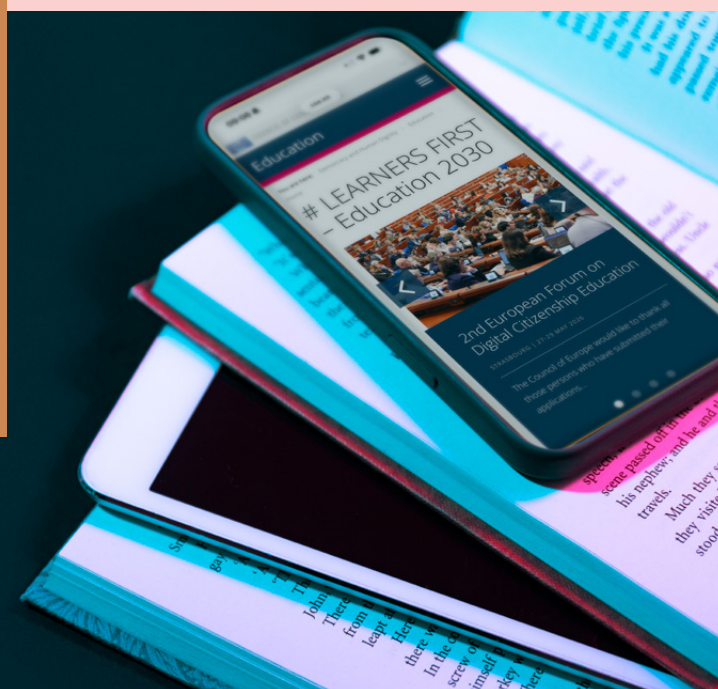


EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMME

2026



Key Activities, Objectives
and Outcomes

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
PROGRAMME 2026

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Foreword

Education stands at the heart of democratic resilience in Europe.



In times marked by uncertainty, conflict, technological disruption and growing polarisation, education remains our most powerful instrument to safeguard human rights, uphold the rule of law, and nurture a vibrant democratic culture.

The Education Department Programme 2026 reflects our collective determination to place learners at the centre of this endeavour. Through the implementation of the Education Strategy 2024–2030 “Learners First”, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering every learner to become an active, responsible and critically minded participant in democratic life.

Across all levels of education — from early childhood to higher education and lifelong learning — this programme promotes inclusive, equitable and high-quality systems that value diversity and foster social cohesion.

It strengthens the civic mission of education, reinforces academic freedom, and advances ethical, transparent and integrity-based governance.

At the same time, we embrace the opportunities of digital transformation while ensuring that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, are guided by human rights standards and democratic principles.

Through enhanced co-operation among member states, educators, institutions and partners, we aim to translate shared values into practical tools, innovative policies and measurable impact.

By investing in education, we invest in Europe’s democratic future. This programme is both a response to present challenges and a vision for sustainable, inclusive and democratic societies for generations to come.

Villano QIRIAZI
HEAD OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A stylized blue ink signature of Villano QIRIAZI.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Europe is experiencing democratic backsliding. It faces threats that undermine the culture of democracy and its values and principles. Adding to the current complex state of affairs is the advent of the digital realm and technologies such as artificial intelligence, which offer unprecedented opportunities but also harbour considerable risks if used inappropriately.

The recent crises on the European continent have exacerbated some of the existing shortcomings of education systems. Education continues to fall short of its goal of preparing students to live as active citizens in a democratic society, despite the recognition that democratic values are fundamental components and essential for both professional and personal development, as well as for the democratic functioning of institutions, including schools and universities themselves.

National education systems are introducing artificial intelligence in classrooms without common guidance (addressing data, algorithm, and education ethics) and targeted regulations related to the broader effects of

AI tools on teaching and learning processes, learners' developing cognition, mental health, and human rights.

Furthermore, learners may lack opportunities to be empowered and to fully benefit from an education that prepares them to become active and informed citizens, and resilient in the face of adversity and crisis, due to a lack of flexible curricula and safe and non-violent learning environments conducive to learning democratic practices. In addition, not all learners in Europe reach the point where they are able to understand and think critically about issues such as history, the world, politics, law, human rights, cultures, religions, media, economics, science and the environment.



ADDED VALUE AND INTERVENTION LOGIC

The Council of Europe has considered education, including the right to quality education for all, in a broader human rights context, as a driving force for democratic culture and mutual understanding, the promotion of inclusion and equality at all levels, and respect for diversity.

Building on its acquis of standards and tools, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Democratic Culture, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, various recommendations, the European Cultural Convention and the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Council of Europe is well placed to support policy-makers, educators and young people in member states in the development of their education systems and educational provision that contribute to the development of inclusive, sustainable and democratic societies.

Action helps to influence change in five interdependent but distinct areas at all levels of education, from pre-primary to higher education and lifelong learning: adaptable curricula and syllabuses, learner autonomy,

professional development, safe and inclusive learning environments, and democratic and participatory governance. The previous programmes’ accomplishments in the area of digital transformation of education would ensure that the use, teaching, and learning of emerging digital technologies (including AI systems) in education prioritise human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and support learners’ agency, well-being, and development (cognitive, social, and emotional).

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) promotes excellence and innovation in language education practice. It works with language professionals to develop research-informed solutions to key challenges in language education.

The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) collects data on history teaching practises that are consistent with the Organisation’s values as stated in its Statute. The primary target audience is policy-makers in the member states’ Ministries of Education and higher education. Young democratic leaders, education stakeholders from schools, colleges and universities, specialised agencies and non-governmental organisations are also involved.

PRIORITIES 2024-2027

Over the four years, the focus is on the implementation of the new Education Strategy 2024-2030: “Learners First: Education for today’s and tomorrow’s democratic societies” and the following objectives:

01

Revitalising the democratic and civic mission of education.

02

Strengthening the social responsibility and responsiveness of education.

03

Advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation.

Follow up to the 4th Summit is ensured, in particular the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy on the importance of education for human rights and fundamental democratic values such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability. Learners and educators are positioned as the ultimate beneficiaries of any changes in local, regional, national and international education policies. Some areas are being developed such as democratic culture in vocational education and training, and connections made with education for environmental sustainability, complemented by national projects for democratic culture, projects promoting innovation and quality in language and history teaching, and resilience of education systems.

New standards and instruments are being developed, notably in relation to the European Space for Citizenship Education, on the creation of a European area of citizenship education, on the use of artificial intelligence systems in education, and on the automatic recognition of academic qualifications to further support student mobility across European countries. A culture of trust, transparency and accountability is being reinforced through the activities of the ETINED platform and its new Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud.

The European Year of Education for Digital Citizenship 2025 provided a platform for member states to set common objectives, exchange good practice, measure the results

achieved and jointly define a roadmap for the future. This will be further strengthened with the 27th Session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education taking place in December 2026, which will provide a political platform to take stock of the first implementation phase of the Education Strategy 2024-2030 “Learners First”.



INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	INDICATORS AT OUTPUT LEVEL	TARGET 2027	MILESTONE 2025	BASELINE 2022
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1				
Member states and relevant stakeholders could rely on standards and guidance for the provision of quality education that empower learners as active and responsible citizens in democratic sustainable societies.				
Number of new standards and tools to encourage quality education and renew the democratic and civic mission of education (e.g. on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), rights to education in democratic sustainable societies development).	●	4	2	-
Number of new standards and tools to further the social responsibility and responsiveness of education (e.g. on the use of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), inclusive quality education, history education, Roma inclusion policy, gender equality in education).	●	7	6	-
Number of new standards and tools to guide higher education policies towards contributing to the promotion of fundamental values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, culture of trust, transparency and integrity.	●	5	2	-
Number of new standards and tools to advance education through a human rights-based digital transformation (e.g. Council of Europe Compass on AI and Education, on artificial intelligence systems in education, teaching in digital age, education data).	●	8	2	-
Number of member states declaring having taken action to apply the RFCDC.		24	22	-
Percentage of actions envisaged under the first implementation plan of the Education Strategy 2030 fully implemented.		50%	35%	-

INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	INDICATORS AT OUTPUT LEVEL	TARGET 2027	MILESTONE 2025	BASELINE 2022
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 2				
Member states and relevant stakeholders have increased their capacity to renew the democratic and civic mission of education while increasing the effectiveness of education for democratic culture at the European level.				
Number of member states covered by co-operation activities.		6 [7]	6 [7]	7
Number of participants in the capacity-building activities.	●	3 750 [4 500]	3 250 [4 000]	3 500
Percentage of institutions engaging in exchanges on promoting the RFCDC through the Education Advisors' Policy Network (EPAN).		75%	60%	60%
Percentage of participants/leaders newly trained by the Schools of Political Studies in the 16 participating countries declaring that they have increased their capacities.		80%	80%	-
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 3				
Member states and relevant stakeholders have increased their capacity to furthering the social responsibility and responsiveness of education, that value the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of every learner, from early childhood education to higher and further education.				
Number of member states declaring having taken action to implement the CM/Rec(2022)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture.	●	10	5	-
Number of countries using the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees.		30	25	22
Number of participants in the capacity-building activities.	●	600 [1 000]	500 [700]	350
Percentage of participants/leaders newly trained declaring that they have increased their capacities.		30%	30%	-
Number of member states using the extended toolkit on language support for migrant and refugee.		10	5	-

INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	INDICATORS AT OUTPUT LEVEL	TARGET 2027	MILESTONE 2025	BASELINE 2022
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 4				
Member states and relevant stakeholders have increased their capacity to guide higher education policies towards contributing to the promotion of fundamental values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, culture of trust, transparency and integrity.				
Number of countries and organisations taking part in activities related to democracy mission of higher education, i.e. protecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy, supporting internationalisation, democratisation of science, higher education’s engagement with society.	●	>35	>30	25
Number of countries promoting automatic recognition of qualifications in higher education.		35	30	25
Percentage of countries and organisations engaging in exchanges on promoting fair recognition and international mobility for all through the work of the ENIC Network.		>70%	>50%	60%
Percentage of member countries and organisations engaging in exchanges on promoting transparency and integrity in education through the work of ETINED Network.		>70%	>50%	60%
Number of countries joining the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud.		10 [46]	5 [23]	-

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 5				
Member states and relevant stakeholders have increased their capacity to advance education through a human rights-based digital transformation.				
Number of member states implementing the curriculum framework for digital citizenship education.		>30	>15	-
Number of member states participating in 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education.		[>30]	[>30]	-
Date of availability of the Education knowledge hub.			31/12/2024	-
Number of member states having introduced online/offline capacity building courses for education actors based on Council of Europe standards.		8 [10]	3 [5]	-
Percentage of member states engaging in exchanges and activities on promoting digital citizenship education and AI literacy through the DCE promoters network.		>60%	>50%	-

INDICATORS OF IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	INDICATORS AT OUTPUT LEVEL	TARGET 2027	MILESTONE 2025	BASELINE 2022
IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 6				
Language education has gained knowledge, professional competences and access to innovative resources to improve quality in language education (ECML).				
Percentage of survey respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” that the ECML event they participated in has contributed to developing their professional competence.		>85%	>85%	100%
Percentage of survey respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” that the ECML event they participated in has highlighted quality aspects of language education that they will promote in their professional environment.		>85%	>85%	98%
Percentage of survey respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” that participating in an ECML event has encouraged them to play a more influential role in reform processes in their professional environment.		>85%	>85%	93%
Percentage of survey respondents who rate the relevance and clarity of the professional content of ECML publications as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.		>85%	>85%	>95%
Number of events registered in the Online European Day of Languages’ database by September.	●	4 000	>2 000	1 474

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 7				
Member states could rely on comprehensive data on the state of history teaching in education systems (OHTe).				
Number of thematic and general reports.	●	6	4	2
Number of annual conferences and events providing a platform for exchange of knowledge, practices, and methodologies.		12	10	7
Number of relevant organisations in the field of history teaching expressing their interest in or joining the OHTe network and contributing to its activities.		25	20	10
Number of OHTe members.		23	20	16

1

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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.

EUROPEAN SPACE FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Formal and non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
SALVADOR SALA

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

The creation of the European Space for Citizenship Education is driven by a strong political will, as demonstrated by the Declaration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Reykjavik and the outcome of the 26th European Conference of Ministers of Education.

These events have collectively called upon member states to commit themselves to a democratic future shaped by education. This political momentum is unprecedented and signals a collective move towards improving the quality of citizenship education across Europe.

Furthermore, the democratic backsliding that we are experiencing in Europe undermines the culture of democracy and its values and principles. Phenomena such as the return of war, radicalisation, and online hate speech

have exacerbated some of the existing shortcomings in education systems. As a result, learners do not have sufficient opportunities to benefit from an education that prepares them to become active and informed citizens in democratic societies.

In this context, the European Space for Citizenship Education is more necessary than ever to ensure the sustainability of democracy through quality citizenship education, to respond to growing dissatisfaction with the quality of democracy, and to renew its civic mission.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Member state authorities in formal and non-formal education sectors.
-  Education professionals (including educational leaders, teachers and teacher educators), non-formal educators and in-company trainers.
-  Schools and educational institutions, education providers, and enterprises that welcome VET students and apprentices.
-  Learners and apprentices.

OBJECTIVES

- 01** To create a European Space that strengthens member states commitment to fostering a culture of democracy in education systems. The European Space for Citizenship Education aims to serve as a comprehensive resource hub, promoting democratic values and principles through high-quality citizenship education.
- 02** To codify the fundamental principles for education for democratic citizenship and democratic values that underpin quality citizenship education, addressing both current and future challenges.
- 03** To provide a new quality framework for education for democratic citizenship, for formal and non-formal sectors, to assess the progress made by member states in advancing quality citizenship education in Europe.
- 04** To provide a platform and mechanisms for co-operation to support and guide the implementation of the principles for EDC and the progress towards quality citizenship education, based on exchange, collaboration, and innovation.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- 14-15 JAN.** WORKING GROUP MEETING
- MAY** EPAN AND WORKING GROUP MEETING
- DEC.** LAUNCHING OF THE ESCE AT THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01** Codification of principles for EDC.
- 02** Quality framework for EDC.
- 03** Concept development of a dashboard.
- 04** Contextualisation of the principles for EDC and quality framework for EDC in the non-formal sector.
- 05** Creative messages and visual identity of the ESCE for different communication platforms and strategies (social media, and CoE website and webpages).
- 05** To contextualise and adapt the principles for EDC, the elements of the quality framework, and the co-operation mechanisms to the non-formal education sector.
- 06** To implement a creative and communication strategy, for the European Space for Citizenship Education, including key messages, visual identity, and social media outreach.



OUTPUTS

- 01 Final draft of the codification of principles for EDC.

02 Final draft of the Quality framework for EDC.

03 Concept development of the operational guidelines and of the dashboard.

04 Contextualisation of the principles for EDC and quality framework for EDC in the non-formal sector.
- 05 Creative messages and visual representations of the ESCE for different communication platforms and strategies (social media, and CoE website and webpages).

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1

Member states and relevant stakeholders could rely on standards and guidance for the provision of quality education that empower learners as active and responsible citizens in democratic sustainable societies.

SUB-INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01 Number of member states that participated in co-creating the key documents of the European Space for Citizenship Education (Principles for EDC, Quality Framework, and Co-operation Mechanisms).

02 Number of member states that have formally committed to implementing or piloting the quality framework of the European Space for Citizenship Education (ESCE).

03 Number of member states willing to engage in one or more co-operation mechanism of the ESCE.

QUALITATIVE

- 01 Perception of usefulness of the Principles for EDC and its new narrative to develop policies and practices to advance quality citizenship education.

02 Perception of value of the instruments and quality indicators in advancing quality citizenship education in member states and education institutions.

03 Perception of interest in the co-operation mechanisms.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME INDICATOR

Number of new standards and tools to encourage quality education and renew the democratic and civic mission of education (e.g. on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), right to education in time of emergency, education for sustainable development).

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

135K €

- Funding sources:**
Ordinary budget,
Voluntary contribution
from Germany.

Key cost drivers:
Consultancy fees,
communication,
and IT services.

KEY RISK

Lack of agreement on the assessment objects, approach, and instruments of the quality framework for EDC, which could undermine the programme evaluation and the pursuit of quality.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Conduct targeted consultations on evaluation with member states and experts.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- Targeted dissemination to member States in CDEDU and EPAN plenaries.

Web and digital visibility.

Integration into Education Programme reporting.

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Formal and non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
SALVADOR SALA

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

The project consists in contextualising Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) through eight central issues to consider: children’s rights and agency; the development of prejudice from an early age; diversities, intersectionality and plurilingualism; social segregation or social cohesion; equity and access; socialisation; and participation.

Early Childhood Education and Care covers the years from birth to compulsory school age. All public and private institutions involved in the care and the education of this age group are integrated in one comprehensive system (as is the case in Scandinavian countries) or split in two separate systems, usually called childcare (mostly from zero to three years of age) and preschool (mostly from three to six years of age).

Early Childhood Education and Care will be also included in the European Space for Citizenship Education. The project will contribute to designing and adapting the principles of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and the elements of the quality framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to support the inclusion of ECEC into the European Space.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- 15-16 JAN. WORKING GROUP MEETING
- JUN. WORKING GROUP MEETING

OUTPUTS

- 01 Publication of EDC in ECEC finalised.
- 02 Adapted principles for EDC in early childhood education and care.
- 03 Adapted elements of the quality framework for EDC in early childhood education and care.

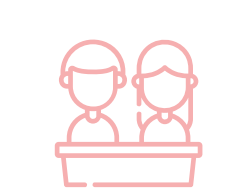
TARGET GROUPS



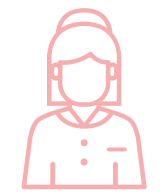
MEMBER STATE
AUTHORITIES
(responsible in ECEC)



EDUCATION
PROFESSIONALS



CHILDREN
AND PUPILS



SCHOOLS AND CARE
SERVICES PROVIDERS

OBJECTIVES

- 01 To contextualise education for democratic citizenship in early childhood education and care.
- 02 To adapt the European Space for Citizenship Education principles for EDC in early childhood education and care.
- 03 To adapt elements of the European Space for Citizenship Education quality framework for EDC to early childhood education and care.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01 Publication of EDC in ECEC finalised.
- 02 Adapted principles for EDC in early childhood education and care.
- 03 Adapted elements of the quality framework for EDC in early childhood education and care.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

40K €

- Funding source:** Ordinary budget
- Key cost drivers:** Consultancy fees

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME 1

Member States and relevant stakeholders could rely on standards and guidance for the provision of quality education that empower learners as active and responsible citizens in democratic sustainable societies.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME INDICATOR

Number of new standards and tools to encourage quality education and renew the democratic and civic mission of education (e.g. on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), right to education in time of emergency, education for sustainable development).

SUB-INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01 Number of member states consulted during the elaboration of the publication of EDC in ECEC.
- 02 Number of stakeholders that participated in the elaboration of the publication of EDC in ECEC.

QUALITATIVE

- 01 Content areas covered by the publication are key areas for EDC in ECEC.
- 02 Meaningful adaptation of the principles for EDC in the context of ECEC for education professionals of this sector.
- 03 Meaningful adaptation of the quality indicators for the context of ECEC for education professionals of this sector.

KEY RISK

Low stakeholder consultation during the development of the publication of EDC in ECEC.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Conduct targeted outreach to experts and stakeholders to ensure adequate consultation on the EDC publication in ECEC.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- 01 Targeted dissemination to member states in CDEDU and EPAN plenaries.
- 02 Web and digital visibility.
- 03 Integration into Education Programme reporting.



DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Formal and non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
SALVADOR SALA

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

The Education Department has been working in the implementation of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in vocational education and training (VET) since 2022. This work resulted with the publication *RFCDC Guidance Document for Vocational Education and Training*, published in 2024. This was the first publication in Europe tackling education for democratic citizenship in VET.

The Guidance document was followed by a second publication, *Learning Democracy in Vocational Education and Training in Europe: An Anthology*, published in 2025. This publication explores eight topics that contribute to the effective implementation of the RFCDC in VET and the development of competences for democratic culture among VET learners. The Anthology aims to further strengthen democratic values and practices, and to promote a culture of democracy in

VET. The CoE remains committed to this work, striving to ensure that VET systems prepare learners not only for employment but also for active citizenship in democratic and diverse societies. The drafting of a Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET will signal the importance of a joint effort by all member states to promote democratic citizenship in and through VET.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- 12-13 JAN.
- WORKING GROUP MEETING
- JUN.
- WORKING GROUP MEETING

OUTPUTS

- 01
- Draft of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.
- 02
- Draft of the Explanatory memorandum of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.
- 03
- Report and visibility of consultation Conference on the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Member State authorities responsible for VET.
-  Education professionals, including in-company trainers and teachers, and trainers' educators.
-  VET schools, training providers, and enterprises that welcomes VET students and apprentices.
-  VET learners and apprentices.



RFCDC Guidance Document for Vocational Education



Learning Democracy in Vocational Education and Training in Europe: An Anthology

OBJECTIVES

- 01
- To promote a culture of democracy and democratic citizenship in and through VET, by ensuring that VET systems prepare learners not only for employment but also for active citizenship in democratic and diverse societies.
- 02
- Provide specific recommendations in different key areas and transversal topics that indicate how VET systems can introduce and foster a culture of democracy and democratic citizenship by implementing the RFCDC and integrating CDC.
- 03
- Justify and explain the proposed recommendations through an explanatory memorandum.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01
- Draft of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.
- 02
- Draft of the Explanatory memorandum of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on developing a culture of democracy in VET.

INDICATORS

Member states and relevant stakeholders could rely on standards and guidance for the provision of quality education that empower learners as active and responsible citizens in democratic sustainable societies.

SUB-INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01 Number of member states involved in the elaboration of the draft recommendation and the explanatory memorandum.
- 02 Number of member states consulted during the elaboration of the draft recommendation and the explanatory memorandum.
- 03 Number of VET stakeholders consulted on the draft recommendation and the explanatory memorandum.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

125K €

IMMEDIATE OUTCOME INDICATOR

Number of new standards and tools to encourage quality education and renew the democratic and civic mission of education (e.g. on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), right to education in time of emergency, education for sustainable development).

QUALITATIVE

- 01 Alignment of the recommendation with current European political priorities in VET.
- 02 Adaptation of the European Space for Citizenship Education principles for EDC in the context of VET.
- 03 Content areas covered by the draft recommendation that guarantees a wider implementation and impact of the recommendation.
- 04 Type of VET stakeholders that participated in the elaboration of the draft recommendation and the explanatory memorandum.

Funding source:
Ordinary budget

Key cost drivers:
Consultancy fees, travel and subsistence expenses

KEY RISK

Low participation in the consultation process of the draft recommendation and the explanatory memorandum, which could negatively affect the quality and validation of the recommendations.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Targeted outreach to the experts to encourage engagement in the process of drafting and consulting about the Recommendation and the relevant explanatory memorandum.



MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- 01 Targeted dissemination to member states in CDEDU and EPAN plenaries.
- 02 Web and digital visibility.
- 03 Integration into Education Programme reporting.



DEMOCRATIC MISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN ACTION

Higher education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER

JELENA DRCA

PERIOD

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

PAN-EUROPEAN

Across Europe, higher education institutions are facing increasing and multifaceted pressures that undermine academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and the democratic role of universities. These pressures include political interference, legal intimidation (including SLAPPs), online harassment, foreign interference, funding-related constraints, and other threats.

Academic freedom is not only a core higher education value but a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of democratic societies. Its erosion has direct implications for freedom of expression, democratic governance, public trust in science, and the rule of law.

This project builds on the Council of Europe's mandate to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and is firmly anchored in the Education Strategy 2024–2030 ("Learners First"), the outcomes of the 2023 Summit of Heads of State and Government and

the New Democratic Pact, existing standards such as CM/Rec(2012)7, and the work of the Expert working group on the Democratic Mission of Higher Education.

It responds directly to evidence and policy recommendations emerging from the Report on the Erosion of Academic Freedom in Europe and the Academic Freedom Insights series, and supports ongoing reflections on strengthening the Council of Europe's normative framework, including the preparation of a new Recommendation and exploratory work towards a legal instrument.

OBJECTIVES

- 01** To strengthen the protection of academic freedom and reinforce the democratic mission of higher education across Council of Europe member states through policy development, capacity-building, and multilateral cooperation.
- 02** To advance a shared European understanding of contemporary threats to academic freedom and appropriate state responsibilities.
- 03** To support the development of updated policy and normative instruments protecting academic freedom.
- 04** To enhance cooperation, visibility, and practical guidance for public authorities, higher education institutions, and relevant stakeholders.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Member State authorities (ministries, policymakers, national agencies).
-  Higher education institutions, academic staff, researchers, and students.
-  Parliamentarians, judicial actors, and national human rights bodies.
-  Civil society organisations and international partners active in higher education and human rights.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- Q1-Q2** PREPARATION OF THE REPORT ON LEGAL PROTECTION FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM¹
- Q1-Q4** ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON 25-26 NOVEMBER
- Q1-Q3** THEMATIC REPORTS AND EXPERT STUDIES²
- 1** Current Framework, Structural Gaps, and the Case for a Convention.
- 2** Study on Democratisation of Science; Policy brief on community engagement (Education Info Note); Preliminary draft Guidelines for member states on Scholars at Risk; Feasibility study for a Clearing House on academic freedom.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01** Improved policy coherence and political awareness among member States regarding emerging threats to academic freedom and the democratic mission of higher education.
- 02** Concrete progress towards strengthened Council of Europe standards on academic freedom, including preparatory work for a new Recommendation and exploratory steps towards a legal instrument.
- 03** Enhanced multilateral cooperation and stakeholder engagement, including with international organisations, parliamentarians, and civil society.

OUTPUTS

- 01** Draft Report on Legal Protection for Academic Freedom¹.
- 02** Public Advocacy, Annual Dialogues: Organising the annual conference, webinars -bringing policymakers, academics, students and civil society together, for reflection, strategy development, and transparency .
- 03** Thematic reports and expert studies².

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- 01** Targeted dissemination to member states through CDEDU and its subgroups.
- 02** Web and digital visibility via the Education Department’s platforms.
- 03** Integration of results into Education Programme reporting and major events.

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01** Number of countries and partner organisations engaged in the work and the events: 30-35 in 2025, more in 2026 already through the topic being presented at the Ministerial Conference.
- 02** Number of reports, studies, policy documents, briefs, and guidance tools produced: 5.
- 03** Number of participants in conferences, meetings, and webinars.

QUALITATIVE

- 01** Level of policy uptake and reference to Council of Europe standards.
- 02** Feedback from member states and stakeholders on relevance and usability.
- 03** Evidence of strengthened alignment with democratic and human rights standards.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

149.5K €

- Funding source:** Ordinary budget
- Key cost drivers:** Experts, reports and studies, meetings, publications
- KEY RISKS**
- Low member state engagement in events and activities.
- Timing constraints affecting workshops, or reports.
- Limited availability of experts or participants.
- MITIGATION MEASURES**
- Phased and realistic planning of deliverables.
- Coordination with partner organisations to ensure complementarity.

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.

LANGUAGE POLICY

Language policy

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
ARZU-BURCU TUNER

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES

Across Europe, democratic backsliding, polarisation, migration, and rapid digital transformation pose urgent challenges to inclusive societies.

Language education is one of the essential instruments for promoting equality, enabling participation, and responding effectively to increased migration flows, as emphasised in the Council of Europe Secretary General’s 2025 Report and the Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024–2030. In its programme for 2026–2027 which sits within the Education Strategy 2024–2030: Learners First, the division will continue to provide targeted support to member states in line with the following three Committee of Ministers’ Recommendations:



↙
CM/Rec(2008)7
The use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism



↙
CM/Rec(2022)1
The Importance of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democratic Culture and Recommendation



↙
CM/Rec(2025)6
The Committee of Ministers to member states on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe

OBJECTIVES

To support the member states in their efforts to strengthen the quality, fairness, and inclusiveness of language education with an aim to ensure that European societies are resilient to the challenges threatening democracy.

01 Support member states in ensuring transparent, reliable, and integrity-based use of the CEFR in language policy, curriculum, and assessment to secure quality language education.

02 Strengthen the capacity of member states to implement fair, transparent, portable, and accessible language testing approaches for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees leading to improved recognition and integration.

03 Provide member states with the tools to assess their progress and address their needs in plurilingual and intercultural education and collaborate bilaterally, multilaterally and with the Council of Europe to advancing towards the implementation of Rec (2022)1 in their national context.

TARGET GROUPS



Member State authorities



Education professionals / institutions



Learners / civil society / other (as relevant)

EXPECTED RESULTS

01 Member states have a clearer understanding of the key messages from the CEFR and the CEFR Companion Volume to allow them to challenge misinformation and misuse of this flagship instrument in their contexts.

02 Member states are making use of new CoE tools and guidance (joint survey with ALTE and the guidance/training videos on the use of the Language support for migrants (LSM) toolkit) to implement fairer, more transparent and more accessible language tests for migrants and refugees leading to improved recognition and integration.

03 Member states have been able to gauge their progress at lower secondary level towards the implementation of CM Rec(2022)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture by engaging with the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool and to learn from one another via the first results of the European Language Education Profile.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

125K €

Funding source:
Ordinary budget

Key cost drivers: Experts, meetings, publications, digital tools

QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

1 ROUND-TABLE

Number of participants to the roundtable: 2-3 consultants and 6-8 experts/participants in person and 6 member states and 24 participants (online) taking part in the roundtable on CEFR.

1 CO-PUBLICATION

3 ONLINE MODULES TO PROMOTE / FACILITATE THE USE OF LSM TOOLKIT

5 MEMBER STATES THAT USE THE REFLECTION AND PLANNING SURVEY TOOL AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EUROPEAN PROFILE

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- 01 Targeted dissemination to member states
- 02 Web and digital visibility
- 03 Integration into Education Programme reporting

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- Q1/Q4 **Two meeting of the new language expert group:** first one to divide the tasks related to the expected outputs and the second one to finalise deliverables.
- Q1 Launch and promotion of the **Reflection and Planning Survey Tool** on plurilingual and intercultural education for lower-secondary level.
- Q2 **Roundtable discussion on the challenges in the use of the CEFR** (such as misinterpretations, misuse of levels, etc.) and possible means to overcome these challenges.
- Q3/Q4 Development of **3 short online introductory/ training modules on the use of the LSM toolkit** and their launch via an online webinar.
- Q4 Development and **launch of the first European profile for plurilingual and intercultural education** based on the data from the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool for lower-secondary .
- Q4 **Completion of the upper secondary level of the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool** and the scoping work for the primary level of the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool.

OUTPUTS

- 1.1 One policy/info note on the use of the CEFR based on the roundtable discussions.
- 2.1 Co-publication with ALTE of the **revised Manual for Language Test Development and Examining** (MLTDE).
- 2.2 ALTE – Council of Europe joint survey.
- 2.3 Three online modules to introduce the LSM toolkit.
- 3.1 Launch of the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool on plurilingual education for lower-secondary level.
- 3.2 Development of the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool on plurilingual education for upper-secondary level and scoping for the primary level.
- 3.3 Launch/publication of the existing entries for the Policy toolbox that relate to the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool for lower-secondary.
- 3.4 Development and launch of the Webpage/Platform for the European Profile.

KEY RISKS

Low member State engagement for the Reflection and Planning Survey Tool for lower-secondary level. Limitations of the Council or Europe website structure for the visual presentation of the survey results / European profile.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Promotional videos and targeted outreach is planned for the launch of the survey for the lower secondary level. Visual support from external providers is foreseen and research is being done to find the most cost-effective solution.





Formal and
non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
GENNADIY KOSYAK

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

HISTORY EDUCATION

Recognising the role of education in fostering democratic participation, Ministers of Education, at their meeting in Strasbourg on 28-29 September 2023, supported the development of a new instrument on history education at digital age.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

80K €

Funding source: Ordinary budget
Key cost drivers: CDEDU and drafting work and Rec implementation.

In accordance with the CDEDU decisions and main guiding principles enshrined in the prospective CM Recommendation, the action will primarily be focused on support to its implementation and would involve extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and awareness-raising and promotion events.

The proposed action would be anchored in the CoE Education Strategy 2030 - “Learners First”: agency, inclusion, critical capacities, non-formal learning, digital citizenship; all content would be grounded in CoE acquis, forum conclusions, and verified historical-didactic research; consistent with the 2026-2027 programme design aligned with the New Democratic Pact and the Reykjavik Declaration.

In particular, the draft Recommendation on History Education in the Digital Age highlights the need to ensure quality history education in a context transformed by digital technologies, including generative artificial intelligence, video games, and rapidly evolving digital environments. It identifies opportunities for multiperspectivity, wider access to information, and enriched engagement with historical sources, but also stresses risks linked to disinformation, misinformation, false narratives, historical distortion, historical negationism or historical denialism, and hate speech. The Recommendation emphasises the importance of digital media and information, data and

AI literacy as essential foundations for critical historical inquiry and for the ability to analyse and interpret sources in digital contexts. It underlines the need to equip educators and learners with competences to navigate digital environments responsibly and to counter manipulative uses of history. It calls for the protection of academic freedom, academic integrity, and institutional autonomy, and for ensuring equitable access to historical data.

It also stresses the importance of cross-sector cooperation involving education authorities, ministries, teachers, museums, remembrance sites, libraries, archives, civil society organisations, higher education, and digital actors, as well as the role of heritage institutions in ensuring access to digital collections and preserving digital historical heritage. In the light of the above, 2026–2027 offers opportunity to transform history education into a pillar of democratic resilience, directly addressing digital misinformation, historical distortion, and the evolving ways in which young Europeans encounter the past.

The 2026–2027 intergovernmental action will therefore focus on supporting member states in giving practical effect to these principles and policy measures by facilitating implementation, strengthening competences, promoting ethical and effective use of digital tools, and addressing the challenges identified in the Recommendation.

OBJECTIVES

01 Reinforce democratic culture by ensuring that all encounters with history across formal, non-formal and informal education are grounded in human rights, democracy, rule of law, multiperspectivity, critical thinking, historical literacy, historical thinking, and historical consciousness, and by supporting responsible and ethical use of digital technologies in line with the (Draft) Recommendation.

02 Support the implementation of the principles and policy measures set out in the (Draft) Recommendation

Discuss, agree upon, propose and further build practical, scalable implementation pathways for member states across curricula, teacher training, assessment, archives, museums, digital learning, and AI-related risks.

03 Support member states in addressing historical manipulation in line with the framework of the New Democratic Pact and European Space for Citizenship Education

Equip educators, institutions, and learners with tools to recognise, resist, and counter disinformation, hate speech, denialism, and illiberal narratives – i.e., begin development of an on-line course.

04 Embed the “Learners First” principles into history education ecosystems

Strengthen learner agency, critical inquiry, access to reliable historical resources, and inclusive memory practices, i.e. through the development of specific guidelines.

05 Enhance cross-sector collaboration between ministries, higher education, archives, museums, learner organisations, and non-formal actors through the development of specific guidelines or recommendations stemming from the above action.

EXPECTED RESULTS

01 Further to prospective adoption of the draft CM Rec, national and institutional are advised on the implementation of the new Recommendation, as relates to curricula, teacher training frameworks, digital literacy curricula, and history-education policy planning and prepare an outline for specific guidelines.

02 Following a series of consultations and feedback received from stakeholders, prepare an extended Concept Note on supporting the implementation of the (future) Recommendation and report on feedback (possibly, in co-operation with EPAN).

03 On the basis of the action above, to develop further guidance and conduct specific events targeting strengthened democratic capacities of educators and learners, concentrating on practical tools to detect historical manipulation, algorithmic bias, AI-generated distortions, and hate-driven narrative and prepare a concept of the on-line courses.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

Q2-Q4 UP TO 3 MEETINGS AND ONLINE EXCHANGES

Q2-Q4 PRESENTATIONS AT PARTNERS’ MEETINGS

Q3-Q4 THEMATIC AWARENESS-RAISING EVENT/S, DRAFTING AND ONLINE EXCHANGES

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Building on the 2026 achievements, consider creating stable multi-stakeholder implementation communities, envisage establishing or supporting the integrated networks linking schools, archives, museums, universities, and learner organisations and start developing evidence-based practical guidance for responsible use of digital technologies and AI in history education, directly responding to Forum findings on AI vulnerabilities and other CoE work.

Guidelines for tangible implementation of the new Recommendation across member states that offer clear European perspective for AI, digital, and historical integrity in education, deriving from the Recommendation.

A functioning multi-sector collaboration model agreed upon (ministries, archives, museums, universities, learners, etc.), ready to be elaborated and further proposed to the member states.

Strengthened democratic culture and historical resilience among young people, consistent with “Learners First” and improved national capacity to counter manipulation of history in line with the New Democratic Pact through the development of a dedicated on-line course.

OUTPUTS

- 1** Draft CM Rec and Annexes and activities to support its implementation.
- 2** Outline for on-line course addressing historical manipulation in line with the (future) Recommendation.
- 3** Outline for Guidelines or recommendations resulting from the above activities and events.

KEY RISKS

Digital and AI threats evolving faster than educators’ capacity; politicised resistance to pluralistic history teaching.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Foresee flexibility and be ready to adjust; strong coordination via workshop structure and GT-HIST; co-designed tools; direct support from archives/ museums; practical not theoretical outputs.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Member states authorities
-  Education institutions
-  Learners

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

Tools and guiding documents.

QUALITATIVE

CEDU feedback, stakeholder feedback via CEDU WG members’ outreach, CEDU Bureau feedback.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Partnership with EuroClio and other key partners’ large-scale events, other relevant annual and large-scale meetings, to hold specific discussions and dedicated sessions.

Web and digital visibility.

Integration into Education Programme, CEDU reporting.

PLATFORM ON ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION (ETINED)

Higher and further education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
URSULA STICKER

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND STATES PARTIES TO THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL CONVENTION REPRESENTED AT THE CDEDU

The ETINED Platform, launched in 2015 by the Council of Europe, is a network of specialists appointed by member states of the Council of Europe and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention.

Its mission is to promote transparency, integrity, and ethical principles in education by sharing good practices, addressing corruption challenges, and building capacity across all actors and all levels of education, to ensure quality education for all. ETINED contributes to Pillar II: “Enhancing the social responsibility and responsiveness of education” under the Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030, as well as to the CDEDU 2024-2027 Terms of Reference. It also supports the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on countering education fraud, Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)9 on fostering a culture of ethics in the teaching profession, and of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy, reaffirmed at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which emphasise transparency, accountability, and youth participation in democratic processes, including education.

↙
CM/Rec(2022)18
Countering education fraud



↙
CM/Rec(2019)9
Fostering a culture of ethics in the teaching profession



↙
4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe



OBJECTIVES

- 01** To strengthen transparency, integrity, and ethical standards in education systems across Council of Europe member states and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, contributing to quality education for all.
- 02** Promote the exchange of good practices among education stakeholders to enhance transparency and ethical governance at all levels of education.
- 03** Address integrity challenges in education systems through collaborative analysis, policy dialogue, and targeted guidance.
- 04** Build the capacity of education actors, including policymakers, institutions, and practitioners, to uphold ethical principles and implement integrity-based policies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01** Increased access to ETINED knowledge and improved awareness of transparency, integrity, and ethics in education among stakeholders.
- 02** Strengthened peer exchange and policy reflection on open school data and transparency in higher education governance.
- 03** Improved co-ordination and strategic guidance of the ETINED network to support future policy development.

OUTPUTS & KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- Q1-Q4

ORGANISATION OF TWO EDUTALKS (WEBINARS) ON KEY ETINED TOPICS
- Q3-Q4

ELABORATION OF OPEN SCHOOL DATA POLICY GUIDELINES
- Q2

ORGANISATION OF ONE OPEN SCHOOL DATA WORKSHOP
- Q1-Q4

ORGANISATION OF TWO ETINED BUREAU MEETINGS AND 10TH ETINED PLENARY MEETING
- Q3-Q4

ORGANISATION OF A EUROPEAN FORUM ON TRANSPARENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01

Number of ETINED activities implemented (EduTalks, open school data workshop, ETINED Bureau meetings, plenary meeting, Forum).
- 02

Number of participants from Council of Europe member states and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention taking part in ETINED activities.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

170K €

Funding source:

Ordinary budget

Key cost drivers:

Experts, meetings

TARGET GROUPS

- State authorities / policy makers
- Education professionals / institutions
- Learners / civil society

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Targeted dissemination to Council of Europe member states and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention represented at the CDEDU.

Web and digital visibility (e.g. LinkedIn).

Integration into Education Programme reporting.

QUALITATIVE

- 01

Participant feedback demonstrating increased awareness and understanding of transparency, integrity, and ethics in education.
- 02

Quality and effectiveness of peer exchange and discussion during ETINED events, as reflected in workshop and Forum reports.

KEY RISKS

Low member state engagement in events and activities.

Timing constraints affecting workshops, or reports.

Limited availability of experts or participants.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Early outreach and invitations to state representatives and relevant stakeholders.

Phased scheduling with clear timelines and buffers.

Collaboration with ETINED, CDEDU members and partners (e.g IIEP- UNESCO) to support participation.



Higher and further education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
ALESSANDRA RICCI ASCOLI

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION
OF HIGHER EDUCATION
QUALIFICATIONS

From 2012 onwards, automatic recognition of qualifications has been an underlying aspiration for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Automatic recognition refers to the right of a qualification holder to have their degree recognised without the need for a separate recognition.

In other words, qualifications issued in another country of the EHEA should be handled on the same conditions as domestic degrees (“a Bachelor is a bachelor is a bachelor”). It promotes and facilitates student mobility and international cooperation and reduces administrative barriers for qualification holders.

Although Europe has made major strides in transparency and quality assurance in Higher Education, the implementation of automatic recognition of qualifications remains highly inconsistent, as member states apply the concept with different interpretations, practices vary widely, and many authorities indicated that, although willing to move toward automatic recognition, they cannot do so without a clear assurance that all Parties meet shared standards of transparency, integrity, data reliability, and quality assurance.

To overcome these challenges, in 2022 the Council of Europe set up a working group on Automatic Recognition to explore all aspects of automatic recognition. This work yielded its results and at its last Plenary session the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education approved the proposal to draft a Convention on the Conditions of Transparency and Quality Assurance for Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Europe. The proposed Convention is not intended

to establish automatic recognition between its Parties directly. Rather, its purpose is to lay enabling conditions for such recognition by ensuring that all Parties meet the essential standards of transparency, quality assurance and data reliability that underpin mutual trust. It will apply to qualifications belonging to the three higher education cycles (Bachelor’s, Master and PhD) as defined within the European Higher Education Area, while leaving admission decisions fully within the autonomy of higher education institutions.

To ensure trust and transparency, Parties will be required to verify that each qualification has been issued by a recognised higher education institution operating within an accredited national system, and to ensure that all qualifications covered by the Convention are placed within a National Qualifications Framework referenced to the QF-EHEA. The Convention will apply solely to academic recognition and will not extend to professional recognition or regulated professions, which remain governed by separate legal frameworks.

It would complement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Multilateral Treaty (initiated by the Benelux and Baltic countries), ensuring that the broader European space is sufficiently prepared for more ambitious forms of automatic recognition.

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

EHEA countries.

QUALITATIVE

Signature and ratification of the convention.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

97.5K€

Key cost drivers: meetings

OBJECTIVES

ESTABLISHING A CONVENTION ON THE CONDITIONS OF TRANSPARENCY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE.

EXPECTED RESULTS

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF EXPERT WILL DRAFT THE CONVENTION.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

Q1-Q2 1 DRAFTING MEETING

Q2-Q3 2 DRAFTING MEETINGS

Q3-Q4 1 DRAFTING MEETING

OUTPUTS

Convention

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Targeted dissemination to member states.

Web and digital visibility.

Integration into Education Programme reporting.

TARGET GROUPS



STATES

They will be provided with a clear and inclusive framework and benefit of better cooperation.



LEARNERS AND INSTITUTIONS

They will have reduced administrative burdens, delays and costs associated with recognition, mobility will be enhanced.

KEY RISKS

Low member State engagement, time constraints.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Involvement of the willing countries to participate in the drafting of the convention, they are free to intervene; tight time schedule for drafting.



THE STUDENT RIGHTS CHARTER

Formal and non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
GENNADIY KOSYAK

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

A key decision emerging from the 26th Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, held in Strasbourg on 28-29 September 2023, where Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening democratic values in education, was the promotion and protection of students’ rights, particularly in relation to non-discriminatory access to higher education, student-centred learning, privacy, data protection, freedom of expression, and social rights.

Recognising the role of education in fostering democratic participation, Ministers supported the development of a legal instrument on student rights in collaboration with the European Students’ Union. This initiative aligns with the broader vision of establishing a European Space for Citizenship Education, which aims to ensure that all learners are equipped with the competences necessary to engage in democratic societies. In accordance with the CDEDU decisions, the drafting the European Student Rights Charter is co-led by the CoE and European Students Union (ESU) and involves

extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. A proposal to form a dedicated drafting working group was approved by the CDEDU in March 2025, together with the Group’s mandate. A call for nominations was launched shortly after and, further to the CDEDU and ESU nominations, a group was formed and held its first meeting in Paris on 2-4 July 2025. ESU Board consultations took place in Barcelos in September (on-line) and in Vienna in December 2025. The second meeting of the WG took place on 18 December 2025 (on-line).

OBJECTIVES

- 01** The Council of Europe’s Education Strategy 2030 outlines a vision for education systems across Europe that are inclusive, equitable, and student-centred.
- 02** It emphasises the importance of providing a high-quality education to all students, regardless of their background, and fostering an environment where students are empowered to participate in democratic processes.
- 03** By establishing a European Student Rights Charter, the CoE could ensure that a core set of rights—including access to affordable education, academic freedom, and student participation in governance—are universally guaranteed across all member states.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 01** Modernise and standardise protections for students, particularly in these emerging areas, and ensure that quality education is accessible to all students, regardless of their nationality or social background.
- 02** Enhance the consistency and protection of student rights across Europe, further promoting the democratic principles and human rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- 03** Consolidate and protect students’ rights across Europe, ensuring that every student, regardless of their 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.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01** Further to a series of consultations and feedback received from stakeholders, prepare an extended Concept Note and report on feedback.
- 02** Further to a series of consultations and work of the CDEDU thematic group and designated drafting group, develop draft CM Rec and annexes.
- 03** Draft CM rec and explanatory memorandum presented to the CDEDU in Fall 2026 for the first reading.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- Q1-Q2** 2 MEETINGS OF THE CDEDU THEMATIC WG AND ONLINE EXCHANGES
- Q2-Q3** PRESENTATIONS AT EUA AND EURASHE ANNUAL MEETINGS
- Q3-Q4** THEMATIC WG MEETING AND ONLINE EXCHANGES
- Q1-Q4** DRAFTING GROUP ACTIVITIES – EXPERT CONTRACTS AND AD HOC MEETINGS



TARGET GROUPS

-  Member states authorities
-  HE institutions
-  Learners

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

55K €

Key cost drivers: CDEDU thematic WG and ESU
Funding source: Ordinary budget

OUTPUTS

- 01** Extended Concept Note and results of consultations.
- 02** Draft CM Rec and Annexes.
- 03** Explanatory Memorandum.

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

CDEDU WG
(nominated)

QUALITATIVE

ESU Board feedback, stakeholder feedback via CDEDU WG members’ outreach, CDEDU/HE sub-group/ Bureau feedback.

KEY RISKS

Internal restrictions, funding and timing constraints.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Foresee flexibility and be ready to adjust.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- Making use of ESU, EUA, EURASHE etc large-scale events, annual and Board meetings, to hold specific discussions/sessions.
- Web and digital visibility.
- Integration into Education Programme, CDEDU reporting.

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION SCORECARD

Formal and non-formal education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
CATHERINE GUERRERO

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

The Council of Europe Gender Equality in Education Scorecard (Scorecard) contributes to the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The scorecard is being developed in response to the mandate given by the Committee of Ministers to the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), in close co-operation with the Gender Equality Commission (GEC). The scorecard will also be aligned with the Education Strategy 2024-2030 “Learners First”, the Reykjavik Declaration and the New Democratic Pact for Europe.

OBJECTIVES

01 To develop a self-assessment tool and common framework enabling members states and actors in the education system to measure, strengthen and make visible their commitment to gender equality in education. Measuring, highlighting and encouraging the mainstreaming of gender equality in education strengthens democracy and contributes to the implementation of the standards and democratic values promoted by the Council of Europe.

02 Define and structure a Scorecard with clear domains and relevant indicators easy to analyse.

03 Conduct a comparative analysis of existing tools and consultations with stakeholders to ensure the Scorecard brings a real added value to the landscape of studies on gender equality in education.

04 Create an accessible, visually clear digital tool tailored to each country's situation, which supports the integration of gender equality in education and enables meaningful comparative analyses over time.

KEY RISKS MITIGATION MEASURES

Low member State engagement, timing constraints, lack of human resources).	Targeted outreach, phased delivery, anticipation.
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MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Targeted dissemination to member states
Web and digital visibility
Publications

EXPECTED RESULTS

MEMBER STATES AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS COULD RELY ON STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION THAT EMPOWER LEARNERS AS ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS IN DEMOCRATIC SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES.

OUTPUTS

Deliverable 14

In the terms of reference of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) : Gender Equality Scorecard in Education (jointly with GEC), in line with the implementation of CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Member State authorities
-  Education professionals / institutions
-  Learners / civil society

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

JANUARY	WORKING GROUP MEETING
APRIL	WORKING GROUP MEETING
SUMMER	WORKING GROUP MEETING
Q2	POSSIBLY TRAINING SESSIONS

INDICATORS

This project contributes to Immediate outcome 1: Number of new standards and tools to further the social responsibility and responsiveness of education (e.g. on the use of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), inclusive quality education, history education, Romani policy and pedagogy, gender equality in education.

QUANTITATIVE

- 01** Number of member states involved in the elaboration of the Scorecard.
- 02** Number of member states consulted during the elaboration of the Scorecard.

QUALITATIVE

- 01** Alignment of the Scorecard with CoE acquis on gender mainstreaming in education.
- 02** Content areas covered by Scorecard that guarantees a wider implementation and impact of these policies and instruments.
- 03** Value added and complementarity of the Scorecard in relation to other initiatives from intergovernmental organisations.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

50K €

Key cost drivers: Experts, meetings, publications, digital tools	Funding source: Ordinary budget
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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.

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.

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.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION

Digital Transformation

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
AHMET-MURAT KILIÇ

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND
STATES PARTIES TO THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL
CONVENTION REPRESENTED AT THE CDEDU

In 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recommended that member states examine the implications of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies for education, given their growing impact on society, democracy and human rights. In response, the Steering Committee for Education launched the intergovernmental project on Artificial Intelligence and Education (AI&ED) in 2020.

Building on the work of the Committee and the Framework Convention on AI, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education adopted a resolution on the use of AI in education in September 2023. The resolution stresses the need for AI in education to protect human rights, support democracy and uphold the rule of law, and highlights the value of a sector-specific legal instrument. Ministers of Education supported the development of a legal instrument applying the Framework Convention to education, as well as a Recommendation to ensure that teaching and learning about AI address its impact on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, while prioritising the active role of teachers and

✓
[CM/Rec\(2019\)10](#)
Developing and promoting
digital citizenship education



KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------|--|
| Q1-Q3 | ORGANISATION OF TWO MEETINGS OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED COMMITTEE ON AI AND EDUCATION (EDU-IA). | Q4 | PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DRAFT LEGAL INSTRUMENT TO REGULATE THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS IN EDUCATION TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW. |
| Q2 | DEVELOPMENT OF A POLICY TOOLBOX ON TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT AI. | | |
| Q2 | ORGANISATION OF THEMATIC WORKSHOPS DURING THE DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP FORUM. | Q4 | DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES. |

learners. The AI&ED project contributes to Pillar III: “Advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation” under the Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030, as well as to the CDEDU 2024-2027 Terms of Reference and included in the Programme and Budget 2024 – 2027. It also supports the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy, reaffirmed at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe.

✓
[The 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe](#)



OBJECTIVES

- 01** To advance education systems across Council of Europe member states and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention through a human-rights-based digital transformation, with a particular focus on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in education.
- 02** Support member states in developing and implementing policies, standards and practices for the use of AI in education that uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
- 03** Promote peer exchange, policy dialogue and shared learning among education stakeholders on AI literacy and the governance of AI systems in educational settings.
- 04** Strengthen the capacity of education stakeholders to design, apply and monitor AI-related policies, tools and practices in line with Council of Europe standards.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- Targeted dissemination to Council of Europe member states and States Parties to the European Cultural Convention represented at the CDEDU.
- Web and digital visibility.
- Integration of results and outputs into Education Programme reporting and the Education Knowledge Hub.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01** Increased capacity of member states and relevant stakeholders to advance education through a human-rights-based digital transformation, including the responsible use of AI in education.
- 02** Enhanced policy coherence and peer exchange among member states on AI in education, informed by Council of Europe standards and tools.
- 03** Improved availability and uptake of standards, guidance and capacity-building tools supporting the ethical, transparent and rights-respecting use of AI systems in education.

TARGET GROUPS

-  State authorities and policy makers
-  Education professionals / institutions
-  Learners / civil society

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 01** Number of representatives from member states attending the events organised under the AIED scope.
- 02** Percentage of member states engaging in exchanges and activities promoting AI literacy.

OUTPUTS

- 01 Meetings** – Two meeting reports.
- 02 Publication** – Policy Toolbox on teaching and learning about AI.
- 03 Event** – Thematic Labs, to be turned into a synthesis report.
- 04 Draft Proposal** – Proposal for the development of a draft legal instrument to regulate the use of artificial intelligence systems in education.
- 05 Publication** – European Reference Framework for the Evaluation of Educational Technologies.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

238K €

Funding source: Ordinary budget
Key cost drivers: Experts, meetings

QUALITATIVE

- 01** Evidence of policy, legislative or practice changes in member states related to AI and digital transformation in education.
- 02** Quality and relevance of peer exchange and policy dialogue, as reflected in evaluation reports and feedback.

KEY RISKS

- Uneven engagement of member states in AI and digital transformation activities.
- Rapid technological developments outpacing policy and guidance work.
- Limited availability of experts or education actors for capacity-building activities.

MITIGATION MEASURES

- Early and targeted outreach to member states and relevant networks.
- Flexible and iterative approach to standards and tools, allowing updates as technologies evolve.
- Articulation with the EDU-IA Committee and close co-operation with CDEDU members, expert bodies and partners to ensure expertise and participation.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Higher Education

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER
ALESSANDRA RICCI ASCOLI

PERIOD
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE
PAN-EUROPEAN

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, including its transformative potential in the recognition of qualifications, offers significant opportunities while posing complex ethical and practical challenges. These developments necessitate a coordinated, values-driven approach to ensure AI's integration supports human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, principles foundational to the Council of Europe.

The potential benefits of AI's integration into credential evaluation

Efficiency Gains: Automation of routine tasks such as data verification and document classification.

Fraud Detection: Enhanced identification of fraudulent documents using machine learning.

Global Consistency: AI's ability to harmonise recognition methods in line with the shared principles across borders, improving mobility.

However, risks also loom, including

Bias in Algorithms: Discriminatory practices embedded in AI models due to biased training data.

Over-reliance on AI: Risk of undermining human judgment in general, and in particular in complex or nuanced cases.

Ethical Concerns: Questions around data privacy, accountability, and the misuse of AI tools.

OBJECTIVES

01 Ethical Integration of AI: Ensure AI systems used in recognition of qualifications do not violate fundamental human rights and are in line with existing legal frameworks and promote equity.

02 Capacity Building: Equip credential evaluators and stakeholders with knowledge and tools to navigate AI's integration into recognition workflows.

03 Policy Development: Contribute to the creation of guidelines and frameworks that align AI application in recognition with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

This proposal builds on key insights from existing frameworks, such as the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on AI and Human Rights, rule of Law and Democracy and the EU AI Act, which highlight the importance of transparency, fairness, and human oversight in AI systems. It also incorporates recommendations from the ENIC-NARIC networks, the networks of national information centres on recognition that CoE supports from 1994, which has identified AI as a critical area for capacity building and policy development.

At its 26th session in September 2023, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution highlighting the necessity of leveraging AI in education while safeguarding fundamental values. The resolution recognised the added value of a sectoral instrument to implement the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on AI, emphasising principles of equity, transparency, and accountability.

EXPECTED RESULTS

01 Mapping of the usage of AI tools by ENIC-NARIC centres, higher education institutions and ministries in recognition workflows based on the responses to the survey launched in 2025.

02 Drafting of a code of practice for credential evaluators and admission officers taking into account the HUDERIA model of the CAI.

03 Building an online training module for professionals.

Aligned with this vision, the Council of Europe's Education Strategy 2024–2030 prioritises «Advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation.» This strategic pillar underscores the need to address the ethical and operational challenges of digital technologies, including AI, within education systems.

In response to the Ministers' resolution and subsequent directives from the Committee of Ministers, the Council commissioned a preparatory study in 2024 to assess the case for a legal instrument on AI in education. The findings, presented to the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) in March 2024 and discussed during a European Conference in October on Regulating AI in Education, highlighted the necessity of structured interventions to explore AI's role in education and higher education and its implications for rights-based practices, particularly in the recognition of qualifications and based on the longstanding work carried out by the Council within the framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention implementation.

KEY RISKS

Low member state engagement in events and activities.

Timing constraints affecting workshops, or reports.

Limited availability of experts or participants.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Early outreach and invitations to state representatives and relevant stakeholders.

Phased scheduling with clear timelines and buffers.

Collaboration with ETINED, CDEDU members and partners (e.g IIEP-UNESCO) to support participation.

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

20 ENIC-NARIC centres, HEIs, ministries align with the code of conduct and take the online training.

QUALITATIVE

AI tools used in recognition of qualifications are aligned with the HUDERIA model.

TARGET GROUPS



EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS INSTITUTIONS

Credential evaluators and admission officers.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

Q1-Q2 MEETING WORKING GROUP

Q2-Q3 MEETING WORKING GROUP/WORKSHOP

Q3-Q4 MEETING WORKING GROUP

OUTPUTS

01 Mapping of the situation (analysis of survey responses)

02 Workshop on AI and Recognition

03 Draft of a code of practice for professionals

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

49.8K €

Key cost drivers: Experts, meetings, publications, digital tools

Funding source: Ordinary budget

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Targeted dissemination to ENIC-NARIC centres, HEIs and ministries

Web and digital visibility

Integration into Education Programme reporting



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Digital Transformation

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER

MILENA NAHAPETYAN

PERIOD

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

PAN-EUROPEAN

Digital evolution, accelerated mainly by artificial intelligence, has a deep impact on the lives of people, reflecting on the democracy and human rights protection. Digital citizenship education (DCE) that encompasses digital and AI literacy helps fostering human agency.

It allows learners of all ages to understand emerging digital technologies and their impact on the rights and freedoms, as well as to master and engage competently and positively with them, to participate actively, continuously and responsibly in social and civic activities while defending human rights and dignity.

While the Council of Europe’s actions in leading digital citizenship education to date have fostered strong international cooperation, facilitated by the DCE Promoters’ Network and other expert groups, research shows that current implementation of DCE at the national level is too fragmented, and the level of take-up across member states is too low. Moreover, a lack of standards is leading to overlapping mandates and a lack of policy cohesion, with only a limited number of countries aligning with the framework outlined in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10.

As shown in the Review on the implementation of the DCE Recommendation, it is also the case that only a few member states are advanced in their policies to implement digital citizenship education and have been engaged in various associated activities for many years. The Road map is being designed as a guiding document to be sufficiently flexible to be adapted in different contexts and starting points while converging around common collaborative actions across the member states.

DCE is included under the “Learning and Practicing Democracy” pillar of the New Democratic Pact for Europe. This emphasises the importance of prioritising youth participation in democracy, investing in civic education, including digital and media literacy. This investment is seen as vital for countering polarisation and disengagement among young people and for promoting critical thinking and civic participation in the digital age.

OUTPUTS

- 01 Evaluation Report of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025.
- 02 Digi-Nauts episodes 5 and 6, situation cards for learners aged 5-18.
- 03 Policy guide on the promotion of DCE for policy makers.
- 04 Collection of classroom activities and DIY videos on the DCE Planner.
- 05 DCE Road Map 2027 – 2031.

TARGET GROUPS

-  Ministries and policy makers in member states.
-  Education professionals, teachers, heads of schools, education institutions.
-  Learners / civil society / youth.

OBJECTIVES

- 01 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.
- 02 DCE is enhanced on policy level in member states.
- 03 Learners have developed digital competencies further contributing to meaningful and responsible online environments.

KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

- | | | | |
|-------|--|-------|--|
| Q1–Q4 | FINALISATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DCE ROAD MAP 2027 – 2031. | Q1–Q2 | 2 ND EUROPEAN FORUM ON DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION. |
| Q1 | DCE PROMOTERS NETWORK MEETING. | Q3–Q4 | DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND RESOURCE MATERIAL TO ADVANCE DCE IN EDUCATION AND POLICY MAKING. |
| Q1–Q2 | EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR 2025. | | |

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

Number of countries who adopt DCE as a priority in education, number of schools piloting the DCE Planner, number of released resources.

QUALITATIVE

Alignment of education related policies to include DCE, revision of curricula to integrate DCE, stakeholder feedback.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 01 Awareness on DCE is further increased among educators, policy makers and general public.
- 02 DCE is embedded in education system and curricula in secondary education based on the use of DCE Planner.

KEY RISKS

DCE is not taken as a policy priority.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Targeted outreach to Ministries of Education (by introducing the Road Map, by presenting a Guide for policy makers for the advancement of DCE, showing the benefits of strong DCE curricula for the active participation and reinforcement of democracy, etc.).

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

Targeted dissemination to member states.

Regular updates on the main website of the Education Department, on the dedicated website of the European Year, dissemination of news via the digital newsletter.

Integration into Education Programme reporting.



RESOURCES AND BUDGET

250K €

Funding source: Ordinary budget / voluntary contributions

TRANSVERSAL
PROJECTS



KNOWLEDGE HUB

Digital Transformation

RESPONSIBLE PROJECT MANAGER

ENISA KARAXHO

PERIOD

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2026

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

PAN-EUROPEAN

The Council of Europe’s Education Department (Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity – DGII) supports the Parties to the *European Cultural Convention* in promoting a culture of democracy within national education systems. Through its education policies, programmes, and instruments, the Department aims to ensure that all learners are empowered to fully exercise their rights as active citizens in democratic European societies.

The Department’s overarching mission is to improve the quality, equity, and accessibility of education, enhancing both the acquisition of knowledge and the development of key competences, while ensuring equal opportunities for all learners. As part of this ongoing effort, the **Knowledge Hub** constitutes a digital learning ecosystem supporting the Council of Europe’s mandate in education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights.

While significant policy frameworks, tools, and practices exist at Council of Europe and member State level, a persistent challenge lies in translating these standards into sustainable practice across national contexts. This project addresses this gap by strengthening a sustainable pan-European digital learning and knowledge infrastructure that supports continuous professional learning, knowledge exchange, and collaboration.



Knowledge Hub



E-Democracy Lab

The Knowledge Hub provides the structured knowledge backbone of the ecosystem by curating and organising resources and practices developed by the Department. With a searchable catalogue of more than 5,000 resources (books, reports, guidance, toolkits), policymakers and educators can quickly find what they need and implement them in classrooms and systems.

The **E-Democracy Lab**, part of the Knowledge Hub, offers structured, scalable, and practice-orientated online courses across Council of Europe democracy topics such as education for democratic citizenship, youth policy, elections, media literacy and cultural heritage. Key learning offers available include Countering bullying and cyberbullying in the school environment, Intercultural School Development, The Key to Media Literacy: Creating safer and more democratic schools in the digital age, and a structured learning pathway on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). In addition, EDL hosts a Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) learning pathway composed of six dedicated courses. Successful completion of this pathway leads to the awarding of a Digital Citizenship Education Ambassador badge, supporting the recognition of learning outcomes and encouraging engagement beyond the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025.

Recognising that meaningful professional learning also depends on participation, identity, and peer exchange, the project aims at further developing a social learning dimension within the ecosystem. The initiative is grounded in social and participatory learning approaches that understand knowledge as co-constructed through participation, interaction, and shared practice. From this perspective, professional learning takes place not only through access to information but through sustained engagement in communities where participants share concerns, exchange experience, and collectively develop solutions to common challenges. Such participatory learning processes are particularly relevant to education for democratic citizenship, where learning is understood as a lived and continuous practice rather than the transmission of fixed knowledge.

By engaging in a process of collective learning, the communities learn from and with each other by combining the collective wisdom to understand a challenge and devise a solution. This aligns with the Council of Europe’s vision of democracy as an ongoing process of participation and will include the establishment of digital communities of practice and a light, recognition-based EDC Fellowship/ Ambassador initiative whereby Fellows/Ambassadors act as stewards and multipliers who support peer learning, share practice-based knowledge, and strengthen feedback loops between policy and educational practice.



Countering bullying and cyberbullying in school environment



Intercultural School Development



The Key to Media Literacy: Creating safer and more democratic schools in the digital age



Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)



Digital Citizenship Education (DCE)

The communities will be established within the Lab with the intention to:

01

Foster peer-to-peer dialogue on the challenges and opportunities related to education for democratic citizenship and digital citizenship in education.

02

Enable participants to share and reflect on real-world practices, case studies, and resources from their own contexts.

03

Support the co-creation of new knowledge, strategies, and tools that are relevant, grounded, and context-sensitive and that can inform future Department initiatives.

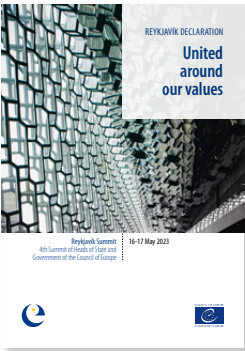
The aim is not to impose a rigid structure, but rather to nurture an organic, participatory learning space where participants have a sense of ownership and are trusted to self-organise. This initiative aligns also with the “Cooperation Mechanism” of the new **European Space for Citizenship Education** and the implementation of the RoadMap on Digital Citizenship Education developed by the DCE Promoters Network in the framework of the European Year for Digital Citizenship Education.

Through this combined approach - knowledge structuring, online learning, and supported social learning processes - the project contributes to the long-term implementation of education for democratic citizenship by enabling member states and education professionals to engage in continuous, collaborative, and practice-oriented learning aligned with Council of Europe standards. Simultaneously, it operationalises the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe, notably the **Reykjavik Principles for Democracy**, the **Education Strategy 2024-2030 “Learners First”** and supports the implementation to the Council of Europe’s **New Pact for Democracy**, through discussions on ways to learn and practice democracy, foster democratic engagement and fight disinformation by promoting media and information literacy and critical thinking.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

95K €

Key cost drivers: Digital platforms and technical maintenance, course development and instructional expertise, meetings (experts, meetings, publications, digital tools).



Reykjavik Principles for Democracy



Education Strategy 2024-2030



New Pact for Democracy



European Space for Citizenship Education

OBJECTIVES

01 To provide a sustainable digital learning ecosystem for continuous professional learning, knowledge exchange, and collaboration that supports Member states in the implementation of education for democratic citizenship.

02 To consolidate, curate, and make accessible policy-aligned education resources and practices through the Knowledge Hub, improving coherence, discoverability, and reuse across member states.

03 To develop and deliver structured, scalable, and practice-oriented online learning pathways through the E-Democracy Lab that strengthen professionals’ capacity to apply education for democratic citizenship.

04 To strengthen participatory and practice-based professional learning mechanisms through the creation of digital exchange spaces that support peer learning, collaboration, and feedback loops between educational practice and policy development.

INDICATORS

QUANTITATIVE

- 3,000+ Active users accessing the Knowledge Hub.
- 4 New online courses developed.
- 2 Online courses translated and localised into national contexts.
- 1 Pilot social learning space launched and established.

EXPECTED RESULTS

01 Enhanced accessibility, structure and number of digital education resources through the Knowledge Hub.

02 Expanded E-Democracy Lab course catalogue offering new introductory courses on key programme areas and localisation of existing courses.

03 Launch of a digital social learning and exchange space within the digital ecosystem, including active communities of practice and an EDC Fellowship/Ambassador initiative, supporting peer learning, professional stewardship, collaboration, and structured feedback between policy and educational practice.

QUALITATIVE

- 01 User feedback on accessibility and coherence of resources collected through the evaluation form.
- 02 Participant feedback on relevance of learning pathways to professional needs collected through the evaluation form.
- 03 Evidence of peer-to-peer learning and collaborative problem-solving.



KEY ACTIVITIES 2026

Q1–Q2	KNOWLEDGE HUB CONSOLIDATION AND ENHANCEMENT	Improvement of Knowledge Hub visual identity; optimisation of metadata; development of thematic collections aligned with programme priorities; enhancement of navigation and resource structuring to improve accessibility and policy alignment.
Q2–Q3	DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ONLINE LEARNING OFFERS	Design and development of four new self-paced online courses in priority programme areas.
Q2–Q3	PROMOTION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN (“DCE CHALLENGE”)	Implementation of a digital communication and social media campaign to promote participation in EDL courses, including the DCE learning pathway, encouraging learners to complete courses and obtain recognition through the DCE Ambassador badge.
END OF Q2–Q3–Q4	ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIAL LEARNING SPACE	Establishment and facilitation of digital communities and collaborative exchange spaces to support peer learning, sharing of practices, and dialogue between education professionals and policy frameworks. This activity includes the launch of a pilot EDC Fellowship/ Ambassador initiative, whose members act as stewards and multipliers within the communities, contributing to knowledge-sharing, peer support, and feedback between practice and policy.

KEY RISKS

- Low engagement of learners in digital learning activities.
- Limited active participation in social learning space.
- Low course completion rates and reduced participation in exchanges due to time constraints and workload of education professionals.
- Technical constraints or platform instability.
- Over-reliance on external expertise for social learning design.

MITIGATION MEASURES

- Targeted communication campaign (“DCE Challenge”); clear value proposition; modular and self-paced learning; recognition mechanisms (badges, Fellowship) to incentivise engagement.
- Involvement of Fellows/Ambassadors as stewards and multipliers; clear thematic focus; integration of community outputs into Knowledge Hub.
- Short, modular learning units; flexible engagement formats; practice-oriented content directly linked to professional needs.
- For Knowledge Hub the platform and services are internal to the Council of Europe, ensuring institutional ownership, continuity, data governance, and long-term sustainability. For E-democracy Lab -> conclusion of a Moodle technical support contract; phased rollout of new courses and features; coordination with technical providers.
- Knowledge transfer during consultancy; integration of processes into internal workflows; gradual internal capacity-building.

MAIN COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

- Targeted dissemination to member states.
- Web and digital visibility.
- Integration into Education Programme reporting.



TARGET GROUPS

-  Education policymakers in Ministries of Education in Council of Europe member states.
-  Education professionals, including school directors and teachers.
-  Learners and students.
-  Education agencies.
-  Higher education institutions and universities.
-  Non-governmental organisations.
-  Public at large.

OUTPUTS

- 01** Updated and restructured Knowledge Hub, including optimised metadata, newly curated resources, and thematic collections aligned with programme priorities.
- 02** Expanded E-Democracy Lab course catalogue, including 4 newly developed introductory courses and translation/localisation of selected existing courses.
- 03** Operational digital social learning space established within the ecosystem, including active communities and a pilot EDC Fellowship/ Ambassador initiative supporting peer learning and feedback between policy and educational practice.

PROGRAMME ANCHORING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

Democracy is more than just a matter of laws and institutions; it depends on a culture of democracy rooted in democratic values.

The last decade has shown a worrying trend of democratic backsliding. Freedom of expression and information continues to worsen in several countries and the civic space to shrink. Mistrust towards public institutions is increasing and attempts to distort the notions of culture and cultural heritage, used as instruments of polarisation or stigmatisation, make democracies less resilient to pressures undermining democratic values.

The effective protection of human rights requires citizens, well informed, who understand the importance of human rights for them personally and are ready to defend them and to participate in society. There is a need to improve both the way institutions involve citizens in decision making and the ways they exercise public authority at all levels, to ensure freedom of expression and information and to increase the capacities of all members of society, including young persons and civil society to actively participate in democratic societies while promoting a mutual understanding and reciprocal appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage. The aim of this Programme is to anchor democratic values in European society. It comprises notably the education sub-programme.



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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.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT