

# Newsletter education

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## Editorial

As this edition of the Education Newsletter appears, the Council of Europe is celebrating fifty years of existence. The achievements of the organisation are wide-ranging, and over the coming weeks and months considerable attention will be given to its role in protecting human rights, sustaining the rule of law and promoting democracy, as well as to the importance of being the first European organisation to bring in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Often, the Council of Europe has been responsible for important work which doesn't make the headlines, but which nevertheless makes a deep and lasting impact. This is particularly true in the field of education. Enormous progress has been made in European educational co-operation during the past 50 years, and it is opportune to think both of the breadth of experience acquired over the last half century, and of how this can best be used to meet future challenges – particularly in view of the current dramatic situation in South Eastern Europe.

Educational cooperation has taken many forms, and involved many different partners – ministries of education, inter-governmental organisations, representatives of civil society and many others. The meetings of our own Education and Higher Education Committees, bringing together both academic and governmental representatives of 47 states as well other governmental and non governmental organisations, are themselves the source of long-standing and important European educational networks, providing opportunities for new ideas to be explored, approaches to common problems to be analysed, and new projects and partnerships to be forged. One of the most obvious and important signs of cultural difference is language, and it is particularly appropriate that the Council of Europe has been able to play a strong role in promoting the dissemination of good practice in language teaching and learning. This has been facilitated in recent years by the establishment of a European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, and the importance of the work undertaken at this centre is examined in an article on p 5.

The pace of societal change continues to increase, carrying immense implications for education policy. New needs, both for individuals and societies, are emerging, and education structures will have to adapt to meet them. Many of these new challenges are being addressed through the CC-HER project on "Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion" which is outlined on p 6.

The Education Department has a major role to play in providing technical assistance and expertise in very specific

circumstances. Our work in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the war in 1996 was outlined in the previous edition, and recent events in South-Eastern Europe demonstrate that many countries are certain to require considerable support for a number of years – particularly in democratising educational culture, teaching and understanding sensitive periods of history, and in ensuring that adequate and appropriate educational opportunities are provided for refugees and returnees whose world has quite literally been blown apart through conflict.

The post-conflict educational challenges in South Eastern Europe will be on a scale which far exceed anything which Europe has faced in the past fifty years. How are security and common European democratic values respecting human rights and cultural difference to be assured where they have been so recently and totally violated? It is imperative to think differently about the kind of attention which should be given to South Eastern Europe, and the development of a regional education policy, affirming the common European identity of all cultures and peoples, is now underway at the Council of Europe. This policy will, in practice, be implemented in a variety of local contexts, and will aim to assist a process of democratic stability through education which gradually but profoundly permeates society.

The countries of South Eastern Europe should continue to play a major role in all forms of European educational cooperation. Many such educational activities may now seem commonplace and banal, but they are in fact major achievements. European student and academic exchange programmes, whether at regional level or throughout the continent, are increasingly taken for granted, yet without the Council of Europe, it is far from certain that such programmes would have developed as they have. Their benefits are impossible to quantify, as they not only have direct impact on personal and professional development, but also bring indirect advantages to all of our societies, especially in terms of increasing knowledge and cultural awareness. Bringing people together was the inspirational reason for creating the Council of Europe 50 years ago. The horrifying events which we have all witnessed over the last few months illustrate that it remains the main reason why the organisation is still urgently required.

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# Developing a *European Language Portfolio*

**T**his article provides an outline of an initiative to promote plurilingualism among citizens of Europe. The activity is carried out within the context of the Modern Languages Project, Strasbourg: *Language policies for a multilingual and multicultural Europe.*

## What is a EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO?– Definition

It is a document, or rather an organised collection of documents relating to language studies and assembled over a period of years, the purpose of which is to record qualifications, results and experience, and also containing samples of personal work.

The language portfolio is conceived as an instrument by means of which those who so desire will be able to record information about their formal and informal language learning attainments and experience, highlighting their acquired skills in a positive and internationally comprehensible way. The idea is to produce a document that fosters plurilingualism by stimulating young people and adults to build up throughout their lives the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to become European citizens. The language portfolio will, therefore, have a lifelong use.

## What is the purpose of a EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO, what are its principles, objectives and functions?

A language portfolio has firstly a documentary function. It will provide relatively complete information about skills, knowledge and experience

acquired by its holder over a period of time, including those not highlighted in official – e.g. school – documents. It will also encourage holders to become aware of their language learning process. Assembling portfolios will encourage holders to plan, organise and assess their own learning process, and, it is hoped, will provide motivation for lifelong language learning. The portfolio can thus be considered to stimulate plurilingualism, and so has a pedagogic function as well as providing a record of attainments. It will provide potential employers with information about skills, knowledge and experience, and it will ensure that attainments are clear in every country, since it contains an international evaluation grid. The language portfolio thus has a presentational and informational function, as well as a pedagogic function, and it will, via this duality, facilitate and encourage mobility among European citizens.

## One PORTFOLIO or several?

Discussions about portfolio holders naturally led to the question of whether there should be one portfolio for everyone, or a range of different ones. The tendency is to favour a set of portfolios to meet the different age-related needs. If there is a set of portfolios, however, they must have common features, so that there is no break in continuity. Here are three phases that might be distinguished for language portfolio use, with their respective functions:

- *Function of a PORTFOLIO in pre-primary and primary education:*

At this level, skills evaluation will be less necessary than providing information about introductory aspects characteristic of this form of teaching (songs, games, counting rhymes, sketches), and giving children a sense of purpose.



- *Function of a PORTFOLIO in secondary education:*

Here the main purpose will still be to motivate, but the aim of encouraging language learning and an awareness of pupils' own learning process will be more important. The portfolio will thus be an aid to self-directed learning. The need for an attestation of learning achievement will also be more manifest.

- *Function of a PORTFOLIO for adult learners:*

A portfolio for adults will certainly include a more detailed presentation of skills and information about achievements, as well as a job-oriented evaluation. In a school context the core of the portfolio will be the learning process (hence the learner), but at the adult stage, the addressee (the person to whom the portfolio is shown) will be more central to the selection of documents. This will also be the key phase for the portfolio as a means of backing up the holder's self-directed learning process, helping him or her to clarify personal objectives and facilitating self-evaluation.

It having been established that the functions may vary depending on the learning context, it must also be noted that there are crossover points and elements in common. For example a very young child who learns to record songs and nursery rhymes on a sheet prepared for that purpose is taking the first steps towards organising not only a language portfolio, but also his or her lifelong language learning.

## Structure of the PORTFOLIO

A portfolio, depending on the type of user, will include:

- an overview of lifelong language learning (past and present), a kind of language "passport",
- a language "biography" or profile of the languages learnt,
- a dossier or compilation of personal work.



The overview or "passport" will present language attainments at a given time. It will list the languages known, the level, and any qualifications achieved; it will include intercultural experience.

The language "biography" (or profile) will detail language skills and experience, each language being considered separately, as well as any relevant intercultural experience. Self-assessment may be included here and also possibly in the "passport" section.

The dossier will contain additional information, giving the holder the opportunity to make a more personalised presentation. It may, for example,

include information about the holder's self-set and institutionally-set objectives. It may contain a "logbook" or learning diary, and possibly observations about the language learning process. Extracts from school curricula or lessons may be incorporated, as well as samples of evaluation and documentary backup. Learners may include evidence of authentic contacts, samples of completed projects and any other documents which will substantiate their qualifications. Since learning takes place over a period of time, the dossier as presented may become out-of-date, so the holder may remove and update it.

## The form of the PORTFOLIO

The learning process brings about changes in attainment levels, and consequently in the way they need to be recorded. Accordingly, the portfolio needs to be flexible, e.g. in a format enabling pages to be added, removed or replaced in accordance with circumstances and needs. The sections will contain *hard* and *soft* pages. The hard pages will mainly contain information, while the soft pages focus on the learning process and educational considerations.

## The language of a PORTFOLIO

A distinction will have to be made between entries under headings and the holder's own entries. In a school context the mother tongue will probably be used for both. In the local employment context this may still be sufficient, but in an international context, it will certainly be necessary to use the languages of the Council of Europe, i.e. English and French. In some contexts, however, it might be necessary to use the language of the addressee, i.e. the person to whom the portfolio is to be presented.

## Pilot scheme

The Intergovernmental Conference held in Strasbourg in April 1997 approved the preliminary work carried out on the Portfolio. Versions of a European Language Portfolio are currently being piloted in a variety of educational contexts. Different formats and procedures are being tested and issues concerned with the introduction of a Portfolio on a wider scale are being examined. Specifically the piloting is investigating the following features:

- trying out different formats in the different pilots;
- testing different designs and procedures for different ages of learners –

among suggested alternatives have been a two Portfolio system for "juniors" and "seniors" and a three Portfolio system distinguishing primary, secondary and adult needs. The piloting should contribute to decision taking in this matter;

- considering issues concerning the choice of languages in which the Portfolio is best issued it is recognised that there will be variations due to the target sector, the age of users and national contexts, but the piloting should enable decisions to be taken on a distinctively European Portfolio, capable of being used in trans-national contexts.

At the moment consideration is being given to questions concerning the nature, aims, content, structuring and management of a European Language Portfolio.

After the trialling period, which is scheduled to end in 2000, the European Language Portfolio will be evaluated, and if the evaluation is positive, wider dissemination will commence in 2001, which may be declared the European Year of Languages (more about this in a future number of the Newsletter).

**For further information please consult the Modern Languages Section Web Site: <http://culture.coe.fr/lang>.** ■

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## The Lisbon recognition Convention enters into force

The Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (better known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention) entered into force on 1 February 1999. Currently, eight countries have declared themselves bound by the Convention: Austria, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Norway, Romania and Switzerland.

The first meeting of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee was held in Vilnius on 16 June. Reports from the states present suggest that there is good hope that a substantial number of them will ratify the Convention within the next year.

The Council of Europe is very pleased that the Lisbon Recognition Convention entered into force less than two years after its adoption and hopes that more countries will ratify it in the months to come. Currently, 37 countries have signed the Convention.

The Convention and its Explanatory Report are now available in a handy edition published by the Council of Europe Press and comprising all four language versions in a single volume. The publication (ISBN 92-871-3552-5) may be ordered through Council of Europe sales agents or directly from the Council: [publishing@coe.fr](mailto:publishing@coe.fr) or <http://book.coe.fr>. ■

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# The European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz

It was on the initiative of Austria and the Netherlands, with special support from France, that in 1994 eight states founded the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in the framework of a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe as “a forum in which educational policy makers can meet up with specialists in language teaching methodology to discuss and seek solutions to the specific tasks and challenges that face them in the coming years and which will play a decisive role in the process of European integration”.

By the end of 1998 a total of 25 states have become members of the ECML\*. Other states have declared their interest in joining.

Following an initial trial period (1995-1998) the continuation of the activities of the Centre was confirmed by Resolution (98) 11 of the Committee of Ministers. The Centre is now a permanent institution of the Council of Europe. The aim of the Graz Centre is to offer, generally through workshops and conferences, a platform and a meeting place for officials responsible for the implementation of language policy, specialists in didactics, teacher trainers, textbook authors and other multipliers in the area of modern languages. It also organises and supports research and development networks gathering experts from different member countries around key topics working towards concrete results.

The Centre undertakes to promote the dissemination of good practice in language teaching and learning, and to contribute to the respect and reinforcement of linguistic diversity in a multilingual, multicultural, democratic and tolerant Europe.

It concentrates on the investigation and implementation of innovative approaches and developments in language

education. In doing so the ECML works in close complementarity with the Modern Languages Project of the CDCC, the latter focussing on the development of language policies whereas the ECML directs its attention to the implementation aspect. Two co-organised workshops in 1998 and subsequent research and development projects leading into 1999 on the Common European Framework of Reference are but one example of successful co-operation; another is the planned synergy between the ECML's 3rd Colloquy (December 1998) and the conference “Linguistic Diversity for Democratic Citizenship” in May 1999 in Innsbruck organised by the Modern Languages Section.

At the same time the Centre is strengthening its links to national, bilateral and multilateral partners (DGXXII of the European Commission, FIPLV, Linguapax, EQUALS, ICC, to name but a few).

Over 60 workshops have been held up to date, mainly in Graz, (9 in 1995, 21 in 1996, 22 in 1997, 15 in 1998) bringing together almost 2000 experts from the member states and from countries all over Europe. These workshops focussed on the most pertinent aspects of reflection in the area of the teaching and learning of languages i.e. intercultural competences, bilingual education, teacher training, the use of modern information and communication technologies, autonomous learning, and many others.

Three colloquies have provided vital occasions for discussion and exchange of ideas on the promotion of modern languages education and the ECML's role in this process. The latest in this series was held in Graz in December 1998; its main objective was the discussion and initiation of concrete research and development projects answering

the challenge of plurilingual and pluricultural communication.

A large number of dissemination workshops in member or partner states have offered the opportunity to respond, in a more targeted way, to specific needs of member states.

A number of research and development networks have been active over the past years and some of their concrete results are forthcoming in the near future in form of publications.

Over 30 workshop reports on topical issues as set out in the ECML's priority areas of activity and the proceedings of the colloquies held in 1995 and 1997 are available.

These numbers only partly reflect the richness and diversity of the work initiated and carried forward during the years of the trial period; a number of results still await evaluation and editing with a view to their wider dissemination.

One of the priorities for 1999 is precisely that the evaluation of the experiences and the results of the first three years of activity and their presentation in various formats (publications, ECML-website, etc), while improving the organisational, dissemination and support structures.

At the same time the ECML is preparing its first medium-term programme which will span the years 1999-2002 and will pursue two main aims.

- a research and development focus on innovative approaches to the organisation and set-up of language education adapted to the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe;
- a focus on on-going concerns of the member States in the area of the teaching and learning of modern languages.

More information is available on the ECML website:

<http://culture.coe.fr/ecml> ■

\* *Principality of Andorra (7 February 1996), Austria (8 April 1994), Bulgaria (21 August 1995), Croatia (23 February 1995), Cyprus (15 February 1996), Czech Republic (28 April 1995), Estonia (24 March 1995), Finland (1st January 1997), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2 December 1996), France (8 April 1994), Greece (8 April 1994), Hungary (2 August 1995), Iceland (1 January 1998), Latvia (25 June 1996), Liechtenstein (8 April 1994), Luxembourg (17 March 1995); Malta (8 April 1994), Netherlands (8 April 1994), Norway (1 August 1994), Poland (19 March 1996), Romania (25 June 1996), Slovak Republic (1 September 1995), Slovenia (8 April 1994), Sweden (1 January 1999), Switzerland (8 April 1994).*

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# Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education

At its plenary session in March 1998 the Higher Education and Research Committee (CC-HER) decided to launch a new major project on "Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education" within the first pillar of its work programme "Policy and practice for European higher education".

Since 1966 the Council of Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe has carried out a number of activities defining the concept of permanent education and introducing it to policy makers. Drawing on this rich experience the newly proposed project addresses political goals within a field of crucial importance to the future of the higher education community in Europe, which has to find its specific role in developing a learning society. It also responds to the priorities defined by the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's Member States who called for "a new strategy for social cohesion" in the context of democratic security. The mission of higher education in such a strategy lies in combating exclusion and marginalization by providing equal opportunities for learning and in responding to the new demands raised by society as a result of the profound political, economic and social transformations in Europe.

The Second Summit also called for multidisciplinary action on the application of new information technologies (NIT), maximising their educational and cultural potential. An important part of the project will deal with the impact of NIT on lifelong learning.

Through models of good practice, case studies, analytical reports, workshops and conferences the project will work out policy recommendations to governments and institutions aiming at developing rational and operational

strategies for national higher education systems in lifelong learning and at creating networks of expertise for sharing experience and good practice.

The project foresees partnerships and synergies with several international organisations and networks: EU, OECD, and UNESCO, key NGOs (EDEN-European Distance Learning Network, EUCEN-European University Continuing Education Network, EAN-European Access Network, etc.), employers, local and regional authorities, and others actors in the field.

What is the specific role of higher education in lifelong learning? Should lifelong learning be a catalyst in changing higher education institutions or should it be a supplement to the existing structures?

What can lifelong learning offer to the public: A second chance? Better career prospects? New employment opportunities? Personal development? Are higher education institutions and government structures ready to meet the diversified demand? Who has to pay for it? Who can afford it? What is the impact of NIT on lifelong learning? What are the respective roles and the relationships between teachers and learners in the new environment? What is the value of the qualifications acquired through lifelong learning?

In what way should lifelong learning contribute to the process of social cohesion?

These are only part of the questions discussed at the launching symposium on the project held from 12 till 14 November 1998 at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. Participants from 30 member states of the Council of Europe and representatives of a number of networks and projects (EAN, EUCEN, EDEN, PHARE, etc.) discussed the main theme and the three major sub-themes of the activity. "Governments need clear indications on the priority issues, as well as on the necessity of

specific institutional structures and financing schemes to support lifelong learning" stated in his opening address Professor Josef Pálincás, State Secretary at the Hungarian Ministry of Education. "We need a thorough reflection on the new mission of the University in the current political, economic and social realities and on its relationships with society—the state, the local authorities, the enterprises, the world of work, the non governmental organisations, the intergovernmental structures, etc." underlined in her speech Professor Suzy Halimi, Chair of the CC-HER.

To redefine the role of higher education institutions as it extends beyond their traditional mission into lifelong learning involving new clients and partners and to develop operational lifelong learning strategies are really major challenges to higher education institutions and national higher education systems. Far from being exhaustive the symposium identified several key issues to be studied by the project and provided input to further action and specialised workshops included in the work programme of the project.

A first workshop on the theme: "Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society" took place from 27 till 29 May 1999 in Bornholm (Denmark). A second one on "The role of new information technologies in lifelong learning" will be held next year, possibly at the University of Catania (Italy). ■

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# Education for democratic citizenship

**D**eveloping a democratic culture; responding to the lack of interest in politics; intolerance; acquiring a sense of responsibility; active citizen participation; the role of civil society; social skills; living together – these are some of the key issues that crop up regularly when education for democratic citizenship is discussed.

## A political context

At their second Summit, in October 1997, the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe member states declared education for democratic citizenship to be one of their priorities.

They expressed their desire to develop education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the participation of young people in civil society. They therefore decided to launch an initiative for education for democratic



*Declaration of the 50th Anniversary: To celebrate the 50th Anniversary, the Committee of Ministers has adopted a declaration and a programme on education for democratic citizenship*

citizenship with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

For the Council of Europe, this is a matter of strengthening its primary purpose of promoting a culture based on human rights and democracy.

## A definition?

Education for democratic citizenship embraces the whole range of practices and activities aimed at better preparing young people and adults to play a more active part in democratic life by exercising their rights and shouldering their responsibilities in society.

It aims to develop a sense of belonging and commitment to democratic society, while also fostering a sense of sharing fundamental values. Its purpose is to help make individuals aware of their rights and responsibilities and thus enable them to live in accordance with these rights and responsibilities.

Democratic citizenship can be learnt in many ways, ranging from civics teaching to all the other forms of learning, practising and stimulating participation in society. The process is part of out-of-school education, formal education and informal education.

While priority is given to children and young people, education for democratic citizenship concerns all age groups on a lifelong basis.

## A declaration

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, the Committee of Ministers has adopted a declaration and a programme on education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. The declaration is a non-binding policy document designed to publicise the Council of Europe's strategy and mobilise the efforts of the many different players involved in this field.

## A project

The Education Committee has been running a specific education for democratic citizenship project since February 1997. The project has the backing of the European Ministers of Education and gained further political impetus from the Summit.

It sets out to answer three questions: what values and skills will people need to be full citizens in Europe in the 21st century; how can these values and skills be developed; and how can we learn to pass them on to others, whether children, young people or adults? There



## The sites of citizenship

The sites of citizenship are grassroots projects implemented in local neighbourhoods, youth centres, schools, etc. Their key feature is their participatory nature. Those involved – young people, NGOs and project initiators – define objectives, decide how to go about the projects and carry the projects through. The sites thus reveal democratic processes which enable those involved to find solutions to the problems they face in their daily lives. They show citizens new ways of participating and learning to understand their rights and responsibilities.

The sites also enable the local partners to contribute directly to the Council of Europe project. Through the Education for Democratic Citizenship project, the sites are networked, pool their experience and contribute to a comparative analysis exercise that should enable conclusions to be drawn and answers to the project's three main questions to be found on the basis of actual experience of democracy in action.

The project currently includes sites in Alsace (France), Portugal, Ireland, Belgium and Quebec (Canada). They concern issues such as democratic mediation, social exclusion, intercultural relations, youth participation and community development. New citizenship sites are due to be set up in Croatia, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Albania and Italy.

to projects; and young people's cultures, lifestyles and citizenship.

The project has also included training schemes for teachers and others in a position to spread the word, such as educational and NGO leaders. These more pragmatic activities have involved human rights education, a critical approach to the media and democracy in schools; training courses in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Russia and Ukraine; and the preparation of teaching material.

Lastly, the project is becoming a reference framework for activities in the member countries and in other international organisations. Co-operation with NGOs, the European Union and UNESCO is very close. Examples of good practices that can serve as models are also being gathered and disseminated

are four complementary strands to the project activities, namely analysis of the concepts of democratic citizenship, sites of citizenship (see below), training and support systems and communication and dissemination.

A series of seminars have been held on topics such as the basic concepts and core competences; the concepts and foundations of democratic citizenship in Europe; participation; remembrance and citizenship, from places

## A tight schedule

1998 can be regarded as a year of consolidation of the project. 1999 sees its expansion: the analysis will be taken a stage further, the partnerships will be

## Results to date

The work to date has shown that it is difficult to produce a single definition of citizenship, as it is a multifaceted concept. Democratic citizenship needs a multidimensional approach that links its legal and political dimensions – rights and responsibilities and the operation of pluralist democracy – with its cultural and social ones. Participation is recognised as the key to democratic citizenship.

Partnerships are playing an increasing part in the development of democratic citizenship. Schools are far from being the only bodies that teach people how to be democratic citizens. NGOs, civil society, communities, local authorities and the media all play a crucial part in developing a more participatory democracy.

## Young people's cultures, lifestyles and citizenship

This seminar was held in Budapest from 8 to 13 December 1998. It was prepared jointly on an inter-sectoral basis by those responsible for the Education for Democratic Citizenship project and the Culture Committee's Culture, Creativity and Young People project and by the Youth Directorate. It was attended by 80 participants from all over Europe, half of whom were young people, with the remainder being practitioners and decision-makers. Through workshops, a round table, an information exchange and the presentation of projects, the participants exchanged their ideas on topics such as values and attitudes, relationships, identities on the Internet, young people in the transition countries and "youth culture means good business", and shared their experiences.

Education for democratic citizenship must take account of the personal development and socialisation processes that all young people go through. They themselves mainly want education and youth policies to reflect and build on their own forms of participation in society rather than necessarily instilling in them the values of the existing system. The seminar also showed the advantages of dialogue between the worlds of formal and informal education and between young people, teachers, youth workers and representatives of government departments (education, culture and youth). An example worth following!



strengthened and new graphics will be used to give the project a higher profile.

The conclusions will be drawn at the start of 2000, for presentation to the European Ministers of Education, who will meet in Warsaw in the autumn of that year. As we are dealing here with educational processes that take time to have an effect, some people are

already asking whether a project on education for democratic citizenship can really be completed within only four years.

Visit the Internet site <http://culture.coe.int/postsummit/citizenship> to find out more, propose examples of good practices or take part in a discussion forum. ■

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## Legislative Reform Programme (LRP) – former Soviet Union

The other main priority of the Legislative Reform Programme (LRP) recently has been the “newly independent states of the former Soviet Union” (NIS for short). These activities have been funded the “Matra” programme of the Netherlands, which awarded the LRP an earmarked grant of 1m FF in October 1998 for a series of activities in this region.

Bilateral missions took place in late 1998 in Georgia and Ukraine. These countries are making slow but steady progress in educational legislation. The **Ukraine** mission took the form of a round table with representatives of the Ministry of Education, of universities, and of the Parliament committee on education and science. Following up missions in previous years, the LRP made concrete suggestions for improving the law currently going through parliament. In **Georgia**, the team provided a critique of the framework law on education in force, and argued for recognising the specificity of higher education in a distinct law on higher education. An enjoyable and democratic feature of this mission was a large meeting with professors and students of Tbilisi Technical State University. The largest effort was however devoted to **Russia**. The Minister of Education of the new Russian government is Professor Filippov, formerly Rector of

the University of Peoples’ Friendship and a member of the joint expert group with Unesco that drafted the Lisbon Recognition Convention adopted in 1997. With his help, the LRP drew up an action plan with the Ministry, to be implemented by joint working parties – a step in cooperation beyond the traditional advisory missions. In this format, it has become possible to carry out actual legislative drafting. The first laws tackled have been those on education and higher education. The major issue has been the introduction of European concepts of fairness in access to higher education, especially on the necessary evils of tuition fees (which should, we say, be regulated to protect students) and selective support to student subsistence (which should be allocated on the basis of need, not by academic competition). The Council’s policy Recommendation R (98) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to the member states on access to higher education, the main result of the CC-HER’s big multilateral project on access, has been a key reference text. Creating a clear and fair legislative framework for access will involve amendments not only to the laws but to the Constitution! In 1999 the joint project between LRP and the Russian Ministry of Education is dealing with the equally challenging

issues of federalism and of professional higher education.

**Regional cooperation** among the NIS countries was also successfully launched, on the theme of the policy role of the state in higher education. There are substantial common traditions and shared practices in higher education that make this cooperation feasible, while the CIS framework is not proving effective for the purpose. All these countries are in dire economic straits, and often face political instability as well.

The LRP held a first workshop in Tbilisi in December on standards and quality; a second is planned in 1999 on funding. The Tbilisi meeting went beyond the traditional *dialogue des sourds* between western experts and NIS officials on the obsolescence, or contrariwise the necessity, of detailed state standards for HE curricula. NIS participants engaged in lively and constructive debates on the way forward to a more decentralised and flexible system that is still accountable for meeting society’s needs. Perhaps it is significant that Western policymakers are themselves rediscovering the language of educational standards. ■

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# Violence in schools: awareness-raising, prevention and punishment

Not a day goes by without our newspapers reporting on more or less serious incidents of violence in schools. The public is very sensitive to the issue, and there is general agreement that the prevention and management of violence in schools is the very foundation of any coherent policy on education for democratic citizenship. Nevertheless, as Mr François Dubet stressed in his introductory statement, the overriding tendency is for the condemnation of violence to take the place of analysis and for imprecation to take the place of policy.

That is why the Council of Europe joined forces with the Education Ministry of the Flemish Community in Belgium to organise a European symposium on the subject from 26 to 28 November 1998. Representatives from all of the member states and the various partners involved were able to share their experiences and conclusions in the course of discussions which:

- i. took stock of the situation in all of the states parties to the Cultural Convention with regard to the forms, causes and relative significance of the various aspects of the question;
- ii. highlighted common features and differences in the assessment of the situation in the states in question;
- iii. allowed exchanges of views on the various actions taken, and;
- iv. enabled the broad thrust of an effective strategy to be defined.

The discussions were based in part on a series of over forty case studies concerning schools in particular, the education system as a whole and the entire range of partners concerned outside the education system itself.

As stressed by Mr Gilbert Van Leenhove, a member of the Flemish Parliament, violence in schools is a complex phenomenon that needs to be analysed and demands a firm but measured

response. Even defining the concept of violence in schools is a difficult undertaking, as analysis of the causes must take account of the personal and family background of the pupils concerned, the individual teachers and the features of the schools involved, as well as the direct social environment of the schools, while also considering the role of the media and general trends in the society in question.

Awareness-raising, prevention and punishment must be properly adapted to the actual situations and the real causes of the violence if the action taken is to be effective beyond the short term.

One of the most striking findings of the symposium was that, despite the major differences between the member states in terms of the situation and structure of their education systems, great similarities exist in terms of the trends in the types of violence observed and the strategies adopted to counter them.

The conclusions highlighted a number of key approaches to be taken in the strategies implemented.

There was agreement first of all on the need to analyse the causes of the growth of violence in schools in each case. It is necessary to attack the roots of violence and not simply limit its impact. Each approach or experience is therefore unique.

In particular, it was stressed that although schools are a key environment for responding to violence, they cannot do so in isolation from the social, economic and political context in which they are only one player among others.

Particular emphasis was placed on prevention. As was clearly shown by numerous case studies, this demands that each school has an effective system for managing violence that is based on the development of a climate of

participation, discussion and school citizenship involving all of those concerned, namely the pupils themselves, their parents, the teachers and all of the school's educational and administrative staff.

In other words, priority should be given to bottom-up rather than top-down strategies, even though the central bodies of the education system do clearly have an important role to play in managing the situation and creating the right conditions for such strategies to be developed.

There was also agreement that action confined to schools themselves is inadequate and that it is necessary to foster networking with local partners outside the schools proper in order to involve youth organisations, the police, the courts, the world of work and society in general.

This was the point made by Mr Baldewijns, Minister of Education of the Flemish Community in Belgium, in his closing statement, when he stressed the need for a firm and decisive approach for dealing with immediate problems combined with a long-term policy based on mobilisation of all of the partners concerned in a spirit of openness and co-operation. ■

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# Calendar of Events: August – December 1999

*(N.B. The following list is not exhaustive, but it gives an idea of the many activities in which the Education Department is involved)*

## August

24, Tirana	Training seminar in the framework of the project "Democratic change in Albania"
30-31, Strasbourg	Planning meeting for the Seminar on the European Language Portfolio (Budapest, 7-10 October)

## September

Date to be confirmed, Strasbourg	Conference to initiate the project Democratic Change through school development in "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Velingrad	Education for democratic citizenship: Training course for participants of the site of citizenship in Bulgaria, Part 2 of 3
Krasnoyarsk	Education for democratic citizenship: Training seminar in Russia for trainers on civic education
Strasbourg	Education for democratic citizenship: Expert meeting to create a strategy for the development of sites of citizenship in Eastern and Central Europe
1-4, Neuchâtel	Trainee seminar for teachers "Living together in a same space"
6-8, Cambridge	Meeting for the revision of scales and descriptors in the Common European Framework
9-12, Colle Val d'Elsa	ESSSE – European Secondary School Student Exchanges Training course
11-16, Vilnius	Europe at School – On the threshold of a new millennium: "Europe at School" as a tool to integrate the european dimension of citizenship into the classroom
19-24, Warsaw	In-Service Training Programme for education staff: assessment in civic education
20-25, Irkutsk	National Seminar on "Curricula and standards on history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation"
20-25, Ulan-Ude	One-day Seminar for history teachers in new methods in teaching history in secondary schools (Federation of Russia)
26-28, Bulgaria	Regional Seminar for South East Europe "Higher Education in European Studies: Education for Democratic Citizenship"
30-3 October	Education for democratic citizenship: Training seminar "Education for democracy and European Studies" (EDES) for Croatian multipliers (Croatia)

## October

Rostov on Don	Tbilisi Initiative: Meeting for the Ministers of Education of the Republics of the North Caucasus (Federation of Russia)
6, Budapest	Meeting of the Co-ordinating Group for the European Language Portfolio

7-10, Budapest	Seminar on the European Language Portfolio
11-12, Strasbourg	Education Committee
11-16, Sochi	Regional Meeting of the teams of authors from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Federation of Russia)
14-18, Delphi	Education for democratic citizenship: Seminar on the notions of responsibility
18-22, Donaueschingen	In-Service Training Programme for Educational Staff: 85th seminar: "New technologies in international school projects"
25-26, Strasbourg	2nd consultation meeting for the follow-up to the Conference "Linguistic diversity for democratic citizenship in Europe"
27-31, Budapest	In-Service Training Programme for Educational Staff/Education for Democratic Citizenship: "Learning and teaching for democratic citizenship: critical approaches to the media in civic education"
28 - 29, Sèvres	Education for democratic citizenship: Seminar on "Partnerships"
Oct. or nov., Erfurt	Education for democratic citizenship: Conference on examples of good practice in Germany
Autumn	Education for democratic citizenship: Study visit of the site of citizenship in Croatia
Autumn	Education for democratic citizenship: Study visit of the site of citizenship in Moldova
Autumn	Education for democratic citizenship: Study visit of the site of citizenship in Albania

## November

4-6, Prague	Symposium on "Strategies for educational reforms"
11-15, La Valetta	School links and exchanges "Everyone can make the difference"
15-19, Donaueschingen	In-Service Training Programme for Educational Staff: 86th seminar: "Speaking about the Balkans at school"
15-20, Vladivostok	Japan / Russian Federation Seminar
17-20	Education for democratic citizenship: Education for Democracy and European Studies (EDES) for Romanian multipliers (Romania)
18-19, Strasbourg	Meeting of the Working Party on "Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education"
18-20	Education for democratic citizenship: Conference on "Civic Education in the new democracies" (Slovenia)
25-26, Strasbourg	Meeting of the European steering group for the preparation of the European Year of Languages

30-3 Dec, Dillingen "Migration flows in Europe in the 20th Century" Trainee Seminar for teachers (Germany)

## December

Velingrad Education for democratic citizenship: Training course for participants of the site of citizenship in Bulgaria, Part 3 and last part 4-8, Warsaw

2-4, Thessaloniki Black Sea Initiative: Seminar on the preparation and publication of new history textbooks and 9-10, Geneva

the preparation of a proposed Handbook for history teachers on the methodology of teaching about the history of the Black Sea including the sensitive and controversial issues

Education for democratic citizenship: Conference on Training Policies and Strategies

Meeting of the Working Party on "Social Sciences and the Challenge of Transition"

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### In the next issue:

- 2001 European Year of Languages
- new technologies at school
- history teaching
- general overhaul of the bursary scheme
- lifelong learning
- european studies
- education for democratic citizenship

## Abbreviations

<b>CoE:</b>	Council of Europe
<b>DECS:</b>	Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport
<b>CDCC:</b>	Council for Cultural Co-operation
<b>CC-HER:</b>	Higher Education and Research Committee
<b>UNESCO:</b>	United Nations, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>ECML:</b>	European Centre for Modern Languages
<b>LRP:</b>	Legislative Reform Programme

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