.

## Capacity Building and School Support

Throughout 2025, the project delivered advanced training and mentoring to more than 250 educators across 25 pilot schools, strengthening competences for democratic culture and inclusive pedagogy. Publicly available national training materials are in the final phase of preparation and online dissemination, supporting wider use beyond the pilot network. In September 2025, the Network of Democratic and Inclusive Schools was formally established, creating sustained peer support for whole-school democratic governance.

## Curriculum Reform

The project continued assisting the primary education curriculum reform by embedding the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) across subjects, and by providing guidance and sample learning activities to support implementation at school level.

## Follow-up to the ECtHR Judgment in Elmazova and Others v. North Macedonia

In 2025, the project intensified its support to national and local authorities on implementing the European Court’s judgment. A second round table held in Veles in June 2025 resulted in practical recommendations to prevent segregation and strengthen equal access to quality education. The project contributed policy analysis, coordination support and recommendations for a feasibility assessment in Bitola and Štip, reinforcing institutional cooperation in this area.

### KEY EVENTS 2025

- 01 Contribution to national stakeholder workshop on the new Education Strategy 2026–2032
- 02 Second Round Table on the ECtHR’s Elmazova judgment
- 03 Establishment of the Network of Democratic and Inclusive Schools
- 04 Summer Academies for teachers and students
- 05 Preparation and promotion with pilot schools of publicly available national training materials

### TOTAL BUDGET

**800,000€**

### STATISTICS

**250+** EDUCATORS TRAINED AND MENTORED

**25** PILOT SCHOOLS INVOLVED

**2** ROUND TABLES ORGANISED

**3** LOCATIONS INVOLVED IN FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS  
VELES · BITOLA · ŠTIP

**1** NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP  
ON EDUCATION STRATEGY



# Serbia

In the Republic of Serbia, the project is recognised as highly important (i.e. official training has been placed on the Minister’s list of national importance) and policymakers and state authorities have taken ownership of the results by providing funding, proposing further integration and building on its outcomes.

## STATISTICS

TOTAL BUDGET	<b>€1,65 M</b>	Total combined budget : €1,000,000 – Quality Education for All €650,000 – Prevent Bullying and Peer Violence in Schools
RESEARCH & EVIDENCE	<b>5,200+</b>	Respondents on National Research on peer violence and students’ wellbeing.
PROFESSIONALS TRAINED	<b>80+</b>	Teachers, psychologists and school staff trained
SCHOOL-LEVEL IMPACT	<b>95%</b>	Of participants reported improved confidence and skills.
GOVERNANCE	<b>20</b>	External advisors for Democratic Culture re-appointed
SCHOOL NETWORKS	<b>36</b>	Mentor schools leading dissemination and 180 additional schools identified for RFCDC rollout (2025)

PROJECT N° 1 **Quality Education for All**

TOTAL BUDGET **1,000,000€**

The “Quality Education for All” project in Serbia is part of the joint EU and Council of Europe programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye” (2023-2026), with a budget of 1,000,000€. The project aims to enhance the quality of education by fostering democratic culture and inclusion within the formal education system.

### RFDC sustainably integrated into the education system and the school curriculum

The Ministry of Education re-appointed 20 external advisors for Democratic Culture in Schools who were recruited from 36 mentor schools, demonstrating full state ownership and a systemic approach to RFCDC implementation. The Council of Europe, together with local actors, adapted the RFCDC descriptors to the Serbian national context, setting a best practice in RFCDC integration in the Council of Europe member states, as published in the **Strategic Guidelines for Integration of the Reference Framework in Selected Subjects of National Curricula - Cross Curricular Approach**. The Ministry of Education created a **dedicated page on Democratic Culture in Education**, while the Council of Europe supports sustainability with Serbia’s Institute for Education Improvement through the **National Education Portal**. The platform consolidates all related resources and offers an AI-powered tool generating tailored lesson plans promoting competences for democratic culture (CDC). Teachers nationwide submitted lesson plans based on the Guidelines, to be available on the Institute’s page. The Ministry of Education sent a **letter to all schools in Serbia** (to principals) stating the importance of the Council of Europe’s RFCDC.

### Grassroots work and nation-wide dissemination of the RFCDC principles

A new training programme on the RFCDC and Cross Curricular Competences was developed for both face-to-face and online delivery. Based on the Guidelines for CDC integration at the descriptor level, the course supports education for democracy at all levels. In 2025, 36 mentor

schools identified another 180 schools to disseminate the RFCDC training and support the implementation of the whole-school approach.

### Remembrance of the anniversary of the tragic event in Serbia

In May 2025, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia marked The Week of Remembrance and Togetherness, inspired by the Minister’s 2024 RFCDC recommendation. On this occasion, Mentor Schools such as the **Elementary School Radoje Domanovic** in Niš promoted empathy and tolerance through impactful activities.

### Integration of the RFCDC at Higher Education level

The elective subject taught at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) “Children’s Rights and Competences for Democratic Culture in Kindergartens” was submitted for accreditation by the Preschool Teacher Training College in Novi Sad, ensuring pre-primary teachers learn to implement the RFCDC before entering the profession. The postgraduate syllabus “Culture, Identity and Intercultural Learning” for pre-service teachers will create a cascade effect, fostering socially aware citizens and supporting a whole-system approach to RFCDC integration.

### Visibility and Outreach

The Council of Europe maintained a strong local and social media presence and created ‘Human Impact Stories’ with two mentor schools, highlighting the project’s impact on teachers, students, parents, and local communities. Activities in Serbia attracted attention beyond Europe, with two Japanese universities visiting to study RFCDC integration.



**PROJECT N° 2 Prevent Bullying and Violence in Schools**

The project “Prevent Bullying and Peer Violence in Schools” in Serbia aims to create safe and inclusive school environments by addressing bullying and peer violence, in line with European standards and practices. Running from January 2024 to December 2025, the project is funded by Germany with a budget of 650,000€.

The initiative focused on supporting education policymakers, institutions, and professionals in implementing existing policy frameworks to prevent peer violence and on strengthening the knowledge and competencies of educational staff to foster a safer educational environment. By combining policy reforms, capacity building of education professionals, and public engagement, the project set a new standard for creating safe and supportive learning environments in Serbia.

**Collaboration and Partnerships**

The project benefitted from strong partnerships with key national and international stakeholders, including Serbia’s Ministry of Education, the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, the Institute for Education Improvement, and the Institute for Mental Health, ensuring alignment with national priorities and educational reforms.

TOTAL BUDGET

**650,000€**

**2025 IN RESULTS**

**Strengthened School Teams for Effective Violence Prevention**

Over 80 teachers, school psychologists and other school staff were equipped with practical, evidence-based tools for strengthening safety, inclusion and students’ wellbeing in classrooms. Through tailored capacity-building sessions, participants improved their ability to identify and address risks at an early stage, with 95% confirming that tailored tools significantly improved their confidence and skills to implement effective violence-prevention measures in everyday practice. As a direct outcome, 36 school-level Action Plans for violence prevention were developed, each grounded in the evidence-based data derived through the National Research on peer violence and students’ wellbeing.

**Comprehensive National Research Report and Summary of results**

A Comprehensive National Research Report and Summary of results were developed and published, including insights from more than 5,200 students, parents and schools staff, analysis of digital violence with AI-related

risks, insights into gender-based violence, and school-level comparisons of school climate, predictors of victimisation and the effectiveness of existing prevention programmes.

**Stronger Evidence-Based approach improved violence prevention and students’ well-being**

Carried out between May and October 2025, Serbia now has the first comprehensive, evidence-based Policy recommendations and roadmap developed through an extensive participatory process involving key education stakeholders, including policymakers, primary and secondary schools, and professional institutions. Grounded in data from the National Assessment and enriched by extensive focus groups with schools and decision makers, the recommendations provide clear guidance for strengthening safe and inclusive school environments. The Recommendations and Policy Roadmap are aligned with Council of Europe priorities and national education policies, and are structured as short-, mid-, and long-term actionable steps for both policymakers and schools, enabling intersectoral actions, effective prevention mechanisms, immediate improvements while supporting sustainable systemic change for strengthening the child protection system.

# Türkiye

“Enhancing Foreign Language Education Quality in Türkiye” is a joint European Union and Council of Europe project implemented by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Board of Education (BoE) of the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Running from July 2024 to July 2029, this project aims at enhancing the quality of foreign language education across Türkiye by aligning foreign language education within the country with international standards, focusing on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the CEFR Companion Volume (2020), strengthening MoNE’s capacity to guide and support teachers and learners in foreign language education, and raising awareness of the CEFR among learners and teachers.

## STATISTICS

POLICY  
EXCHANGE

10

Polymakers and education specialists involved in in-depth policy exchange

POLICY  
ALIGNMENT

2

Reference frameworks promoted :  
· CEFR  
· CEFR Companion Volume (2020)

AWARENESS

400

Participants reached through the awareness-raising event

## TOTAL BUDGET

5,403,000€

### Groundwork for evidence-based policy making

In 2025, the project finalised the country report on foreign language education policy and practice which serves as a basis for the Language Education Policy Profile of Türkiye, as well as the comprehensive report on the good practices in language proficiency tests in the Council of Europe member states. 10 policy makers and education specialists from the BoE and the MoNE gained further insight on foreign language policy and practice in different Council of Europe member states and shared their expertise during a study visit to the Education Department at the Council of Europe headquarters and to the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz on 24-28 February 2025. The two reports and the conclusions of the study visit contributed significantly to the discussions at the First Strategic Meeting, which was held with the key stakeholders of the joint programme on 07 October 2025.

### Strengthened capacities and increased awareness

The study visit in February also served as a means to widen the knowledge and strengthen the policy making capacity of the participants, who in return took active role in the review of the afore-mentioned reports and the discussions at the First Strategic Meeting in October 2025. It also resulted in the organisation of a Seminar on CEFR in Language Education on 7 October 2025, which introduced the CEFR and the CEFR Companion Volume to policymakers. The capacity building seminar aimed to deepen participants’ understanding of CEFR principles and their implementation in foreign language education and its implications on policy making for foreign language education. Moreover, 400 participants, including embassy representatives, officials from the central administrations of ministries, academics, foreign language teachers, and representatives of civil society organisations gained valuable insights into the fundamental role of the CEFR in promoting inclusive and quality foreign language education after attending an awareness raising event on CEFR in Language Education on 8 October 2025. Together, these events strengthened co-operation among



policymakers, experts, and educators, enhancing their knowledge and capacities in implementing international standards, particularly the CEFR and the CEFR Companion Volume, in foreign language education in Türkiye.

### Continued high-level commitment

The high-level commitment, which ensured a strong basis to initiate the project, was maintained throughout 2025. The Deputy Minister responsible for the project participated in the two seminars in October and followed up closely with the potential membership of Türkiye to the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz. The technical and political support of all Project Steering Committee members was also reaffirmed during the Second Project Steering Committee Meeting on 1 July 2025.

23-24 Jan. ↘ Strasbourg

## Empowering Learners for a Democratic Future: Launch of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025



How can learners be empowered for a democratic future? How can all learners be equipped with the skills, values, attitudes and knowledge needed to navigate the digital environment effectively?

The Council of Europe launched the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 with a dedicated conference aimed at raising awareness of the value of digital citizenship education and highlighting its key role in building inclusive and democratic societies.

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 was a unique opportunity to drive forward the implementation of digital citizenship education across Europe. Throughout the year, this initiative emphasised the benefits of implementing such education in all different settings (formal, non-formal and informal education) highlighting how it helps tackle hate speech,

cyberbullying, discrimination, disinformation, privacy concerns and many issues related to the responsible and ethical use of digital technologies. The Launch Conference focused on presenting the key objectives of the European Year 2025, an overview of the current state of digital citizenship education and recommendations on how to implement it and on how to address related challenges. Through the interactive workshop sessions, government experts, educators, learners, academics, representatives from civil society and the private sector had the opportunity to share their sense-making practices and lessons were learned and contributed to developing a road map 2026-2036 for digital citizenship education.

Everyone can make a difference and spread the word about the importance of digital citizenship education. The European Year encouraged all stakeholders to show their support and take action.

25-27 May ↘ Tirana

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks was held in Tirana, Albania, from 25 to 27 May 2025, bringing together around 150 participants from 43 ENIC and NARIC Centres. The meeting provided a platform for exchanging knowledge, sharing best practices and strengthening cooperation across Europe and beyond.

The event was opened by Villano Qiriaz, Head of the Education Department of the Council of Europe, and featured welcome addresses by Ogerta Manastirliu, Minister of Education and Sports of Albania, and Hubert Perr, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Albania. The Co-Secretariats from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO presented updates on

their activities, while the Lisbon Recognition Convention Bureau, ELCORE, ENIC Bureau and NARIC Advisory Board reported on progress in their respective areas of work.

A keynote address by Professor Barbara Wasson (University of Bergen) on “AI and Recognition: Data, Ethics, and AI Literacy” explored the impact of artificial intelligence on the recognition of qualifications. The programme included a plenary session and 12 parallel workshops, offering opportunities for discussion and collaboration on shared challenges and innovative approaches, including AI, automatic recognition and education fraud. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of cooperation and peer learning within the ENIC and NARIC networks.



27-28 May ↘ Strasbourg

## Digital Citizenship Education Forum: Let's Act Now!

The first Digital Citizenship Education Forum organised by the Council of Europe's Education Department was held in Strasbourg on 27–28 May 2025, within the framework of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025. More than 200 participants from over 30 countries, representing governments, education practitioners, learners, civil society, the private sector and academia, came together to exchange views and strengthen cooperation in the field of digital citizenship education.

The Forum highlighted the importance of partnerships in addressing current digital challenges and promoting democratic values through education. Plenary sessions and Forum Talks explored the links between education and democracy, the role of technology companies, the fight against online disinformation and the development of inclusive and accessible digital communities.

A Digital Citizenship Education Resources Showcase presented initiatives from civil society, technology companies and academia. On this occasion, the Council of Europe officially launched the DCE Planner, a curriculum framework designed to support the integration of digital citizenship education into school programmes. The Forum's outcomes and participants' contributions will inform the development of the 2027–2031 Road Map for strengthening digital citizenship education.

### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

**Fostering democracy through digital citizenship education and youth's contribution.**

**Addressing online disinformation and cyberbullying.**

**Parenting in the digital age.**

**The role of tech companies in promoting active and responsible citizenship.**





3-4 Jun. ↘ Bratislava

## Closing Conference of the Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation

– RPPE

The Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE) concluded with a closing conference in Bratislava on 3-4 June 2025, co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Slovak Ministry of Education. The event highlighted practical examples of inclusive, plurilingual, and intercultural education that support democratic culture, aligning with the Council of Europe's recommendations on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture (CM/Rec(2022)1). Participating schools and national representatives from Greece, Slovakia, and Slovenia shared successful approaches for

integrating Romani language and culture into primary education, promoting educational inclusion and linguistic diversity. The conference emphasised the importance of valuing students' identities and languages in education. It featured presentations, a webinar to disseminate project achievements, and discussions on sustaining the RPPE methodology. The event underscored plurilingual education as essential to fostering culturally diverse and inclusive democratic societies, benefiting Roma pupils and other linguistic and cultural minorities alike.

3-4 Jun. ↘ Prague

## 2025 Global Forum on Higher Education: Renewal of the Democratic and Civic Mission

The 2025 Global Forum on Higher Education: Renewal of Democratic and Civic Mission was held on 3–4 June 2025 at Charles University in Prague. Organised by the Council of Europe and the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy, in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the International Association of Universities (IAU), and hosted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, the Forum brought together over 100 higher education leaders, students, public authorities and civil society actors.

Under the theme “Renewing the Democratic and Civic Mission”, the Forum explored how universities can respond to democratic backsliding by safeguarding academic freedom, strengthening civic engagement, rebuilding trust in public institutions and promoting democratic participation. The 1.5-day programme included plenaries, roundtables, workshops and interactive dialogues.

The Forum highlighted both the pressures faced by higher education, such as disinformation, political interference and erosion of academic standards, and the transformative potential of universities as civic institutions. Partners reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated follow-up initiatives, joint advocacy and continued multilateral cooperation.

### PROGRAMME MAIN DIALOGUES

**Democratising science and rebuilding public trust;**

**Academic freedom as a right and responsibility;**

**Civic leadership and student engagement;**

**Local anchoring of the university mission.**



↙  
Programme  
Brochure



↙  
Speaker  
Biographies



↙  
Forum report, prepared by  
the General Rapporteur

11-13 Jun. ↘ Budapest

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum for History Education: “Where learners meet history: Reaffirming the role of history education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

As a concluding event of the current Intergovernmental Programme on History Education, the Forum provided a space for reflection on its outcomes, lessons learned, and achievements. The event involved around 70 stakeholders representing public authorities, academia, civil society, and learners and educators. Discussions centered on the role of learners, examining the spaces and conditions in which they engage with history as well as the challenges they face.

The two panel sessions covered a diverse range of topics, including textbooks and other educational resources, museum learning, digital literacy, archives, and artificial intelligence. Keynote contributions addressed the distortion of historical narratives and spread of disinformation in the context of a resurgence of nationalism and extremism, as well as the obligations of states and public authorities to protect and promote academic freedom, international co-operation, and multiperspectival approaches to history education.

### KEY CONCLUSIONS

**Develop Council of Europe policy papers and classroom guidelines for historical learning in the digital age.**

**Integrate historical literacy, critical media literacy, and civic responsibility as inseparable pillars of history education.**

**Combine digital tools with traditional, face-to-face teaching and non-virtual encounters with historical institutions.**

**Equip students to critically navigate social media, recognise disinformation and misinformation, and engage responsibly with historical content.**

**Foster trust in democratic institutions and public communication as a central goal of history education.**

26 Jun. ↘ Rome

## Council of Europe and CIMEA Join Forces to Launch New Centre Tackling Education Fraud

The Council of Europe and the Italian Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA), acting under the mandate of the Italian Ministry for Universities and Research, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish in Italy the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud. Signed on 26 June 2025 by Mr Bjørn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Professor Luca Lantero, Director General of CIMEA, the agreement marks a major step forward in strengthening Europe's collective response to education fraud and reinforcing academic integrity.

### A Shared Response to a Growing Threat

The Centre will serve as a shared operational mechanism open to all Council of Europe member states, addressing a wide range of fraudulent practices including diploma mills, forged qualifications, and academic misconduct. It will also provide guidance tools, data analysis, and technical support to national authorities and education stakeholders. Anchored in the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on countering education fraud, the Centre will contribute to the implementation of the Education Strategy 2024–2030 "Learners First", with a focus on integrity, trust, and quality assurance in European education systems.

*"The global market of education fraud continues to expand — it's a fast-growing criminal industry. We need to act now!"*

— **LUCA LANTERO**  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIMEA

### Strong Support from Italy

In support of this initiative, CIMEA has made a voluntary contribution of €400,000 to help launch the Centre and reinforce its initial operations. The Centre will be hosted by CIMEA in Rome, working in close coordination with the Education Department of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and engaging with networks across Europe.

*"Education fraud is a global threat to public trust, safety, and the right to quality education. The consequences are real and far-reaching."*

— **BJØRN BERGE**  
DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

30 Jun. – 4 Jul. ↘ Graz

## 4<sup>th</sup> ECML-EC Summer Academy

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the ECML Summer Academy, entitled "Inspiring Innovation in European Language Teacher Education", took place from 30 June to 4 July 2025 at the ECML in Graz, Austria. Organised in cooperation with the European Commission, the Academy brought together 30 language teacher educators from 28 European countries and 8 international experts for an intensive week of exchange and professional development.

The programme focused on key developments in language teacher education, including linguistic and cultural plurality, the use of ECML resources, digital literacy and artificial intelligence, research in teacher education,

and the identities and competences of teacher educators. Through presentations, interactive discussions and workshops, participants engaged in in-depth reflection and collaboration.

The Academy also encouraged the development of sustainable follow-up projects to ensure long-term impact, while cultural and social activities fostered intercultural exchange. The ECML Summer Academy continues to be a valuable platform for innovation, cooperation and inclusion within the European language education community.

28 Aug. ↘ Santiago de Chile

## Council of Europe reaffirms its commitment to quality education at the World Summit on Teachers

At the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee Annual Leaders Meeting held on 28 August 2025 in Santiago de Chile, the Council of Europe reaffirmed the central role of education in addressing global challenges. Speaking on behalf of the Organisation, Matjaž Gruden, Director for Democracy, underlined education as a powerful response in an unpredictable world. The Council of Europe welcomed the HLSC's calls for urgent action to strengthen support for teachers, secure sustainable education financing, improve data for monitoring SDG4 and launch a global consultation on the post-2030 education agenda. These priorities align closely with the Council of Europe's commitment to education as a public good and a cornerstone of democracy. The Council also presented its forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Education, to be held on 3-4 December 2026 in Montenegro, and reaffirmed its long-standing engagement in promoting democratic resilience and social cohesion through education.

### KEY INITIATIVES

**The European Space for  
Citizenship Education**

**A new Legal Instrument on  
Automatic Recognition and  
a Student Rights Charter**

**A White Paper on the Teaching  
Profession in the Digital Age**

29 Sept. — 10 Oct. ↘ Strasbourg

## Languages at the heart of democracy Exhibition

From 29 September to 10 October 2025, the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg hosted the exhibition "Language education at the heart of democracy", organised by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) and the Language Policy Programme. Coinciding with the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the exhibition highlighted how language education strengthens democracy, social cohesion, and intercultural understanding.

The inauguration on 30 September was opened by the Permanent Representative of Austria to the Council of Europe, Aloisia Wörgetter, and attended by an audience

of over 100 parliamentarians and other guests. Speakers included PACE Vice-President Andries Gryffroy (Chair of the Belgian Delegation), Martin Graf (Chair of the Austrian Delegation) and Matthias von Gehlen (Vice-Chair of the ECML Governing Board).

The exhibition demonstrated the central role of languages in both education and democracy through six key concepts – collaboration, digitalisation, motivation, celebration, inclusion and cohesion – illustrated with examples from the work of the ECML and the Council's Language Policy Programme.

2 Oct. ↘ Strasbourg

## Launch of the E-Democracy Lab online learning platform

The Council of Europe's Education Department has launched the E-Democracy Lab (EDL), a new online learning platform designed to help learners explore, practise and co-create democracy through high-quality courses and resources. Hosted by the Directorate for Democracy, EDL brings together learning offers on digital citizenship, youth policy, elections, media literacy, cultural heritage and equality, as well as specialised programmes such as HELP and the Equality Programme.

At launch, the platform features courses on topics including countering bullying and cyberbullying, media literacy, intercultural school development and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic

Culture. Multilingual, mobile-ready and accessible through a single catalogue, EDL is part of the Council of Europe's Education Knowledge Hub, providing a one-stop entry point for education professionals across member states.



↙ Knowledge Hub Portal



↙ Discover EDL and start learning

8-9 Oct. ↘ Strasbourg

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education

On 8–9 October 2025, the Council of Europe held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Conference, "Ensuring Quality Education in the AI Era – Introducing the Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education," which officially launched the Compass for AI and Education. Bringing together policymakers, educators, academics, experts, the tech sector and civil society to discuss how to shape the future use of AI in education. With 120 participants on site, discussions highlighted the need for human-rights-anchored, education-specific, and capacity-orientated regulation aligned with international standards. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> working conference is being prepared and will be published online in 2026.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

**AI literacy was emphasised as a civic and democratic competency integrating technological, practical, and human dimensions, with coherent initiatives, sustained teacher development, and participation of students, parents, and civil society.**

**Independent, transparent, and rights-based evaluation of educational technologies is essential, supported by a European Reference Framework linking ethics, quality, and evidence, while maintaining flexibility and clear oversight.**

**AI can strengthen learning only when embedded in pedagogical and institutional contexts that uphold human dignity, teacher agency, and learner well-being.**

**Cross-cutting recommendations include redefining quality education in the AI era, prioritising capacity-building and interoperability, ensuring transparency and accountability, fostering inclusive dialogue, and maintaining the Compass for AI and Education as a living, adaptive framework aligned with European and global initiatives.**



13- 14 Oct. ↘ Montenegro

## “Towards a European Space for Citizenship Education” - International Conference

An international conference held in Bečići, Montenegro, brought together education practitioners and learners to explore how quality citizenship education can sustain democracy and how education for democratic citizenship can be better integrated into education systems. The discussions focused on identifying key principles and practical solutions to current challenges faced by European education systems and societies.

*“In a world of rapid change and deep uncertainty, education for democratic citizenship is not just a policy – it is the moral foundation of our societies.”*

— MS ANDJELA JAKŠIĆ-STOJANOVIĆ  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE  
AND INNOVATION OF MONTENEGRO

Speakers underlined the central role of teachers, learners and school leaders in renewing the democratic mission of education and emphasised that democracy must be learned and practiced through education. The conference also presented the European Space for Citizenship Education, outlining its goals and mission to strengthen trust in democratic institutions.

Through workshops and a panel discussion, participants shared experiences and contributed inputs on core principles, quality assurance and practical implementation. The conference forms part of the co-creation process of the European Space for Citizenship Education project and contributes to the objectives of the Council of Europe’s New Democratic Pact for Europe.



↙  
Council of Europe New  
Democratic Pact for Europe

16-17 Oct. ↘ Strasbourg

## 5<sup>th</sup> OHTE Annual Conference

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the OHTE Annual Conference, held on 16-17 October 2025, was entitled «History at all costs?». The theme was inspired by the OHTE’s second thematic report on Economic crises in history teaching, and the programme highlighted the relevance of economic history in understanding how societies respond to crises, adapt to change and recover over time. It also invited participants to consider how history education can help learners interpret contemporary challenges through a better understanding of the past.

The Conference also provided an opportunity for the OHTE to align its work and priorities with the New Democratic Pact for Europe, notably through sessions exploring the relationship between democracy and history teaching. Furthermore, this edition introduced several innovations, including a more prominent role for younger generations. Around 300 participants attended an Oxford-style debate led by students, as well as an interactive session between secondary school pupils and the authors of the OHTE thematic report.



6 Nov. ↘ Strasbourg

## WFD2025 – Education System Resilience Framed as a Blueprint for Democratic Innovation

At the 2025 World Forum for Democracy, discussions highlighted how resilient education systems can help strengthen democratic culture, particularly in the context of declining youth participation. A dedicated session explored how resilience-building in education can function as a participatory process, empowering young people, fostering critical thinking and supporting democratic freedoms. The session featured a presentation of the EDURES Toolkit (Education at times of emergencies and crisis), developed by the Council of Europe as part of its Education Strategy 2030. Grounded in the Six Principles of Resilience for Education, EDURES was presented as a practical framework to support education systems in preparing for, responding to and recovering from crises. Piloted in several member states, EDURES contributes to international efforts to transform education in crisis contexts and was highlighted as a potential driver of democratic innovation, reinforcing participation, social cohesion and democratic stability.



↙ The 2025 World Forum for Democracy (WFD2025)



↙ Dedicated session “From crisis to civic engagement: can building education systems resilience be a blueprint for democratic innovation?”



↙ EDURES TOOLKIT

7 Nov. ↘ Strasbourg

## “Learning from history, strengthening democracy” – OHTE Plenary session during the World Forum for Democracy

On 7 November 2025, OHTE co-organised a plenary session during the World Forum for Democracy to explore how history teaching can contribute to democratic resilience in a context of rising populism and challenges to the rule of law. Speakers – including experts in education, memory, public policy and the arts – stressed the need for multiperspectivity in history education so that learners engage with diverse narratives and develop critical thinking, tolerance and civic awareness. The session also underlined the importance of teacher support, civic-education resources and inclusive memory practices (through monuments, museums, art and local participation) to foster democratic citizenship. Attended by around 500 participants, this session reaffirmed OHTE’s conviction that history education plays a key role in shaping informed, engaged citizens and defending democracy across Europe.



18-19 Nov. ↘ Ljubljana

## “The Way Forward” – closing conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

The closing conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025, entitled “The Way Forward”, was held on 18–19 November 2025 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The event took stock of the achievements of the European Year and explored future actions, policies and measures shaping the digital environment in and beyond education.

Organised in cooperation with the Slovenian Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe, the conference highlighted the importance of integrating digital citizenship into education systems, supporting teachers and ensuring coherence between civic education and digital skills. Discussions focused on media and information literacy, online well-being and rights in the digital space.

The draft Digital Citizenship Education Road Map (2027–2031) was presented, outlining key priorities to support member states in mainstreaming digital citizenship education. The conference reaffirmed the role of education in strengthening democratic engagement,

combating disinformation and promoting critical thinking, contributing to the objectives of the Council of Europe’s New Democratic Pact for Europe.

### KEY TOPICS

**Media and information literacy with workshops on disinformation guidelines, constructive narratives in the digital environments, and on youth empowerment to build media responsibility;**

**Well-being online with workshops on digital habits, netiquette to promote democracy and human rights and on how to balance screen time and mental health;**

**Rights online with workshops on ethical and legal responsibilities of social platforms, active digital citizenship and consumer awareness.**



25-26 Nov. [↘ Strasbourg](#)

## Academic Freedom in Action 2025 Conference

The **Academic Freedom in Action 2025 Conference** took place in Strasbourg on 25–26 November 2025. The event responded to increasing pressures on academic freedom across Europe, including political interference, legal intimidation, online harassment, foreign interference and the growing prevalence of SLAPPs.

The 1.5-day programme brought together parliamentarians, state representatives, academics, judges and legal experts, civil society actors, and international organisations. Discussions explored political, legal and institutional safeguards for academic freedom.

A conference report will be published under the framework of the **New Democratic Pact** and will be available on the **Education Department's website**.

### SESSION FOCUSES

**Legislative responses and the role of parliaments.**

**Legal protections under the European Convention on Human Rights with judges and legal experts, and constitutional safeguards, in cooperation with the Venice Commission.**

**Protection mechanisms and sanctuary programmes for scholars at risk.**

**Global panel on shared struggles and international solidarity beyond Europe.**



# 2025 Activities Highlights

Chronological overview of Council of Europe major events organised within the framework of the implementation of the Education Department's Programme.

- CDEDU
- COE at International events
- Edutalks
- Launching projects
- Working groups
- Webinars

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
<span style="color: #e91e63;">●</span>	9 JAN.	<b>94<sup>th</sup> Bologna Follow-Up Group Board Meeting</b>	TIRANA, ALBANIA	The 94 <sup>th</sup> BFUG Board Meeting brought together current, incoming and outgoing co-chairs, as well as key stakeholders, to review progress of the 2024–2027 work cycle. Discussions focused on assessing ongoing initiatives, planning next steps and coordinating preparations for the upcoming BFUG plenary meeting in Warsaw, contributing to the advancement of the European Higher Education Area.
<span style="color: #e91e63;">●</span>	15 JAN.	<b>Ad Hoc Working Group on Automatic Recognition</b>	PARIS, FRANCE	The renewed Ad Hoc Working Group on Automatic Recognition met to advance work on the development of a common framework for the automatic recognition of higher education qualifications. Discussions focused on identifying key building blocks to ensure trust, clarity and coherence, and on strengthening the links between the future legal instrument, the Multilateral Treaty and the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
<span style="color: #004a7c;">●</span>	15 JAN.	<b>Lisbon Recognition Convention Bureau Meeting</b>	PARIS, FRANCE	The LRC Bureau meeting focused on finalising the ENIC-NARIC Charter and advancing revisions to the Code of Good Practice for Transnational Education. Members also prepared the agenda and priorities for the upcoming Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee meeting, reinforcing quality and integrity in qualification recognition.
<span style="color: #e67e22;">●</span>	23–24 JAN.	<b>Empowering Learners for a Democratic Future – Launch of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The launch conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 gathered policymakers, educators, learners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of digital citizenship education. The event presented the objectives of the European Year, shared good practices and explored ways to address challenges such as disinformation, cyberbullying and ethical use of digital technologies.

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
<span style="color: #e67e22;">●</span>	30 JAN.	<b>Launch of the Project “Prevent Bullying and Violence in Schools in Montenegro”</b>	PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO	The Council of Europe and the Federal Republic of Germany officially launched a two-year project aimed at strengthening prevention and protection mechanisms against bullying, cyberbullying and peer violence in Montenegrin schools. The initiative promotes inter-institutional cooperation, research-based approaches and practical tools to ensure safe and inclusive learning environments.
<span style="color: #004a7c;">●</span>	5 FEB.	<b>Academic Freedom under Threat – STOA High-Level Conference</b>	BRUSSELS, BELGIUM	At a high-level STOA session at the European Parliament, the Council of Europe highlighted growing threats to academic freedom in Europe and beyond. Discussions addressed legal protection, digital challenges and institutional resilience, and underlined the shared responsibility of policymakers, universities and civil society in safeguarding academic freedom as a pillar of democracy.
<span style="color: #004a7c;">●</span>	7 FEB.	<b>Action Summit on AI in Education – Ministerial Panel</b>	SÈVRES, FRANCE	During the Action Summit on AI in Education, the Council of Europe participated in a high-level panel discussion on the governance and regulation of artificial intelligence in education. The exchange highlighted the importance of a human-rights-based approach to AI integration, prioritising the protection of learners, particularly children, while safeguarding democracy, the rule of law and ethical digital transformation in education systems.
<span style="color: #e91e63;">●</span>	17–18 FEB.	<b>First Meeting of the Working Group on the European Space for Citizenship Education</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The first meeting of the ESCE Working Group marked an important step in strengthening the civic mission of education. Experts discussed the codification of principles for quality citizenship education, accountability and quality assurance, and enhanced cooperation to respond to democratic backsliding across Europe.
<span style="color: #c0844d;">●</span>	19 FEB.	<b>EduTalk@CoE – Ensuring Quality and Integrity in Transnational Education</b>	ONLINE	The webinar focused on ensuring quality and academic integrity in Transnational Education (TNE), addressing the challenges posed by cross-border provision and diverse regulatory frameworks. It brought together international experts to discuss risks related to academic fraud, the role of international cooperation in strengthening quality assurance, and the contribution of digital tools to safeguarding fair, accountable and high-quality educational standards.
<span style="color: #004a7c;">●</span>	1–2 MAR.	<b>Five Nations Network Annual Conference – Digital Citizenship</b>	EDINBURGH, UNITED KINGDOM	The Five Nations Network Annual Conference examined how citizenship education supports digital citizenship education. Workshops and discussions addressed AI in teaching, media literacy, algorithms and online cultures, reaffirming the importance of cross-national cooperation during the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025.

5 **ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS 2025**

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	6 MAR.	<b>Exchange of Views with the University of Strasbourg</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	An exchange of views held at the University of Strasbourg addressed academic freedom, internationalisation, recognition of qualifications and inclusive access to higher education. The discussions contributed to the ongoing policy work of the CDEDU Subgroup on Higher Education Policy.
●	11 MAR.	<b>ENIC Bureau / National Advisory Board Meeting</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	The ENIC Bureau and National Advisory Board meeting reviewed progress under the 2023–2025 workplan, discussed international cooperation and prepared the forthcoming ENIC-NARIC Joint Annual Meeting. Exchanges with key partners reinforced coordination on recognition of qualifications.
●	17–19 MAR.	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	The 7 <sup>th</sup> CDEDU Plenary reviewed progress in implementing the “Learners First” Education Strategy 2024–2030, with discussions focusing on digital citizenship education, the European Space for Citizenship and Education, higher education policy, artificial intelligence and resilience in education systems. The Committee endorsed guidance on the RFCDC and toolkits on education in times of crisis and inclusive school culture, while advancing key higher education initiatives, including a draft Recommendation on the qualifications and linguistic skills of refugees, progress on automatic recognition, the establishment of a Committee of Experts on AI and Education (EDU-IA), and the launch of a Students’ Rights Charter.
●	1 APR.	<b>EduTalk@CoE on Transnational Education – Challenges and Opportunities for Academic Integrity and Quality Assurance</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>	This EduTalk@CoE focused on safeguarding academic integrity and quality assurance in transnational education. Experts discussed challenges linked to differing regulatory frameworks, risks of fraud, the impact of artificial intelligence, and the need for more coherent terminology and international cooperation to ensure high-quality cross-border education.
●	10 APR.	<b>Meeting with the Minister of Education of Montenegro on Current and Future Co-operation</b>	<b>PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO</b>	Representatives of the Council of Europe’s Education Department met with the Minister of Education, Science and Innovation of Montenegro to review ongoing cooperation and discuss future initiatives. Exchanges focused on upcoming conferences, joint projects on quality education and violence prevention in schools, and preparations linked to Montenegro’s forthcoming Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.
●	11 APR.	<b>Online Webinar: Protecting Academic Freedom – Political Interference and Growing Pressures</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>	This webinar examined increasing threats to academic freedom arising from political interference, foreign influence, digital harassment and legal pressures. Through case studies and expert discussions, participants explored strategies to strengthen institutional resilience, legal safeguards and public engagement to protect academic freedom as a democratic cornerstone.

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	8-9 MAY	<b>OHTE for Victory in Europe Day</b>	<b>KYIV, UKRAINE</b>	During an official mission, the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) marked Victory in Europe Day in solidarity with Ukraine. Meetings with government and academic representatives highlighted the importance of rigorous and responsible history teaching in the face of war and historical disinformation, reaffirming shared democratic values.
●	14 MAY	<b>Exchange of Views on Academic Freedom at the European Parliament</b>	<b>BRUSSELS, BELGIUM</b>	At an exchange of views organised by the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights, the Council of Europe highlighted the need for coordinated, multilateral responses to growing threats to academic freedom. Discussions addressed legal standards, institutional resilience, research internationalisation and protection mechanisms against harassment and SLAPPs.
●	20 MAY	<b>Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE) – Closing Webinar</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>	The RPPE closing webinar presented outcomes of a multi-country project exploring how Romani language and culture can support the educational inclusion of Roma pupils. The event highlighted practical approaches bridging policy and classroom practice and reflected on the relevance of plurilingual and intercultural education for inclusive schooling.
●	20–21 MAY	<b>Annual Meeting of the European Policy Advisors Network (EPAN)</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	The EPAN Plenary brought together education policy advisors to advance the co-creation of the European Space for Citizenship Education. Discussions focused on codification of principles, quality assurance and cooperation, with an emphasis on balancing European frameworks with national contexts and ensuring real impact on learners’ democratic competences.
●	25–27 MAY	<b>Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks</b>	<b>TIRANA, ALBANIA</b>	The 32 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks gathered recognition experts to exchange knowledge, review progress and strengthen cooperation. Key topics included artificial intelligence and recognition, automatic recognition of qualifications and combating education fraud, reaffirming the value of peer learning within the networks.
●	27–28 MAY	<b>Digital Citizenship Education Forum: “Let’s Act Now!”</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	The first Digital Citizenship Education Forum brought together over 200 participants from governments, education, civil society and the private sector. The Forum promoted cooperation, showcased good practices and resources, launched the DCE Planner, and contributed key inputs for the future Road Map for Digital Citizenship Education (2027–2031).
●	3 JUN.	<b>Commemoration event at the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp</b>	<b>ALSACE, FRANCE</b>	An intergenerational event organised by the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) at the former Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp brought together institutional representatives and secondary-school pupils to reflect on remembrance, democratic values and Europe’s historical legacy. The initiative highlighted OHTE’s commitment to youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue.

## 5 ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS 2025

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	3-4 JUN.	<b>Global Forum on Higher Education 2025: Renewal of the Democratic and Civic Mission</b>	<b>PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	The Global Forum on Higher Education convened international leaders to discuss the role of higher education in renewing democratic values. Through keynote speeches, plenary sessions and workshops, participants explored academic freedom, civic engagement, student participation and partnerships to strengthen democracy worldwide.
●	3-4 JUN.	<b>Event &amp; webinar : Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE)</b>	<b>BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA</b>	The RPPE initiative concluded with a one-day event in Bratislava, gathering teachers and coordinators from three countries to reflect on its impact and sustainability. A public webinar showcased good practices in promoting the inclusion of Roma pupils through the Romani language and culture.
●	10-11 JUN.	<b>Foundations of the European Space for Citizenship Education</b>	<b>STRASBOURG, FRANCE</b>	The ESCE Working Group met to codify principles of education for democratic citizenship and develop a framework for quality assurance. The meeting marked a milestone in establishing shared standards to support quality citizenship education and reinforce democratic culture across Europe.
●	11-13 JUN.	<b>The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum for History Education</b>	<b>BUDAPEST, HUNGARY</b>	The fourth Annual Forum for History Education, focusing on the theme <i>"Where Learners Meet History: Reaffirming the Role of History Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"</i> , brought together public authorities, teachers, learners, researchers, and associations, who examined the conditions, innovations and frameworks needed to ensure high-quality and inclusive history education.
●	20 JUN.	<b>World Refugee Day 2025 – European Qualifications Passport for Refugees</b>	<b>EUROPE-WIDE</b>	On World Refugee Day, the Council of Europe highlighted the impact of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, showcasing personal stories of learners and professionals rebuilding their lives through fair recognition of qualifications. The initiative underlined education's role in inclusion, trust and mobility.
●	24-25 JUN.	<b>UNESCO Conference on Global Recognition of Qualifications</b>	<b>PARIS, FRANCE</b>	At the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications, the Council of Europe presented European initiatives supporting transparency, quality assurance and fair recognition. The adoption of operational guidelines and a new roadmap marked progress in global cooperation on recognition.
●	26 JUN.	<b>Launch of the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud</b>	<b>ROME, ITALY</b>	The Council of Europe and CIMEA signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a new Centre dedicated to preventing and countering education fraud. The Centre will support member states through data analysis, guidance tools and cooperation to strengthen integrity and trust in education systems.



## 5 ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS 2025

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	30 JUN. – 4 JUL.	4 <sup>th</sup> ECML–European Commission Summer Academy	GRAZ, AUSTRIA	The 4 <sup>th</sup> ECML Summer Academy brought together language teacher educators and experts to explore innovation in language teacher education. The programme addressed plurilingualism, digital literacy, artificial intelligence and professional identities, fostering professional learning and sustainable follow-up projects.
●	3–4 JUL.	Launch of the Working Group on the European Student Rights Charter	PARIS, FRANCE	The launching meeting of the Working Group marked the start of drafting a European Student Rights Charter. The initiative aims to consolidate and protect student rights across Europe, promoting inclusion, democratic participation and quality education in line with the Council of Europe's education strategy.
●	28 AUG.	SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee	SANTIAGO DE CHILE, CHILE	At the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee Annual Leaders Meeting, the Council of Europe highlighted the central role of education in addressing global challenges. The Organisation welcomed calls to strengthen support for teachers, secure sustainable education financing, improve data for monitoring SDG4 and launch a global consultation on the post-2030 education agenda, aligning with its commitment to education as a public good and a foundation of democracy.
●	10 SEPT.	Webinar: Freedom to Think – Repression, Resistance and Academic Freedom	ONLINE	This webinar brought together experts to discuss academic freedom from a human rights perspective, focusing on transnational repression, political pressure and self-censorship in academia. The discussion explored legal, institutional and policy responses to safeguard free inquiry and democratic debate.
●	15 SEPT.	First Meeting of the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud	ROME, ITALY	The first induction meeting of the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud brought together project partners to define objectives, initial activities and communication strategies. The meeting marked a key step in establishing the Centre as a hub for cooperation and expertise to strengthen integrity in education at European and global levels.
●	18–19 SEPT.	Media Literacy and Democracy Education for Societal Resilience	HELSINKI, FINLAND	At an international conference in Helsinki, the Council of Europe highlighted the role of media literacy and democracy education in strengthening societal resilience. Contributions focused on democratic competences, critical thinking and digital citizenship, and presented key initiatives shaping the future of democratic education in Europe.
●	23–25 SEPT.	8 <sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The 8 <sup>th</sup> CDEDU Plenary adopted key decisions across democracy education, higher education and digital transformation. Major outcomes included advances on the European Space for Citizenship Education, the launch of drafting a new convention on automatic recognition of qualifications, progress on the Student Rights Charter, developments related to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and continued work on artificial intelligence, ethics, integrity and the recognition of refugee qualifications.

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	26 SEPT.	European Day of Languages – 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	EUROPE-WIDE	Europe celebrated the 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Day of Languages, promoting multilingualism, cultural exchange and language learning. With hundreds of events across Europe and beyond, the celebrations highlighted linguistic diversity as a key asset for social cohesion, inclusion and democratic participation.
●	29 SEPT.	Exhibition at the Palais de l'Europe: Language Education at the Heart of Democracy	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The Council of Europe showcased the role of language education in strengthening democracy, social cohesion and intercultural understanding through an exhibition highlighting projects and resources from its Language Policy Programme and the European Centre for Modern Languages. Hosted at the Palais de l'Europe, the exhibition illustrated how language education supports democratic values by linking policy, research, teacher education and classroom practice.
●	2 OCT.	Council of Europe Launches the E-Democracy Lab Online Learning Platform	ONLINE	The Council of Europe's Education Department launched the E-Democracy Lab, a new online learning platform offering high-quality courses and resources to support learning, practising and co-creating democracy. Hosted by the Directorate for Democracy, the platform brings together learning offers on digital citizenship, media literacy, youth policy, elections, equality and human rights education within a single multilingual and mobile-ready catalogue.
●	8 OCT.	Conference: Ensuring Quality Education in the AI Era – Introducing the Council of Europe Compass for AI and Education	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The third Working Conference on AI and Education gathered policymakers, educators, experts, private sector representatives and civil society to discuss responsible, ethical and human-centric uses of artificial intelligence in education. The event introduced the Compass for AI and Education, providing practical guidance to align the use of AI in education with human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
●	14 OCT.	International Conference: Towards a European Space for Citizenship Education	BEČIĆI, MONTENEGRO	This international conference brought together educators, learners and policymakers to explore how quality citizenship education can sustain democracy and be integrated across education systems. Through workshops and panel discussions, participants contributed to the co-creation of the European Space for Citizenship Education, focusing on principles, quality assurance and practical implementation in formal, non-formal and informal education.
●	16–17 OCT.	5 <sup>th</sup> OHE Annual Conference	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The conference explored the role of economic history in understanding societal responses to crises and the relevance of history education in addressing contemporary challenges. Aligning with the New Democratic Pact for Europe, the event also strengthened youth engagement, with around 300 participants attending student-led debates and interactive sessions between pupils and report authors.

5 ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS 2025

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	30 OCT.	<b>Digital and AI Solutions in Focus under the Lisbon Recognition Convention</b>	ONLINE PARIS, FRANCE	A University World News article highlighted key reforms discussed during the 10 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, focusing on digital transformation, artificial intelligence, micro-credentials and transnational education. The article underlined recent updates to the ENIC-NARIC Charter and the Code of Good Practice, reinforcing transparency, fairness and protection for learners in recognition processes.
●	6 NOV.	<b>World Forum for Democracy 2025: Education System Resilience as a Driver of Democratic Innovation</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	At the World Forum for Democracy, a dedicated session examined how resilient education systems can strengthen democratic culture and respond to declining youth participation. The discussion highlighted the EDURES Toolkit as a practical framework supporting education systems in preparing for and recovering from crises while fostering participation, social cohesion and democratic engagement.
●	6 NOV.	<b>Webinar on Well-being Online: Amplifying Young People's Voices</b>	ONLINE	This webinar raised awareness of digital well-being within the framework of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025. Bringing together experts, policymakers and young people, the event explored challenges and opportunities related to digital technologies and highlighted digital citizenship education as a comprehensive framework to support well-being, rights and responsibilities online.
●	7 NOV.	<b>OHTE Plenary session during the WFD</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	During the World Forum for Democracy, OHTE co-organised a plenary session on the role of history teaching in strengthening democratic resilience amid rising populism and rule-of-law challenges. Bringing together experts from education, policy and the arts, the discussion highlighted the importance of multiperspectivity, teacher support and inclusive memory practices in fostering critical thinking and democratic citizenship, with around 500 participants attending.
●	18 NOV.	<b>Academic Freedom in Action 2025: A High-Level Conference to Strengthen Democratic Resilience</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	The conference addressed growing pressures on academic freedom across Europe, including political interference and legal intimidation. Bringing together policymakers, academics and legal experts, the event examined safeguards to protect academic freedom, with a conference report to be published under the New Democratic Pact framework.
●	18-19 NOV.	<b>The Way Forward: Closing Conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025</b>	LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA	The closing conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 reviewed achievements and defined future priorities for digital citizenship education. Discussions focused on media and information literacy, online well-being and digital rights, and contributed to shaping the Digital Citizenship Education Road Map for 2027-2031.

CAT.	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
●	20 NOV.	<b>Plurilingualism: Challenges, Benefits and Perspectives in Europe and in Alsace</b>	STRASBOURG, FRANCE	A public round table organised as part of the Mercredis du Conseil de l'Europe explored the role of plurilingualism in education, democratic participation and social inclusion. Contributions from education, research and media highlighted both the benefits and practical challenges of promoting linguistic diversity at local and European levels.
●	21 NOV.	<b>"The Future of Europe is Shaped in Classrooms": Conference at the University of Elbasan</b>	ELBASAN, ALBANIA	Hosted by the University of Elbasan, this international conference explored the democratic mission of education in the context of globalisation and educational transformation. The event highlighted the role of schools and universities in defending democratic values and fostering quality, inclusive education, with contributions from academics, policymakers and education practitioners.
●	25-26 NOV.	<b>"AI for language education" workshop at the ECML</b>	GRAZ, AUSTRIA	The workshop brought together language teachers and teacher educators to explore the responsible and pedagogically meaningful use of AI. Participants reviewed draft ethical guidelines, tested professional development resources and shared national perspectives, contributing to the refinement of tools and future outputs, including updated guidelines, a report and training materials to support AI-enhanced language teaching.
●	27-28 NOV.	<b>Final Conference of the Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye</b>	ANKARA, TÜRKIYE	The final conference of the Pilot Project on Digital Citizenship Education in Türkiye brought together national authorities, educators and learners to assess the project's impact and share lessons learned. The event showcased practical tools and policy measures supporting the integration of digital citizenship competences at lower secondary level, promoting inclusion, tolerance and learner empowerment.

Throughout 2025, the Education Department of the Council of Europe continued to pursue a clear ambition: to place education at the heart of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Guided by the “Learners First” Education Strategy 2024–2030, its work further strengthened education as a cornerstone of free, inclusive and resilient societies.

This report highlights the major achievements delivered across three interlinked priorities: renewing the democratic and civic mission of education, enhancing its social responsibility and responsiveness, and advancing a human rights-based digital transformation. From citizenship education to academic integrity, from inclusion and gender equality to language policy and history education, 2025 was marked by strong cooperation, innovation and tangible progress.

Key milestones included the consolidation of the European Space for Citizenship Education, the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education, and the publication of the report on the erosion of academic freedom in Europe. Significant advances were also made in the recognition of qualifications, the fight against education fraud, and the development of practical tools designed to support member states and education stakeholders.

Through its governing bodies, expert networks and cooperation programmes, the Department reaffirmed its commitment to quality, equitable and integrity-driven education systems capable of responding to contemporary technological, social and geopolitical challenges. This brochure provides an overview of the year’s activities, partnerships and forward-looking initiatives. It reflects a shared conviction: investing in education means investing in Europe’s democratic future.



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The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.