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2022 Review

of the implementation of the
Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education - CM/Rec(2010)7

First

DRAFT **REPORT**

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I. Introduction

1. About the Charter and the RFCDC

The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (hereafter "the Charter") was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2010 and became the first European document addressing the main principles and standards needed to implement education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE) in both formal and non-formal education sectors across the Council of Europe Member states.

The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (hereafter, "the RFCDC") originates in an initiative from Andorra during its Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2013. The Framework is a set of materials that can be used by education systems to equip young people with all of the competences that are needed to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, to participate actively and effectively in a culture of democracy, and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies. With its competence model and descriptors, it provides a systematic approach to realising the principles of the Charter and of the Council of Europe's call for quality education, and to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture, and introducing them into education systems in ways that are coherent, comprehensive, and transparent. The RFCDC is intended for use by education policy makers, especially those working within ministries of education, and by education practitioners in all sectors of education systems, from pre-school through primary and secondary schooling to higher education, including adult education and vocational education.

Conceptual definitions

Since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, a growing trend for a 'values-based' education has become part of the international education agenda. Although there are a variety of definitions around citizenship education and human rights education, for the purpose of this review we will refer to the definitions provided by the Charter:

- **Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC):** According to the Charter, EDC "means education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law."
- **Human Rights Education (HRE)** means "education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human

rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

A short overview of the related terms is provided in Chapter I, along with a brief discussion of the international context in which EDC and HRE have evolved in the last five years.

2. About the review

This is the third review cycle conducted since the adoption of the Charter on EDC/HRE.
The first review of the implementation of the Charter was organised in 2012. It consisted of a report and the conference "Democracy and Human Rights in Action – Looking Ahead. The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education", organised in Strasbourg on 28-29 November 2012 in co-operation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre. The second review cycle was conducted in 2016-2017. This evaluation consisted of a survey for the governments (organised by the Education Department) and a survey for civil society organisations (organised by the Youth Department). The current review cycle started in November 2021 and is intended to finish at the event "The art of Learning Equality, Dignity, and Democracy – Forum on the present and future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe", that will be held in Turin, Italy, on April 11-13, 2022.

This evaluation was designed following three purposes:

1. further strengthening the Charter implementation,
2. supporting the development of strategic goals for the next five years
3. facilitating the development of national indicators/benchmarks/priorities that can allow assessing progress achieved and guiding further action at national and international level.

The review focused on the evaluation of the Charter implementation and the goals established in 2017 after the previous review. Also, the Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights adopted in the result of the second review were taken into account. The RFCDC published in 2018 was considered as well. It is worth noting that the current war in Ukraine started during the data collection phase, which may be reflected in the analysis and main conclusions of this review.

a. Data Collection Methodology

This evaluation was structured upon three main methods of data collection:

a. **A literature review** to map the implementation of the Charter and the overall state of EDC/HRE in Europe over the last five years. The goal was to identify the main trends across countries, as well as the opportunities and challenges that have facilitated and/or hindered the progress of EDC/HRE. A keyword search was conducted on articles and grey literature (e.g., reports, policy documents, working documents, etc.) from the last five years of the following terms: "human rights education"; "citizenship education"; "education for democratic citizenship"; and "competences for democratic culture". The

geographical scope included all the State parties to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe, and the sources analysed were in English and French.

b. **Seven (7) online focus groups.** These were intended to help us collect qualitative data in order to contribute to the triangulation of the findings. The goal was to lead an in-depth exploration to identify examples from policy and practice in EDC/HRE that would help illustrate the review findings and would support the development of recommendations and guidelines for the next five years. Representatives from different sectors were invited to join the online focus groups: public officers, civil society representatives, youth workers, education stakeholders (e.g. teacher associations, student organisations, parent organisations, etc.), and experts in the field of EDC/HRE. The two-hour focus groups gathered a total of 60 participants and were structured as follows:
    - A maximum of 12 participants per session including people from different sectors.
    - Two moderators.
    - Six focus groups in English and one in French.

    All participants were requested to sign an informed consent form before the online session. No personal identifiers were collected or requested, thus ensuring that confidentiality issues were addressed. After each focus group, a summary of the discussion was shared with the participants to collect further feedback. The purpose was to ensure that the data collected reflected the participants' views and to facilitate the triangulation process.

c. **A survey process consisting of four questionnaires** shared online through the SurveyMonkey platform with the following actors:
    - civil society organisations working in the area of EDC/HRE. In addition, some EPAN members who are not directly employed by the education authorities in their respective countries contributed to the questionnaire. Results from this survey are cited as Q[Number]NGO
    - civil society organisations working with youth. Results from this survey are cited as Q[Number]YO
    - policymakers working in governmental institutions and bodies in the area of youth policy (e.g. Ministries of Youth, National Institute of Youth, etc.).
    - members of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) of the Council of Europe.

    The surveys, available in English and French, were shared by the Youth Department at the end of January 2022 to a dissemination list composed of representatives of youth organisations and NGOs. The surveys for members of the CDEDU were shared by mid-February 2022, also in English and French. All four surveys were developed on the basis of the previous questionnaires used during the second review cycle, including also questions related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EDC/HRE. It's worth noting that 40% of NGOs and 30 % of youth organizations who responded to the survey use other international and European EDC/HRE frameworks. Among them are Maastricht Declaration on Global Education, ETS frameworks for youth workers and trainers, UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and other UN human rights treaties on education and World Programme for Human Rights Education.

At the end of the survey period which spanned over a month in all four cases the evaluators downloaded and cleaned the data collected, which resulted in

- 126 replies from youth organisations
- 75 replies from NGOs
- 13 replies from youth policy representatives
- 22 replies from CDEDU members

For the analysis of responses from non-governmental organisations, the weighted average was applied. Every label was assigned a weight, for example, "not at all" (1) "to a small extent" (2) and so on. Considering the large amount of entry points (198 responses), for the purposes of visual clarity and comparability with the previous findings analysis the weighted average was used for every question where responses were related to various degrees of importance. In most cases, the responses of NGOs and youth organisations are presented in the same graph. Only in question 14 the responses of these two groups are combined because of an insignificant discrepancy and the common level of analysis – policies.

Only responses that covered all obligatory questions were calculated above. More details about the respondents are provided in Annex xxx.

b. Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, the review focused on mapping two key areas for EDC/HRE – i.e., provision and quality -, in relation to the implementation of the Charter and the RFCDC. Stemming from these two areas, other sub-areas explored during the analysis were the following:

- Relevance and adaptability of EDC/HRE, especially in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Inclusiveness of EDC/HRE for all learners.
- Sustainability and implementation of EDC/HRE initiatives in formal and non-formal education.
- Capacity-building and co-operation between the main actors involved in EDC/HRE provision.
- Monitoring and evaluation of EDC/HRE initiatives in formal and non-formal education.

In order to address the abovementioned issues, data analysis was framed using three levels of analysis illustrated in Table 1. These levels were used during the analysis to build an *a priori* codebook to categorise data according to the key areas and sub-areas listed above. *In vivo* codes were added during the data analysis process, which refers to emerging issues in EDC/HRE that were not identified beforehand. For the purpose of coding large amounts of data from the literature review, the focus groups, and the surveys, the reviewers used the qualitative data analysis software QSR International's NVivo.

Table 1: Levels of analysis used during the data analysis phase

Policies and practices ● Subsectors of education and training ● Non-formal education	Policy/legal reforms; curriculum development; teacher education; pre-school; VET; higher education; adult education; non-formal education initiatives; etc.
Stakeholders	Government bodies and agencies; civil society organisations (e.g., NGOs, youth organisations, etc.); education and training institutions; networks (regional, local, international).
Transversal levels	Research; evaluation; multistakeholder partnerships and co-operation; tools and methods; emerging topics; COVID-19 impact.

Source: Authors' own.

c. Limitations

A note of caution is due with regards to the limitations of the findings. The review was designed keeping in mind the time constraints and potential challenges that could come up during the data collection and analysis. First, the sources utilised for the literature review were those available online, which means that the reviewers may have missed other sources published in the last five years only in print. Moreover, the reviewers acknowledge that using only the two working languages of the Council of Europe (English and French) may have left out of the mapping a considerable number of resources available in other European languages.

A second limitation is related to the focus groups. All participants were present on a voluntary basis, and though efforts were made to have as many representatives from different sectors as possible, the reviewers relied on purposeful sampling to recruit participants from their own networks, as well as those from the Youth Department and Education Department. The seven groups were created keeping in mind the importance of ensuring gender and geographical balance to obtain data as relevant as possible for all Member states. Finally, though the surveys were intended to collect quantitative data that would help support the analysis of qualitative data, the low number of replies received from the education and youth policy representatives makes it difficult to generalise the findings and compare them with those of previous review cycles. Specific information from these replies is used to illustrate good practices at the country-level and to compare them with the data provided by the non-governmental organisations and institutions. However, the reviewers have refrained from drawing conclusions based solely on the quantitative data collected from policymakers.

Following the structure of the analysed data, the review falls into three (?) parts. First, the review presents an analysis of the main trends observed in relation to the Charter implementation, such as policies and practices, capacity-building, as well as a section on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The policies and practices section encompasses five sub-sections as follows: formal general education and VET; the school community, key actors, and democratic governance; higher education and research; and assessment, monitoring, and evaluation. Then, a discussion of key transversal challenges is offered to complete the findings from the first part. Finally, the review concludes with a discussion of the emerging issues to be considered for the upcoming term, as well as a series of recommendations for improving the Charter implementation process.

II. Mapping the Charter implementation in Europe: Where do we stand?

This chapter is structured around the main areas of action in terms of policy, evaluation, and co-operation as stated in Sections III and IV of the Charter. Moreover, we considered in the analysis the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the promotion and development of EDC/HRE in Europe. Consequently, the following pages are organised in four main sections: 1) Policies and practices; 2) Key transversal issues to consider along the analysis presented in this review; 3) Training and professional development; and 4) COVID-19.

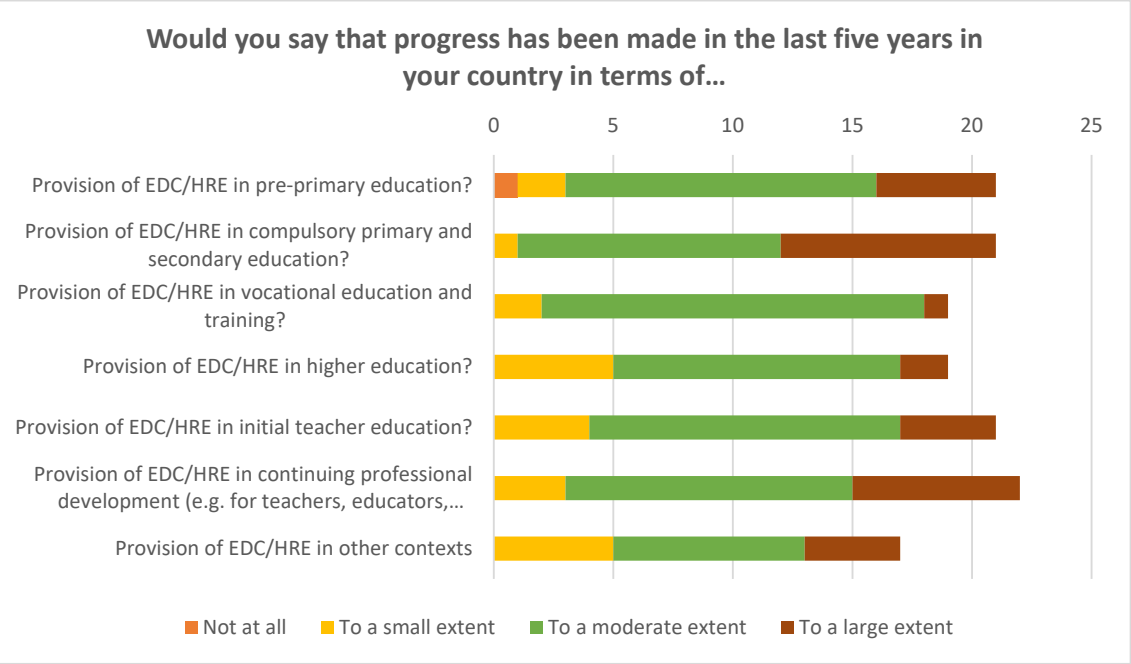
1. Policies and practices

The objectives, principles, and policies set out in the Charter are to guide member states in the design of laws and policies relevant to providing access to EDC/HRE through formal, non-formal, and informal education. Stakeholders involved in the process include policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, educational authorities, civil servants, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), youth organisations, media, and the general public.

According to the report from the last review cycle, until 2016 substantial progress had been made in promoting EDC/HRE in the 40 countries that responded to the survey. However, respondents to both the government and civil society surveys had raised some concerns about the inconsistencies between policies and their implementation (66% of government respondents). Further, countries indicated that little or no reference was made to EDC/HRE in laws, policies, and strategic objectives pertaining vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (Council of Europe 2017). Although the concerns about the policy/practice gap remain, survey data collected for this review reflects a rather positive perception among respondents with regards to the progress made since 2016. About half of the countries (12 out of 22) indicated that EDC/HRE is considered in their education policies to a large extent, whereas eight countries indicated that EDC/HRE is considered to a moderate extent. Further, when it comes to **provision** of EDC/HRE, a positive perception seems predominant about the progress made in the last five years. The key sectors are pre-primary and compulsory primary and secondary education, as well as continuing professional development (e.g. for teachers,

educators, school/university staff); a majority (16) of respondents indicated a moderate progress in provision of EDC/HRE in VET. However, in relation to higher education and initial teacher education (ITE), the replies revealed a rather mitigated perception, as shown on Figure xx below.

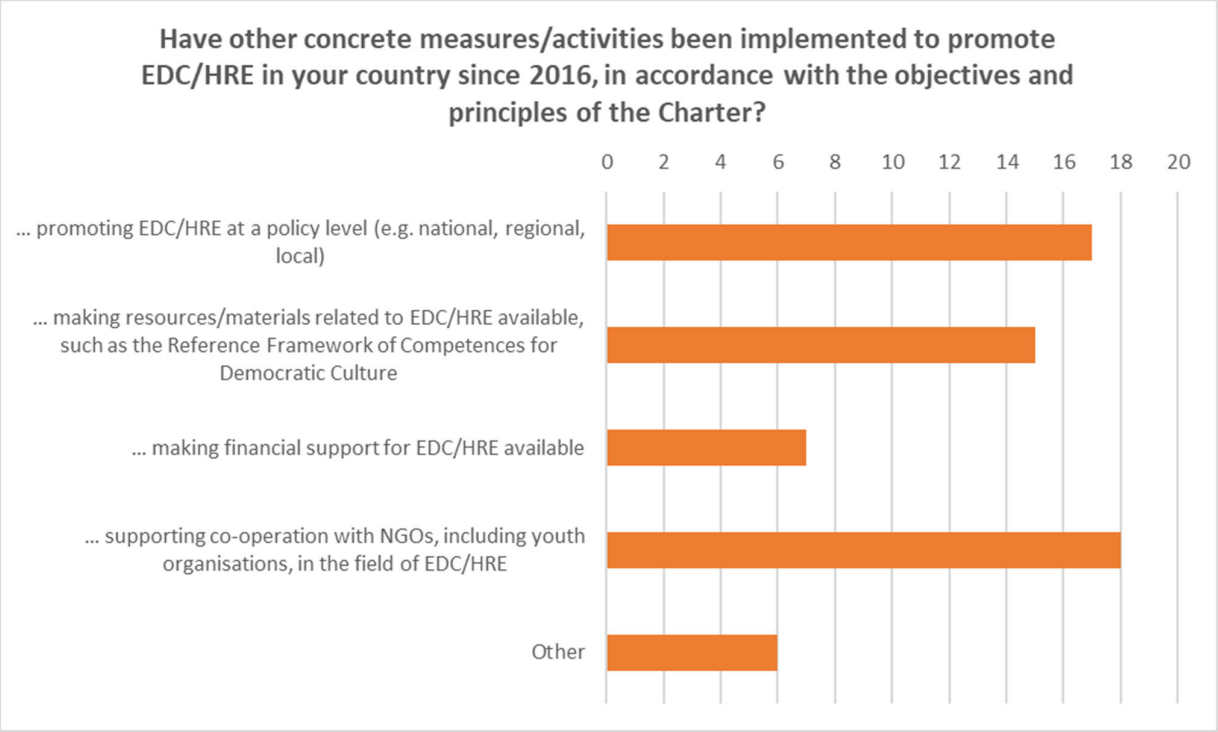
Figure 1: Progress made in the provision of EDC/HRE in the last five years



In terms of **quality** of EDC/HRE, a majority of respondents (18 out of 21) indicated that progress has been made since the last review across educational levels. Some of the examples provided by country respondents to illustrate this trend refer to curricular reforms introducing EDC and/or HRE as a school subject (Slovenia); the development of school projects using the RFCDC (Georgia); the mainstreaming of EDC/HRE in vocational education and training (VET) educational institutions (Armenia); and the implementation of the RFCDC through a whole school approach (Montenegro), to name a few. Although these initiatives reflect that progress is being made to promote EDC/HRE in European education systems it's difficult to assert whether the increase in quality is directly proportional, mostly due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation data specifically focused on EDC/HRE.

In terms of concrete activities and measures implemented in the last five years to promote EDC/HRE (see Figure xxx below), a high number of countries responded positively, notably in terms of promoting EDC/HRE at a policy level (17 replies); making resources/materials related to EDC/HRE available, such as the RFCDC (15 replies); and supporting co-operation with NGOs, including youth organisations, in the field of EDC/HRE (17 replies). Interestingly, respondents to the youth policy survey indicated a positive perception about co-operation with NGOs as one of the key areas of action since the last review.

Figure 2: Measures and activities implemented since 2016 in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter



Data collected outside the surveys point, however, to a persisting lack of policy frameworks or strategies **explicitly** promoting EDC/HRE in European countries. This may be explained partly by the focus on education and training as a means to improve access to employment and citizenship education taking a secondary role in education policy (Pornschlegel and Zels: 2020). Also, while EDC might have been 'boosted' in European Union countries through the progressive adoption of the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Zygierewicz 2021), a systemic approach specifically addressing HRE is still absent in most education policy frameworks. As noted in a study on the state of HRE in Serbia, though HRE as a concept may be present in educational policies, the knowledge about HRE contents and impact in formal general education is very limited, and thus a change in the concept of human rights education in the normative framework is needed to enable the development of comprehensive knowledge, skills, and attitudes in this regard (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 21). Finally, a number of participants from the focus group stated that EDC/HRE "has fallen off the policy agenda" in the last five years, which has had a direct impact on the priority given to EDC/HRE in educational and youth policies. For civil society organisations working with EDC/HRE, this lack of strategy might translate into a multiplication of activities that might often be disconnected between them. For educators and teachers working in formal education, this translates into expanded demands in terms of the curriculum, without providing for the necessary training or additional resources needed to implement the changes required to introduce EDC/HRE at school.

Notwithstanding the lack of explicit EDC/HRE policy frameworks, some examples of 'HRE-friendly' strategies have been developed in the last years, as shown in Box xxx below.

Box xxx: Examples of 'HRE-friendly' policy frameworks

Iceland: In 2021, a policy and action plan on Child Friendly Iceland was adopted in Iceland to further strengthen the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including by strengthening child participation, implementing a child rights impact assessment, and increasing education about the rights of children at all school levels and throughout society. This will also include a development of an integral policy on matters concerning children and young people. The objectives are for public authorities to engage in systematic and frequent consultation with children and young people on education and take their views into consideration in their decision making; to encourage students to influence their education and public debate; and to strengthen democratic competence and active student democracy at all school levels, in both formal and informal learning contexts.[1]

Spain: The new Education Law (LOMLOE, 2020) adopts several approaches that are key to adapting the education system to the demands and challenges of the 21st century. Among these approaches, we find the effective fulfilment of children's rights as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and education for sustainable development and global citizenship, which includes the education for peace and human rights, as well as the prevention of any kind of discrimination or violence. At the same time, the new Law fosters a curricular reform for all educational stages (Early childhood education, Primary and Secondary Education, Baccalaureate) by promoting a competency-based curricular model and holistic learning through active and collaborative action-oriented methodologies. The Law includes an additional provision that states that education for sustainable education and for global citizenship should be considered in the teacher training process and in the access to the teaching profession.

Additionally, respondents to both the educational and youth sector surveys indicated that further measures and activities are planned to continue promoting EDC/HRE in their countries. Some of these measures include the following:

- National Plan for Youth including EDC/HRE in its strategy (Portugal)
- National Pilot Project in schools to foster the implementation of EDC/HRE linked to the RFCDC (Finland)
- The translation of the RFCDC into the national language to make it available to the general public (Germany, Spain)
- Review or development of subject-specific curricula (e.g., Civics, Social Sciences, Ethics, etc.) to strengthen the presence of EDC/HRE (Hungary, Croatia)
- Development of competence-based frameworks including EDC and competences for democratic culture (Andorra).

The following pages provide an overview of the main findings related to key areas of policy action in accordance with the Charter objectives and principles.

[1] Survey for education policy representatives, Council of Europe, 2022

a. Formal general education and VET

According to the Charter, one of the fundamental steps to be undertaken towards the promotion of EDC/HRE is to include it in the **curricula for formal education at pre-primary, primary and secondary school levels as well as in vocational education and training** (Article 7). Moreover, all educational institutions should promote democratic governance and encourage the active participation of the whole school community – including learners, educational staff, parents, etc. – in its governance (Article 8).

As noted previously, respondents to the survey for the education policy sector showed a rather positive outlook on the progress made towards provision of EDC/HRE across educational levels. Higher response rates were "to a moderate extent" for pre-primary (13), compulsory primary and secondary education (11), and vocational education and training (16), whereas higher education, initial teacher education (ITE), and continuing professional development (CPD) gathered mixed replies ranging from a small to a moderate extent. This finding aligns with the results from previous review cycles in which a majority of Member states have reported having in place (or having enacted) laws or policies that support the introduction of EDC/HRE in the curricula either explicitly or through related topics such as civics, education for sustainable development, ang/or global education in primary and secondary school systems.

Even if human rights-related themes are present in the curriculum these are not always explicit in addressing the concept of human rights, and so a note of caution is due. Several authors have studied the relationship between policies promoting EDC/HRE in the curriculum and its integration in schools, observing a loose connection between the written curriculum and the classroom practice (Struthers 2016; Rinaldi 2017; Santibanez 2019). Moreover, as highlighted in the country reports from the Erasmus+ project "Youth for Human Rights"(2018), HRE in formal education curricula usually focuses more on learners acquiring knowledge *about* human rights rather than on developing skills and attitudes *through* human rights (Gavrielides, Nemutlu & Șerban 2018). And while in recent years some countries have taken the initiative to embed EDC/HRE in the curriculum through legal and policy reforms, in other countries such as Poland, Kosovo*, and Greece the provision of EDC/HRE through formal education is far from ensured as reported by participants in the focus groups. This key challenge is discussed in a later section.

In terms of the development of EDC/HRE competences, it's worth noting the influence that the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (European Union 2018) has had at least in the European Union educational systems. Key competences "are those competences all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employment, social inclusion and active citizenship. They are composed of 'knowledge, skills and attitudes' and go beyond the notion of only (academic) 'knowledge'." (European Union 2018: 7); citizenship competence is listed among the eight key competences promoted through the reference framework.

But the shift to a competence-based curriculum is trending among European countries, even beyond the EU. This shift implies moving from an 'input-based' curriculum to a competence-based learning, in which the focus is on learner achievement rather than on the content delivered. Decara, Rask, and Tibbitts (2021) argue that this type of curriculum "calls for curriculum developers to find a balance between understanding content and developing skills, such as critical reasoning and communication. Social-emotional learning also finds a home in the outcome-based approach" (Decara et al. 2021: 13). Moreover, the approach could support non-formal education so that a conscious design of the learning process involves "head (knowledge dimension), heart (attitudes dimension) and hands (skills dimension), taking place in an area between theoretical reasoning and practical experience, and practised in a mix of individual and social forms", thus encouraging a holistic learning experience focused on the individual learners' capacities rather than on delivering content." (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker: 2020: 23).

In this regard, the RFCDC offers a competence framework that encompasses human rights, citizenship, and democracy, showing how EDC/HRE can be integrated into formal education through a competence-based approach. Country replies to the education and youth policy surveys provide some examples of the introduction to the competence-based approach in the curricula from primary through secondary education, including subjects related to EDC/HRE such as active citizenship (Slovenia), civic, ethics, and social education (Romania, Slovakia, and Spain), and competences for democratic culture (Andorra). Some countries have included EDC/HRE as part of the transversal competences in the curriculum (Estonia, Finland), and in others (Montenegro and Romania) countries have also adopted the competence-based approach from pre-primary to university-level education. Latvia included a module on social and civil literacy in adult education and VET. This shift, however, poses the question regarding whether schools, teachers, and educational staff are adequately prepared for it. As part of the last review cycle, the 2017 Conference on the future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe[2] called Member states to take further measures promoting EDC/HRE in particular at pre-school level, VET, and higher education. Nonetheless, in the latest Eurydice report on citizenship education at school (2017), authors concluded that **in comparison to formal general education, citizenship education is given less attention in school-based VET**.

Among respondents to the education policy survey for this review cycle, 16 countries out of 20 indicated that progress has been made in the provision of EDC/HRE in VET. Some of the examples provided by respondents to support this perception point to the introduction of an EDC/HRE-related subject in the VET curriculum (Armenia, Georgia, Estonia) and to an increasing interest in fostering active learners' participation at school (Finland). This outlook is not necessarily supported by data collected through the focus groups: a number of participants indicated that VET schools are "not as open" to including EDC/HRE in the curriculum, and if it does happen it's implicit in subjects related to social sciences. Moreover, teachers in VET schools appear to have even fewer opportunities to access training on these topics in comparison to their peers in formal general education. The unbalanced provision of EDC/HRE in VET could have a stronger impact on vulnerable groups due to the lack of access

[2] https://rm.coe.int/ecit-2017-2-conference-on-the-future-of-edchre-overview/16807161f6

to opportunities for learning. As noted in the study on the implementation for citizenship education in the EU, "for students of vocational education, it is often more difficult to participate in exchange and in projects than for students in universities" (Zygierewicz 2021: 47).

b. The school community: key actors and democratic governance

Schools as learning environments are one of the main contexts in which learning takes place and thus are an essential component to allow access to EDC/HRE to all learners. As Reșceanu, Tran & ÁS (2020) argue, "it is generally considered that certain attitudes, values and competences foster the development of civic awareness and political participation, and that education in school could contribute to the development of such attitudes" (Reșceanu et al. 2020: 149). Therefore, schools as learning environments have a key role to play in particular for students from vulnerable groups (Brussino 2020), by providing them access to learning experiences that involve not only knowledge about EDC/HRE, but also practical experiences in the form of activities involving the school community at large. As such, teachers, educational and administrative school staff, parents, and students themselves are part of the equation and should be considered as key actors in the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to EDC/HRE.

In this regard, the **whole school approach** has the potential to strengthen the presence of EDC/HRE at school, by encouraging democratic practices at all instances of the school community (M. Barrett 2020). Moreover, to foster a participatory and holistic EDC/HRE practice at school, a systemic change is needed so that democratic practices permeate school governance, culture, planning, teaching, learning, and monitoring (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). According to the feedback provided in the education and youth policy surveys, Finland, Montenegro, and Serbia have worked in this direction, helping schools to implement this approach towards building a democratic school culture. In Germany, the ministries of education and local authorities of the Laender (states) have supported EDC/HRE activities in co-operation with schools, NGOs, youth organisations, community groups, etc. A similar experience has taken place in Estonia, where the Kogukonnapraktika (Community practice) offers school students the opportunity to take part in a short internship at a non-profit organisation, also involving teachers in the process; more than 48 schools and 250 NGOs take part in the program to involve nearly 1000 young participants annually. Further examples from the focus group participants show that the RFCDC has helped to implement EDC/HRE in primary and secondary schools using a whole school approach (e.g. Georgia and Turkey). Finally, Amnesty International's Human Rights Friendly Schools[3] are a good example of how participating schools develop a whole school approach by integrating human rights values, principles, and knowledge across different areas such as school governance, school environment, and the school community at large.

Participation of all actors involved in the school community has been extensively recommended to improve school governance (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017).

[3] https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/POL3223342020ENGLISH.pdf

In this regard, respondents to the education policy survey provided some examples of the measures undertaken to foster **student participation** in the school community: in Hungary, students in primary and secondary schools have the possibility to participate in student councils chosen by themselves. In Slovenia, the Children's Parliament programme gives access to approximately 3,000 primary and lower secondary school students annually to learning about democracy and active citizenship. In Iceland, the project of child-friendly communities and rights-respecting schools seeks to encourage democratic competence and active student democracy at all school levels, in both formal and informal learning context. And in Finland, the Basic Education Act, the Act on General Upper Secondary Schools and Act on Vocational Education and Training, establishes that education providers must promote the participation of all pupils and students and to ensure that all students have an opportunity to express their opinions on matters related to students' status; in addition, schools and educational institutions must have a student body.

With regards to other actors from the school community – in particular **parents** and **school leaders** – the data collected paint a somewhat different picture. Though respondents to the youth policy survey indicated that legislation and policies promoting parental involvement in schools are in place (see Figure xxx), when it comes to the existing co-operation between the government and parents' groups the perception tended to be rather negative (Figure xxx). Indeed, co-operation between governmental agencies and civil society organisations, NGOs, and other community organisations was pointed out as a key challenge by the focus groups participants. This observation was made in particular with regards to co-operation with parents and other members of the school community such as school staff, teachers, and school leaders.

Figure 3: Democratic governance perception by youth policy respondents

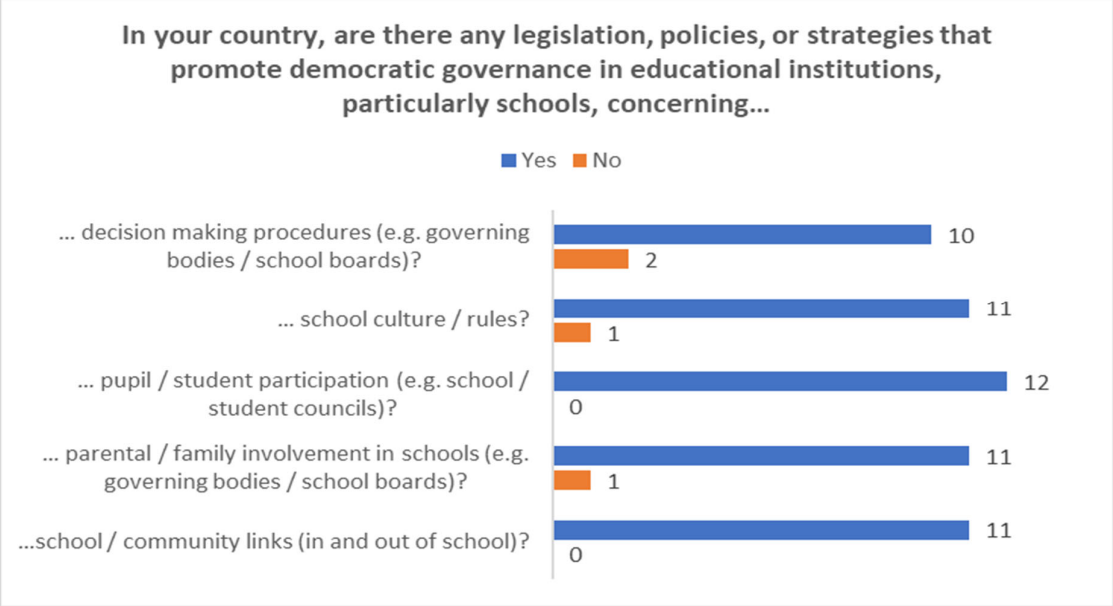
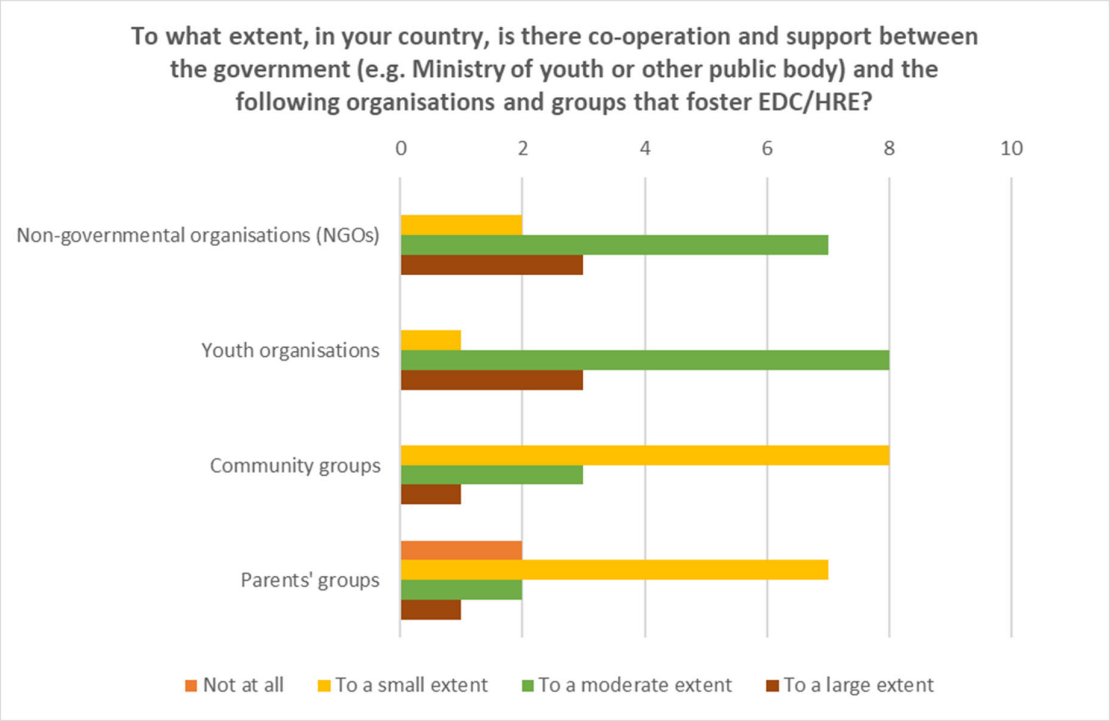


Figure 4: Co-operation between youth policy bodies and organisations and groups fostering EDC/HRE



While in countries where there are high levels of school autonomy in terms of school governance (e.g. Iceland and Norway) a high parental involvement has been observed (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017), in others the task of 'getting parents on board' might result more difficult due to the parents' lack of awareness about topics such as democratic governance or active citizenship (Civil Rights Defenders 2021). Research has highlighted the importance of parental engagement as crucial for building a positive school environment; the lack of awareness might translate into parents holding discriminatory beliefs towards students from minority or vulnerable groups, which in turn affects the possibility of building a truly inclusive school environment (UNESCO 2020a). For participants in the focus groups, this became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic as some of them stated: "schools realised that parents were important to engage…they organised themselves and came together". Moreover, some participants argued that 'parent motivation' is as essential as teacher motivation, and a strong alliance is needed between them. In Romania, the national five-day programme A Different School promotes EDC/HRE by fostering alliances between teachers, students, and parents and allowing schools to replace regular courses with activities that have been organised by the schools based on the proposals submitted by the main stakeholders and other actors, such as authorities, companies or local non-governmental organisations, with the aim of developing students' socio-emotional skills.

As key actors of the school community, **school leaders** have a fundamental role in promoting EDC/HRE at school and in contributing to building a whole school approach. However, data collected about their involvement in EDC/HRE activities or training opportunities is scarce. According to the Eurydice report on citizenship education at school (2017), only 14 European countries provide CPD opportunities to school leaders, encompassing topics such as the

promotion of EDC through the curriculum, democratic culture, and citizenship education as a cross-curricular subject (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). Further, among the country replies to the education policy survey, some countries (e.g. Slovenia, Montenegro) highlighted the training opportunities for school leaders and headmasters including topics such as ethical management. Nonetheless, participants to the focus groups stressed on the importance of providing more learning opportunities for school leaders on EDC/HRE topics and of involving them in the process of creating a more democratic environment at school; as one of the participants stated, "the more democratic competences they have, the better for democracy at schools." The impact of school leaders' involvement in fostering democratic practices at school is paramount, as noted by the OECD (2021); if they fail to support and understand the importance of multicultural education, this could affect the extent to which teachers get involved with diversity and equity issues in the classroom (OECD 2021a).

Teachers play an important role in the provision of quality EDC/HRE in formal general education and VET, as they are at the forefront of the learning process during classroom hours (Santibanez 2019). In the last review cycle of the Charter, one of the key challenges identified was related to "finding the right balance" between avoiding a curriculum overload and having teachers and educators adequately prepared to take on EDC/HRE teaching (Council of Europe 2017). A potential lack of knowledge about the objectives and principles of EDC/HRE as well as useful methods and pedagogical approaches can be addressed by providing appropriate teacher education at an initial level (ITE) and through continuing professional development (CPD) (UNESCO 2020a). Yet research points to the persisting challenge of supporting teachers in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to address EDC/HRE in the classroom (Santibanez 2019). Indeed, the 2017 Eurydice report on citizenship education in Europe highlighted that, even though countries had declared a steady progress with regards to teacher training, only six of them (United Kingdom-England, Belgium-French Community, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Denmark) had a citizenship education specialisation in ITE (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017).

The importance of giving teachers access to learning opportunities, guidelines, and resources to fulfil their role has been widely acknowledged, in particular in relation to human rights and EDC/HRE (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020; UNESCO 2020a; OECD 2021b). Increasingly diverse classrooms have challenged the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to learning, especially due to the intersectional nature of this diversity that encompasses different genders and sexualities, abilities and disabilities, nationalities, socio-economic status, religions, ethnic background, etc. As noted by the OECD (2021b), there are four main trends in the classroom that give a sense of urgency to support and better prepare teachers: first, students from marginalised backgrounds represent an important percentage of those enrolled; second, most teachers are unlikely to have received training about teaching to a multicultural group; third, students from diverse backgrounds have been largely excluded and continue to have lesser academic achievements than their classmates; and finally, research has provided evidence on the positive impact of culturally responsive practices in the classroom (OECD 2021b).

With regards to the provision of relevant training on EDC/HRE for teachers, respondents to

the education policy survey for this review show a positive outlook, as illustrated on Figure 1. Moreover, country respondents shared a series of examples of measures undertaken to support teacher training for EDC/HRE, as described in the Training section. However, data collected from reports from the last five years, as well as qualitative data from our focus groups present a mitigated perception. Country reports from the Erasmus+ project "Youth for Human Rights"(2018) observed that in countries such as Austria, Croatia, and Germany, training opportunities provided are not explicitly addressing contents such as human rights, not to mention EDC/HRE. Further, the 2017 report on citizenship education at school indicated that, in spite of the progress made, there are 17 European education systems that haven't developed regulations to establish the acquisition of citizenship competences through ITE; this was the case even in countries where citizenship education is offered as a single subject in the school curriculum (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). The issue of capacity building for teachers and educators is addressed in a following section in more detail.

The 2017 Eurydice report on citizenship education stated that in primary education, generalist teachers are the ones usually in charge of this topic, except for Belgium (French Community) where a specialised teacher in citizenship education undertakes the task. At secondary level, in most countries teachers specialised in either citizenship education, social sciences, history, geography, and philosophy (among other disciplines) are the ones in charge of the teaching (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). Yet data collected for this review points to a challenge lying in the 'policy to practice' translation of EDC/HRE; teachers are expected interpret the policy and introduce these contents in their lesson plans, regardless of their level of preparation and the support they may receive in the form of guidelines, materials, and resources from the school or the authorities. Hence, the importance of teacher training policies that specifically address the provision of EDC/HRE for teachers in ITE and CPD is crucial to reduce the risk of EDC/HRE being only a 'declarationist' practice at school (Keet 2015; Santibanez 2019).

This 'policy to practice' issue may cause resistance from teachers if they are not fully aware of what's at stake for them and for the school community. As one participant from the focus groups put it, they could prefer to "stick to their subject specific teaching and leave social sciences teachers to deal with EDC/HRE." This is why teachers' involvement not only in training opportunities, but also in the policy design and implementation processes, could help to improve the provision of EDC/HRE at school. It is important, nonetheless, to take into consideration that teachers' perceptions and values may not always align with the values promoted in the curriculum. As noted in a report by Civil Rights Defenders about HRE in Serbia (2021), "the system is set up in such a manner that it is expected that teachers will on their own apply the human rights values in school, there is no question as to their attitudes or prejudices and there is no requirement for them to present various topics in a way that is adjusted to the human rights principles." (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 19). In this regard, exploring the intersection between teacher agency and EDC/HRE can provide more empirical evidence about their professional autonomy and the ways in which they deal with the translation of policies related to EDC/HRE in the curriculum and the school community (Forghani-Arani, Cerna & Bannon 2019).

c. Higher education and Research

Strongly linked to the provision of EDC/HRE for future education professionals, the progress of EDC/HRE in **higher education** was highlighted as an area of particular importance in the recommendations from the last review cycle. This said, higher education institutions (HEIs) are not only crucial to provide EDC/HRE training opportunities to future teachers; they are also main stakeholders in the production of relevant, quality **research** about the provision of EDC/HRE in Europe.

In order to successfully integrate HRE in higher education, a series of measures should be taken in five main areas: 1. Policies and related implementation measures; 2. teaching and learning processes and tools; 3. research; 4. the learning environment, including academic freedom; 5. education and professional development of higher education teaching personnel (Elbers 2020: 53). Indeed, HEIs have a key responsibility in ensuring that learners from all disciplines understand the relevance of acquiring skills that will allow them to act in accordance with human rights principles in their future careers (Jerselius & Helldahl 2017). Also, HEIs are privileged actors at the forefront of research and innovation, and therefore can support education policy makers with up-to-date research on theoretical and empirical aspects of EDC/HRE. This requires, in turn, that teaching and administrative staff at HEIs have access to education and training opportunities relevant to their fields of practice.

Data collected from the education policy survey shows that respondents have a mixed perception about the progress made in terms of provision of EDC/HRE in higher education. Out of 19 replies, 12 countries indicated that progress had been made to a moderate extent, whereas five respondents stated that it had been to a small extent. In comparison to the last review cycle, this is a rather positive outlook; over a third of government respondents (14 out of 40) had stated that there were scarce or non-existent references to EDC/HRE in laws, policies, and strategic objectives higher education. One of the factors that could explain the mixed perception is that, given that HEIs enjoy high levels of autonomy in most European countries, governments have a limited control over the provision of EDC/HRE in university-level curricula. Often HEIs include the commitment to human rights values in their mission statements, but it's difficult to assert whether these intentions translate into concrete actions to increase the provision of EDC/HRE within their academic programmes. Box xxx provides some examples from respondents to the survey for this review illustrating initiatives undertaken to promote EDC/HRE in higher education backed by the government.

Box xxx: Country examples of higher education initiatives in EDC/HRE

Bulgaria: EDC is a subject in the curriculum; at the university level, specialist teachers are prepared to work as educators on citizenship education.
Montenegro: The Ministry of Education, Ethical Committee, Agency for Quality Insurance in Higher Education ethical boards within HEIs academic staff and students have developed tools and capacities to implement the Law on Academic Integrity.
Malta: At higher education levels the National Quality Assurance Framework is being revised and the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority is working on Guidelines for

Ethics and Value at HEIs. **Slovenia:** The Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2030 is in the adoption process in the parliament. It comprehensively addresses the field of higher education, in particular with a view to raising the level of quality of higher education in Slovenia.

Moreover, data from the evaluation of the implementation of the Third Phase of the World Programme for HRE (OHCHR) provide further examples of practice from European countries (e.g. Finland, Georgia, Germany, and Sweden), which reported that human rights are included in HEIs as part of degree programmes in law, social sciences, or humanities (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020). Country reports from the Erasmus + project "Youth for Human Rights" (2018) also mapped the existing trends on HRE in HEIs, and stressed on the need to raise awareness about the importance of providing access to EDC/HRE for all learners, regardless of their discipline (Gavrielides et al. 2018). In a study conducted in the Western Balkans (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia), a survey conducted in faculties from these countries showed that there are some opportunities to study specifically human rights and HRE in the region. At the bachelor's level, a number of faculties offer a course on Human Rights, generally as an elective in the curriculum. At the master's level, it is possible to find human rights and related courses in the curriculum, often in the public law field (Civil Rights Defenders 2021).

One of the flagship initiatives concerning collaboration between HEIs in Europe in the field of HRE is the European Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation (EMA).[4] Launched in 1997 with the support of the European Union, this programme counts today over a 100 universities and human rights centres across Europe, including campuses in Venice (Italy), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Yerevan (Armenia).

As already stated, HEIs have a responsibility not only towards providing access to EDC/HRE to future professionals, but also in fostering relevant research to support evidence-based policy making in this regard. A study conducted by the European Commission on the implementation of citizenship education (Zygierewicz 2021) highlights the need to "bridge the gap" between the abstract and concrete aspects of citizenship education– which reminds the policy and practice gap in formal general education and training discussed before. Although there is a growing support for this topic across member states expressed in curricular reforms, projects, and programmes, more research is needed to understand the current gaps and avenues for improvement, in particular at the school level. According to Zygierewicz (2021: 27), there are three pivotal issues that should be tackled through research on curriculum development, teacher practice, and professional development:

1) Controversial issues: in many countries the debate about the content of citizenship education generates strong tensions: in policy, in society, and in the classroom.
2) Democracy: learning about democracy and experiencing democracy should be at the heart of citizenship education.

[4] https://gchumanrights.org/education/regional-programmes/ema/about.html

3) National and international orientation: balancing the national and international orientation is the challenge for policy on citizenship education and teaching citizenship in the classroom.

These claims are supported by data collected through other sources, which point to the need of more research at the national and regional level and the sharing of experiences about EDC/HRE at the policy level. Focus group participants were keen to highlight the importance of "fresh" research on the challenges to the implementation of EDC/HRE at school, as well as on the use of the RFCDC in formal education and teacher training. In this regard, there are some recent studies that have mapped the presence of human rights and HRE in education and training in Sweden[5] and Switzerland.[6] In France, a study conducted by the National Council for School System Evaluation (Cnesco) in 2016 provided an overview of citizenship education policies practices at school (Bozec 2016). Finally, Boiarsky et al. (2020) reported on the research activities of the Eastern European Network for Citizenship Education (EENCE) in the Eastern Partnership region and in Russia, including topical research on citizenship education in the country members.

For the purpose of this review, we analysed the academic works published between 2017-2021. During this period, the number of studies in these areas has significantly increased due to the presence of EDC/HRE issues in the international development agenda – the SDGs (Grosseck, Țîru & Bran 2019; Pashby et al. 2020). Publications encompass the conceptualisation of HRE in different contexts (Diaz Abraham 2017; Tibbitts & Keet 2017; Vesterdal 2019) and the interrelationship between GCED and HRE (Monaghan & Spreen 2017; Zembylas & Keet 2019; Tracchi 2020). Moreover, research on RFCDC and the concepts presented within the framework is mostly authored by RFCDC contributors (Barrett 2020; Barrett & Byram 2020; Barrett 2021; Gallagher 2021). Other studies analyse RFCDC's applicability for the development of intercultural competences and communication, mainly through learning foreign languages (Jäger 2018; Freitas 2019; Byram 2020a; Byram 2020b; Simpson & Dervin 2020). Two studies look critically at the RFCDC and analyse the framework narrative, pointing out certain contradictions that should be taken into consideration when applying the model (Simpson & Dervin 2019; Zembylas 2020). There is a significant research gap on the implementation of RFCDC for the development of competences for democratic culture in various contexts and on different levels of education. While the framework was mainly aimed at formal education, it is also extensively used by non-formal education actors since EDC/HRE is mostly implemented by NGOs. Gathering data on RFCDC implementation across sectors would allow revealing its successes and shortcomings that can then be systematically addressed.

Available research confirms the growing number of references to citizenship education in the national curricula worldwide (Russell & Suarez 2017; UNESCO 2018). At the same time, as researchers point out, in some European countries these policies envisage only learning about political institutions and procedures in terms of one subject at school that is often selective (Missira 2019). The academic studies demonstrate that access to continuous, engaging, and

[5] https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Education/Training/thirdphase/NationalReports/sweden.pdf
[6] https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Education/Training/thirdphase/NationalReports/switzerland.pdf

transformative EDC/HRE is crucial for the inclusion of all in the political process; without such an approach to EDC/HRE, education can lead to the reproduction of existing inequalities (Daniels 2018; Hoskins & Janmaat 2019; Struthers 2021). A large body of research deals with the issue of the translation of EDC/HRE policy norms into practice on several levels – from the international to European, European to national, and from the national level to the classroom. European policies often pave the way for the transformative and empowering EDC/HRE on the national or regional level (Abs 2021; Loobuyck 2021). European norms can serve as concrete quality criteria for citizenship education. The advocates of EDC/HRE refer to these criteria for the promotion of EDC/HRE on the national level (Albanesi 2018). Lack of international co-operation in the area of EDC/HRE may lead to citizenship education focused on formal knowledge and the purely national dimension of citizenship (Daniels 2018; Hoskins & Janmaat 2019; Missira 2019). European co-operation in the field of education on the issues of relevance for the whole region, such as migration, is essential for addressing the common challenges (Osler 2020).

As for the translation from the national to the classroom level, teacher training both in terms of pre-service and in-service teacher education remains the biggest challenge (Missira 2019). Now and then the researchers report that countries use the good practices discovered in the curricula of other countries without taking into consideration the local context and the corresponding mechanisms of policy implementation, such as the educators' capacity-building (Hartong & Nikolai 2017). The same is relevant for EDC/HRE policies. Even in the countries where EDC/HRE is integral to the curriculum, educators report that they lack understanding of various concepts used in the policy texts and skills to apply formally suggested methodologies (Husser 2017; Robinson 2017; Biseth & Lyden 2018; Santibanez 2019; Weinberg & Flinders 2018). Another important mechanism of EDC/HRE policies implementation concerns capacity-building on the institutional level (Feu et al. 2017; Leek 2022).
Recent scholarship brings forward the idea of transformative EDC/HRE, based on critical thinking (Hyslop-Margison & Thayer 2009; Monaghan, Spreen & Hillary 2017; Zembylas & Keet 2019)**.** The transformative approach implies the reflective and participatory methodology that fosters the awareness about and the ability to act on EDC/HRE-related issues in the actual realities of the learners (Monaghan et al. 2017; Zembylas & Keet 2019). Among the new approaches are the decolonisation agenda (Zembylas 2018; Stein 2021) and racial discrimination awareness (Bajaj, Katz & Jones 2021). The authors suggest looking at the non-Western paradigms of civic action and participation to see how citizenship education can be made relevant for non-Western communities (Kovalchuk & Rapoport 2018). A key persisting issue is, however, the lack of data on the international or regional European level regarding the state of EDC/HRE in general and, in particular, concerning young people.

Teacher education has traditionally been one of the core areas of research in EDC/HRE. At the same time, the emergence of transformative HRE has led to the looming notion of agency (Bajaj 2019). The current tendency is to see the professional development of teachers not only as a formal capacity-building that enables them to convey EDC/HRE basics in the classroom but as developing their agency as actors of social change (Biseth & Lyden 2018; Jerome 2018; Kasa et al. 2021). Researchers pay attention not only to the formal knowledge

of teachers, but to their general views on citizenship (Knowles 2018; Weinberg & Flinders 2018), their moral and civic competences (Kuusisto & Tirri 2019), and their perspectives on the EDC/HRE-related issues that they encounter in the classroom (Rinaldi 2017). These studies emphasize the necessity to train teachers to reflect on their values, attitudes, and teaching practices to empower them to professionally respond to the emerging issues in the classroom, as well as to continuously develop competences of their students.
Another area of interest in EDC/HRE is secondary schools (Coysh 2017). A current trend is to look at EDC/HRE throughout primary education (Yamniuk 2017) to secondary levels. The studies conclude on the relevance of EDC/HRE throughout school education and the pertinence of many EDC/HRE issues for the everyday life of students from an early age. There is a growing number of studies on the whole school approach (WSA), that confirms the effectiveness of the WSA for addressing, for example, bullying (Lester et al. 2017), fostering sustainable development (Mogren, Gericke & Scherp 2019; Bosevska & Kriewaldt 2020), inclusion (Roberts & Webster 2020; Carrington et al. 2021), professional development and well-being of the staff (Young, Cavanagh & Moloney 2018; Lester et al. 2020), as well as students' learning (Goldberg et al. 2019). There is, however, a scarcity of research addressing the challenges of the WSA implementation and its contextualisation within concrete education systems (Restad 2020) and educational institutions.

While there is a paucity of studies on the involvement of parents at earlier stages of education, there is a well-established body of research on parental involvement at schools (Duman, Aydin & Ozfidan 2018; Wei et al. 2019). The scholarship concludes that the involvement of parents matters for two main reasons. First of all, strengthening partnerships with parents on the school level supports students' academic success, as well as their well-being at school (Wilson & Gross 2018). The scholarship confirms that parental and community support is an essential input for successful EDC/HRE interventions at schools (Chiba et al. 2021). Secondly, safety and inclusiveness of the school environment are highly important factors for parents' understanding of the quality education for their children (Duman et al. 2018). Involving them in school life contributes to the quality of education as they see it. From the reports published by the international education organisations we now know that the increasing pressure on parents, as well as the issues of communication between teachers and parents, has been one of the biggest challenges in terms of the COVID-19 (UNESCO 2020b). In the academic field, however, this highly important issue that once again demonstrates the value of parental involvement so far has not been sufficiently addressed.

Higher education has traditionally been one of the prominent focus areas in EDC/HRE studies since scientists have easier access to higher education institutions and combine the research with the teaching practice (Aydin & Cinkaya 2018; Dias & Soares 2018; Cargas 2020; Vissing 2020). The results of their studies allow us to conclude that there is a global trend of integrating EDC/HRE in courses in the legal, social, political and medical domains, though the content and approaches differ (Vissing 2020). Universities do not fulfil their potential in bringing forward EDC/HRE research (Cargas 2020). The authors call for the integration of civics in the academic curricula beyond specific subjects (Dias & Soares 2018) and in the capacity-building for the university staff to assure that students do not only learn about social issues but are also able to address them (Bezbozhna & Olsson 2017; Mulà et al. 2017).

The empirical domain of the EDC/HRE research also deals with the new formats of its implementation. Researchers are looking into the opportunities that technological advances bring for the achievement of EDC/HRE goals. They emphasize that the use of digital tools does not only strengthen the ICT-related competences, but also the fundamental civic competences that can be found in the curricula across Europe (Vaitsekhovska et al. 2020). The possibility to reach anyone in the world with Internet access supports intercultural exchange and the achievement of certain GCED outcomes for learners in the online environment (O'Dowd 2020; Rapoport 2020; Celume & Maoulida 2022). Massive open online courses (MOOCs) serve their purpose of providing information on EDC/HRE issues to a big number of learners (Gómez-Zermeño 2020; Hajdukiewicz & Pera 2020).
Due to a growing interest in the digital engagement of youth, the political influence of social media and digital human rights issues, such as surveillance, digital citizenship gained traction in the research (Fernández-Prados, Lozano-Díaz & Cuenca-Piqueras 2020; Richardson, Martin & Sauers 2021). Researchers claim that effective democratic citizenship education with an emphasis on participation can only be conducted with the inclusion of the digital citizenship element (Choi & Cristol 2021). Teaching about inequalities today and their role for democracy is irrelevant without taking into account digital inequalities (Swarts 2020; González-Betancor, López-Puig & Cardenal 2021). Years before COVID, it was through a digital citizenship education perspective that the digital gap among students was clearly identified (Atif & Chou 2018). The relevance of digital citizenship education is also reflected in the scope of the published studies that cover all levels of education – policies (Krutka & Carpenter 2017), pre-primary (Lauricella, Herdzina & Robb 2020), primary (Walters, Gee & Mohammed 2019), secondary (Gleason & von Gillern 2018), and tertiary education (Al-Abdullatif & Gameil 2020; Campillo-Ferrer, Miralles-Martínez & Sánchez-Ibáñez 2020). The main conclusion that can be drawn is that digital citizenship approaches are essential for preparing students of all ages to use technology ethically and responsibly. To achieve these goals, educators need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

d. Assessment and Evaluation

Member states should, on the one hand, develop criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of programmes on EDC/HRE considering learners' feedback as an integral component (Art. 11). On the other, strategies and policies for the implementation of the Charter should be evaluated, either within or in co-operation with other Member states (Art. 14). In this regard, student assessment in formal general education as well as monitoring and evaluation of EDC/HRE initiatives in formal and non-formal education are key areas of policy action.

Since the launch of the RFCDC, a series of guidance documents have been published to support its implementation, including **learners' assessment** in formal settings and evaluation of education systems, institutions, or programmes (Barrett 2020: 36). A crucial aspect of the learning process, assessment can help to 1) obtain information about the learning process as a whole and about the individual progress of each learner; 2) to support learners in understanding the objectives and methods used in the assessment, so that they take ownership of their own learning process; 3) to increase the attention paid to the

acquisition of competences for democratic culture through the assessment itself; and 4) to encourage the involvement of learners' parents or caregivers in the learning process (Barrett 2020: 34). Evaluation can provide useful insight on the effectiveness of policies and programmes on EDC/HRE, which is fundamental for their sustainability and to identify avenues for improvement.

However, when it comes to assessing learners' competences in EDC/HRE there is a catch. Without clearly defined learning goals, the task of appraising knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values can quickly turn into checking boxes rather than actually identifying learners' progress in these competence areas. Hence, it is essential to establish the basis of a clear understanding about the concepts to be assessed in relation to skills, attitudes, and more specifically, values (OECD 2021c). In this regard, the RFCDC establishes that "[The RFCDC] descriptors cover only those values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and understanding which are learnable, teachable and assessable" (Council of Europe 2018: 12), addressing right away two main issues related to the assessment of values-based education: first, the so-called "fuzziness" attributed to soft skills; and second, the reticence to the idea of grading democratic competences (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker: 2020: 13). Indeed, there is an underlying calling in the RFCDC for a holistic assessment, in which learners take ownership of their own learning process and educators have the possibility to review and readjust their teaching practice accordingly.

During the last review cycle, the findings revealed the need to develop systematic formal assessments for the effective implementation of policies related to EDC/HRE, so as to "reinforce the status of such education, and give it a solid position in the curricula" (Council of Europe 2017). Since then, some progress has been made in this regard as observed by the Eurydice report on citizenship education (2017). By the time the report was published, almost two thirds of the European education systems evaluated (26 countries) had central-level guidelines for teachers on recommended methods for classroom assessment applicable to citizenship education. Among the methods for assessment mapped across countries there were 'traditional' ones (e.g. multiple-choice quizzes) and 'alternative' ones (e.g. project-based assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, reflective diaries, portfolios, etc.) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). The Eurydice report also highlighted that, when it comes to national examinations in citizenship education, 17 countries would administer them at some point in formal general education, usually before awarding a certificate or progressing to the next stage of education. In eight countries (Belgium [Flemish Community], the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, France, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Finland) these national examinations provided data "to evaluating the education system as a whole and/or evaluating individual schools in order to inform improvements in teaching and learning in the area of citizenship education and not to make decisions on student progression" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 13).

In terms of the instruments and tools used for student assessment, it is worth noting that national examinations are often subject to criticism in the area of EDC/HRE. As noted by the Eurydice report, this form of standardised testing has a "tendency to assess only a part of the knowledge and skills targeted by the curriculum, which may result in the undesirable effect of

the narrowing of the curriculum taught to students" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 110). The report argues, however, that such tendency could be reversed by asking students to perform 'authentic tasks', for example in the form of a project-based assessment that will allow the student to demonstrate their progression in the development of skills and attitudes relevant to citizenship education (Ibid). A focus group participant emphasized that countries should be "careful" in implementing national examinations to assess learners' attitudes; a preferred approach is to encourage young people to learn "how to deal with others in a democratic way, rather than comparing their attitudes towards democracy."

As mentioned before, classroom assessment for citizenship education could rely either on traditional or more 'alternative' methods, which are generally deemed more appropriate to assess learners' competences on this area (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). Self- and peer-assessment appear to be among the most used methods, which is also a trend in non-formal education as indicated by the replies to the surveys for NGOs and youth organisations for this review. Teacher observation of students' behaviour appears to be suitable for classroom assessment in primary education, whereas in secondary education other methods such as written assignments, oral presentations, and portfolios are often recommended to teachers (Ibid).

Much like in the last review cycle, the findings of this review reveal that assessment in EDC/HRE remains an area for further improvement. While there has been progress as described in the last Eurydice report, very little information is made available by countries in this regard, in particular with regards to student assessment in VET. Undoubtedly, assessing learners on the development of democratic competences is a difficult task (Barrett 2020; OECD 2021c; Zygierewicz 2021), but recent guidelines to support the implementation of the RFCDC as well as evidence gathered through research focused on this issue could offer the possibility to overcome the challenge (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker 2020).

An important aspect of policy making is the **evaluation** of the strategies put in place, and the implementation of the Charter is no exception. Countries are encouraged to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of the EDC/HRE measures implemented so far in either education or youth policy. If assessments inside the classrooms can provide important insights on how learners are progressing in the development of democratic competences, external evaluations can inform policy makers about the quality of the EDC/HRE provided and the ways in which it can be improved. As noted by the Danish Institute of Human Rights on the Draft Action Plan for the Fourth Phase of the WPHRE, strong monitoring and evaluation systems in this area are a way to "contribute to a stronger commitment from the state and its educational institutions to fulfil HRE obligations…this will provide an evidence-base for improved planning and implementation of HRE initiatives and associated resource allocation".[7] The evaluation of the implementation of the WPHRE is an example of nationwide evaluations conducted specifically in the area of HRE. A further example of a framework for evaluating HRE at the national level is presented in Box xxx.

Box xxx: Examples of evaluation frameworks for EDC/HRE

[7] https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Education/Training/fourthphase/Danish_Institute_for_Human_Rights.pdf

The Human Rights Education Indicator Framework: This resource is a suggested framework of indicators, or measurements, to examine the presence and quality of human rights education policies and practices. It is a tool to support civil society organisations, national human rights institutions, and government bodies, as well as United Nations mechanisms (treaty bodies, human rights committees and special procedures) to monitor the implementation of human rights education. The framework aims to support a review of the status of human rights education within national planning, the formal education sector, and the training of professional groups. It is a means of understanding the scale and quality of such practices and identifying gaps and areas for improvement.

Source: Human Rights Education Indicator Framework, 2015

The last Charter review showed that only over a half of the country respondents (55%) had implemented evaluations of strategies and policies in accordance with the aims and principles of the Charter. In this regard, one of the key recommendations was to develop a more coherent and consistent approach to assess the progress made in the area of EDC/HRE, and to support the data collection process. An important challenge reported was that gathering information from various actors was difficult due to the lack of established channels of communication and the absence of planning with regards to data collection (Council of Europe 2017). Since 2017, the situation hasn't changed substantially. Research on this matter has underlined the lack of monitoring and empirical data on the quality of citizenship education, as well as a lack of common evaluation criteria and/or benchmarks across countries (Bozec 2016; Pornschlegel and Zels: 2020). This trend appears to be confirmed by participants to the focus groups, that highlighted the need to have also "non-official" monitoring and evaluation processes to corroborate what governments are reporting on the access and quality to EDC/HRE.

Participants displayed mixed perceptions about the usefulness of evaluation for EDC/HRE. While some advocated for more research and evaluation to build evidence for policy making – in particular if EDC/HRE is competing with other areas in education -, others warned that evaluation of institutions and programmes should steer away from the "checkbox approach", in favour of more participatory methods. Most participants agreed on the usefulness of having reliable and timely information, and some stressed on the importance of involving the whole school community in the process. However, in countries like Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland recent education policies related to the implementation of EDC/HRE still lack of monitoring and evaluation strategies.

According to the Eurydice report on citizenship education (2017), evaluations at the school level on this topic could be conducted in five main areas: 1) classroom teaching; 2) school/classroom climate; 3) student involvement in school life; 4) parental involvement in school life; and 5) relationships with the local community (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 123). The report's findings showed that in most countries that lead external school evaluations, at least four of these areas are covered; student involvement in school life is the most often measured, and relationships with the local community the least. Among the methods countries use to evaluate the quality of citizenship

education at school, the Eurydice report provides several examples: document analysis (e.g. integration of citizenship education in strategic documents such as the school programme, Germany); the involvement of school leaders, parents, and students in school initiatives related to citizenship education (France); and the monitoring of the school targets on school climate (Netherlands). Moreover, education authorities might commission an "ad hoc" inspection to evaluate specific aspects related to citizenship education at school (Czech Republic) (Ibid: 26).

Respondents to the education policy survey for this review provided some examples of recent initiatives that seek to redress the lack of monitoring and evaluation systems for EDC/HRE in their countries. Currently Latvia is developing an Education Quality Monitoring System, which will be based on statistical information, the results of comparative research, indicators of state level students' achievements and other indicators of education institutions' work, centralized examinations, accreditation / licensing, teachers' work quality, considering mid-term and long-term strategical goals and results. This System will provide a comprehensive contribution to policy planning and implementation, including regarding education for sustainable development and global education. In Slovenia, more thorough monitoring and assessment of the progress in EDC/HRE will be conducted on the basis of the results of the upcoming International Civic and Citizenship Education Study - ICCS 2022. In Bulgaria, the criteria for quality assessment prepared by the National Inspectorate for Education Effectiveness of the interaction for personal development of children and students include the following indicators: Developing social and civic competencies; Development of learning skills; and Development of skills in children and students for teamwork self-assessment, self-criticism, and self-improvement. School inspections are carried out to evaluate their effectiveness and quality looking into aspects such as compliance of the topic, content, and duration of the training; resource provision (human and material); and training methods.

The results from the youth policy survey, however, paint a slightly different picture. When asked if any action has been taken or foreseen to monitor and evaluate strategies and policies on EDC/HRE, six respondents stated not knowing whether this was the case, and five indicated that no actions have been taken or foreseen. The results from NGO and youth organisations surveys show a similar trend, where a majority of the respondents *don't know* whether the quality education criteria in their country include EDC/HRE (see Figures xx and xx below).

Figure 5: Quality education criteria including EDC/HRE

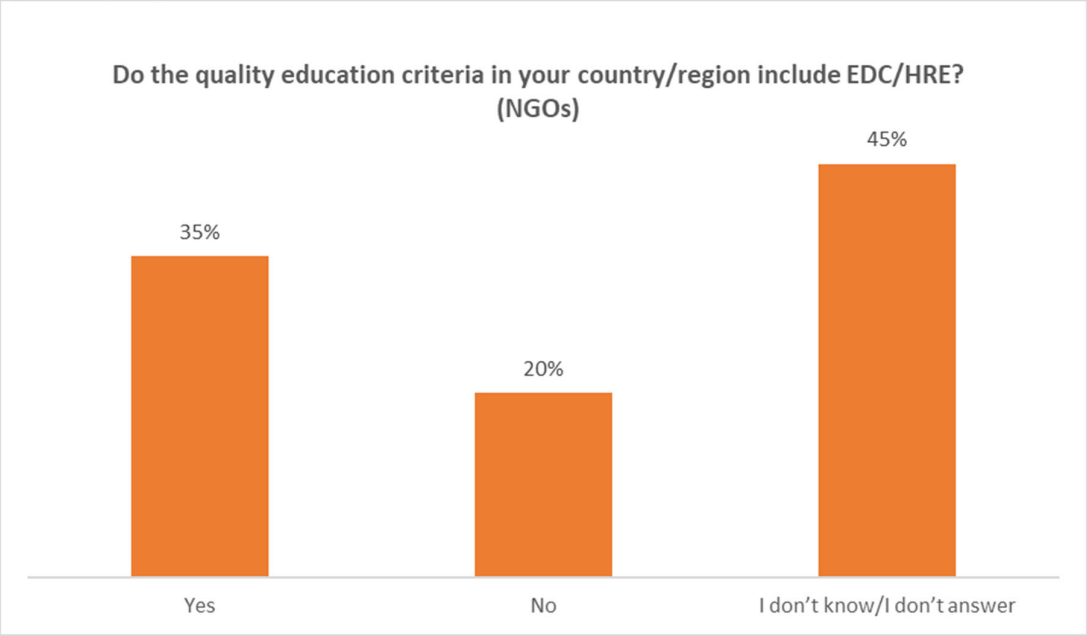
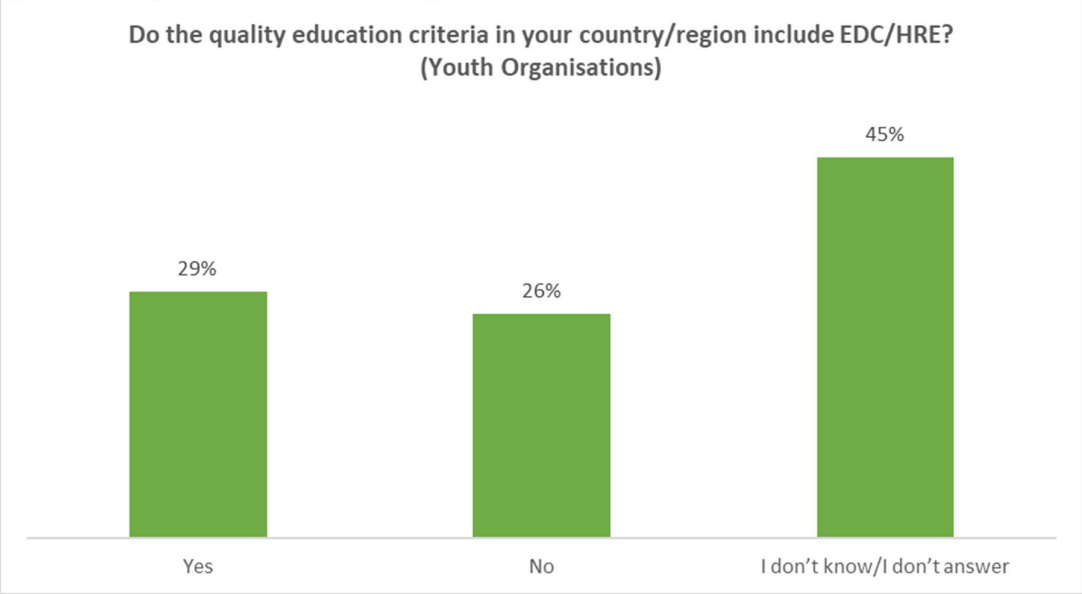


Figure 6: Quality education criteria including EDC/HRE



Further comments provided by the respondents to the NGO and youth organisations surveys shed more light into the current situation. Factors that might influence the availability of data are the political organisation of countries (centralised/decentralised); the breadth of the existing evaluations (e.g. more superficial or detailed levels); and whether EDC/HRE concepts are explicitly mentioned in the curriculum.

Another important aspect of evaluation in EDC/HRE is internally appraising the quality of the initiatives delivered by NGOs and youth organisations. When asked whether they have clear procedures and criteria to evaluate the quality of EDC/HRE initiatives, the surveys yielded

slightly different results. While an average of 43% of NGOs stated they do have procedures and criteria for evaluation, only about a third of youth organisations do so. It's worth noting that almost a third of the respondents from youth organisations do not know whether procedures and criteria for evaluation have been developed in their institutions. In terms of the methods and sources used for the internal evaluations, respondents highlighted the following: document analysis; questionnaires; quality criteria checklists; written and/or oral feedback; focus group with stakeholders; and ex-post impact assessments of the activities implemented. This is a potential area for further improvement in the upcoming review cycle, as part of the overall development of monitoring and evaluation systems for EDC/HRE.

2. Key transversal challenges to the implementation of the Charter on EDC/HRE

As part of the analysis conducted for this review, we identified several challenges that may be considered as transversal to the policy implementation process in EDC/HRE. These challenges reveal persisting issues in terms of access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups, conceptual discrepancies, specific contextual factors, collaboration between across and within sectors, and funding. Such issues may sound relevant to different degrees for each country, and their impact on the implementation of the Charter may be more or less visible across education policy systems. Nonetheless, they should be taken into consideration along the main findings of this review in order to think of the ways in which countries can learn from each other and share good practices with a view to develop strategic goals and actions for the next five years.

a. Access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups

The provision of EDC/HRE to vulnerable groups is an important area where the policy/practice gap became visible in this review. Although most respondents both to the survey for education policy representatives (21) and the youth policy bodies (12) stated that measures and activities put in place in the last five years have ensured that vulnerable groups have access to EDC/HRE, data collected from the focus groups points into a different direction. Box xxx presents some examples shared on legal and policy frameworks in formal education that explicitly include learners from vulnerable groups – e.g., students with special education needs, students from minority groups, etc.

Box xxx: Examples of existing legal frameworks regulating access to education for all learners

In **Slovenia**, the curricula documents comprising and focusing on EDC/HRC address all pupils and students in the educational system (pre-primary schools, primary and lower-secondary schools, upper-secondary school), in line with the provisions of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, determining the following goals of the educational system:

- provision of optimum development possibilities for the individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or invalidity.
- provision of equal educational opportunities for children from underprivileged social environments.

- provision of equal educational opportunities for special education needs children and adults.

In **Latvia**, access to education and curriculum, including EDC/HRE is available to everyone. Pursuant to Article 3.1 of the Education Law, a prohibition of differential treatment is stipulated, thus guaranteeing the persons referred to in Section 3 of the Education Law the right to acquire education regardless of the material and social status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, religious and political affiliation, state of health, occupation, and place of residence.

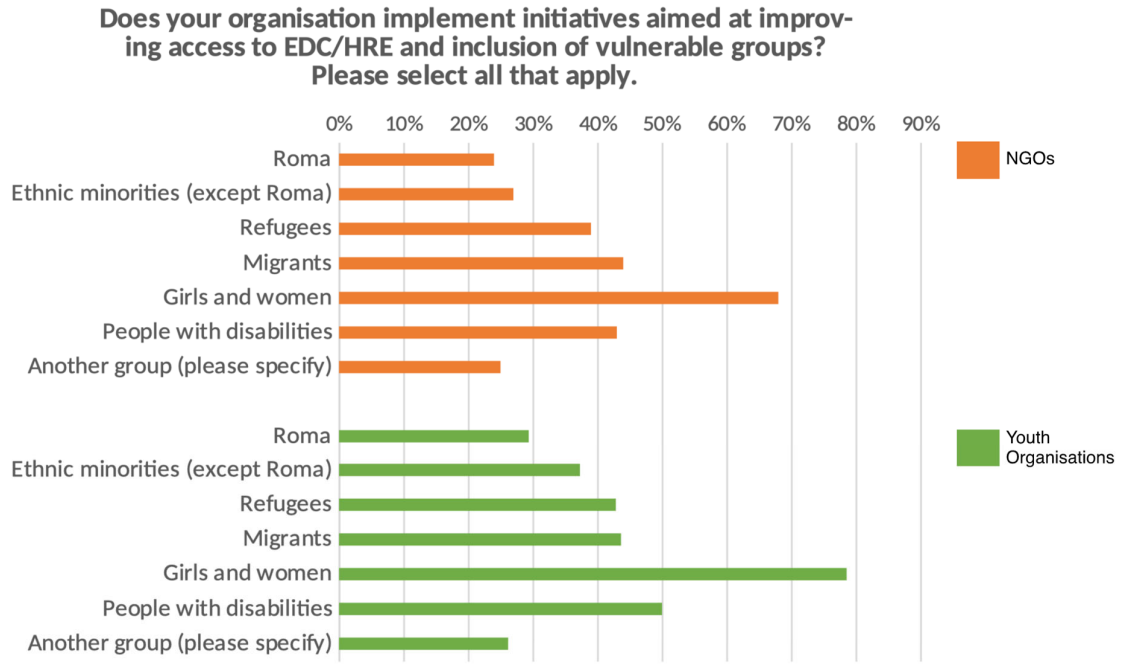
Source: Survey for education policy representatives, Council of Europe (2022)

Nonetheless, according to focus groups participants what is 'written on paper' in legal and policy frameworks is not necessarily what ends up being implemented, and vulnerable groups are usually those who are most affected by the setbacks in the implementation process. Moreover, in some contexts in spite of the willingness to foster inclusive environments for all, learners from non-European or non-Western backgrounds might often feel left out, which in turn affects their chances of accessing EDC/HRE at school or in non-formal education. This seems to be the case in some regions of Germany, where even if there has been progress in reaching out to vulnerable groups – in particular from migrant and refugee backgrounds – these hardly participate in EDC/HRE activities offered in their area (Schild and Droste 2018). In Latvia, the lack of a common approach to HRE contributes to the fragmentation of the NGO sector around specific topics, oftentimes leaving vulnerable groups out of their scope of work: "most sensitive/under covered topics on the national context are sexual orientation and minorities, interpretations on events of Latvian history and Latvian – Russian 'rights' to be and live in Latvia" (Lorence 2018).

Further, even if sometimes there are awareness-raising activities about vulnerable groups, there are fewer opportunities to learn about their realities, such as in Serbia where "the notion (of vulnerable group) is taught, while the substance of the vulnerability and problems faced by them are seldom addressed" (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 17). The key action area 5 adopted after the previous Charter implementation review declares: "Ensure access to EDC/HRE, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups, including young people who are not in education or training". In terms of this study, we defined vulnerable groups as all groups that are excluded or can be potentially excluded from the formal system of education. Due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the respect of their right of access to quality education has been even more precarious. Most of the organisations that responded to the questionnaire implement initiatives aimed at improving access to EDC/HRE for girls and women (Q 12 NGO and YO). Interestingly, the responses do not correlate with any concrete regions in Europe, but they do with other vulnerable groups that the respondents work with. Around half of the respondents work with people with disabilities, as well as refugees and migrants. Approximately a third of respondents work with Roma, a 10-12 million ethnic minority in Europe many of whom suffer from exclusion. Gender equality is a critical issue to consider when working with all the vulnerable groups mentioned above. This explains the high percentage the organisations that work specifically on the inclusion of girls and

women, and it correlates with the high relevance of gender equality as a topic for working with young people. It is probably due to the active work of non-governmental organisations with the vulnerable groups that their access to EDC/HRE was estimated as moderate.

Figure 7: Access to EDC/HRE and inclusion of vulnerable groups



Box XX: Combatting intolerance against Muslim minorities and gender inequality

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE

The ref:EU project – "Muslim minorities and the refugee crisis in Europe" is aimed at providing teaching tools for counteracting and counterbalancing Islamophobia and any other "phobias" related to migrants/refugees/asylum seekers, and "distant Others" in the EU member states. It is planned that the project will target over 1300 participants. More information can be found here: http://refeu.eu/en/

"I am Power" project is implemented in Romania with a goal to educate young people in the spirit of gender equality and to support women by addressing the difficulties they face and identify solutions for gender discrimination. The project conducts awareness-raising and capacity-building activities in the local communities using references to Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights Education frameworks.
More information here: http://iampower.fitt.ro/

As noted by a focus group participant "putting everything on the document is different from implementing". She shared an example from the reality lived by the Roma community in her country:

In some schools, there are 80% Roma students, and others of migrant origin. Teachers lack training and knowledge; they don't know what EDC/HRE is. Teachers in these specific schools hesitate even more to teach these issues. With vulnerable groups like that, the emotional aspect is highly important.

Roma students in Europe are among the most discriminated against and suffer from exclusion in most education systems. Rutigliano (2020) argues that one of the key actions to tackle this issue is to develop a "diversity-conscious" curriculum, which in the case of ethnic minority students should "allow mainstream education to adapt to the various needs of the learners. By doing so, it might both promote academic achievement and sense of belonging to the school." (Rutigliano 2020: 36). Beyond academic performance, a diversity-conscious curriculum can help to reduce bias among students, which is fundamental to achieve a more cohesive learning environment (Ibid). An example in this regard is the Portuguese Law of the bases of the education system (Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo), which includes among its articles a right to difference, implying the "consideration and valorisation of different knowledge and cultures" (Rutigliano 2020: 37); along with a data collection process on Roma students conducted in 2016-2017, the Portuguese government conducted a consultation with civil society in 2018 to improve inclusion in education for the Roma communities in the country (Ibid).

With regards to improving access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups, the availability of the Charter and RFCDC in minority languages might play a role in countries where these instruments have not been translated yet. The findings from the surveys among education and youth policy representatives present a mixed outlook. According to respondents to the youth policy survey, the Charter is not available in the minority language(s) of six out of 11 countries that replied. For the education policy survey, the Charter is not available in minority language(s) in 15 countries out of 20. As for the RFCDC, the instrument not available in the minority languages of 18 countries out of 20 according to the respondents to the education policy survey. It's worth noting that among youth policy respondents, a majority do not know whether the RFCDC is available in the minority language(s) or if it's disseminated to the target audiences by other means. This finding, however, cannot be taken at face value as it doesn't include a majority of the member states.

Nonetheless, some countries provided examples of the efforts that are being made to disseminate these resources as much as possible, in particular the RFCDC. In Romania, both the Charter and the RFCDC are available in Romanian. The Ministry of Education asks the schools inspectorates to inform schools and pre-university educational institutions on the two documents, as often as necessary. In addition, the information is also disseminated to teachers and students through the eTwinning Romania network. As for the RFCDC, it is available in seven languages of the national minorities in Romania (i.e. Albanian, Greek, Italian, Serb, Slovak, Turkish, and Ukrainian). The RFCDC has been equally promoted to schools providing education to children belonging to national minorities, which have been informed on the translations available. And in Serbia, guidelines for the appropriate representation of national minorities in curricula and content textbooks were prepared in 2019. This document concretises the application of the Recommendations from reports on the

representation of national minorities in curricula and educational standards of the Republic of Serbia and the Report on the Representation and Representation of National Minorities in Schools textbooks in the Republic of Serbia, created within the project Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

b. Conceptual controversies

While leading the data collection for this review, a key issue that came up was related to the 'controversial' nature of concepts related to democratic citizenship and human rights (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017; Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker 2020; UNESCO 2020a; Zygierewicz 2021). As noted by Gavrielides et al. (2018), it would seem that implementing activities in HRE is a straightforward and simple task specially for organisations working in non-formal education; however, the authors underline the difficulty of "convincing" education providers to introduce HRE training – more than for any other topic – in formal general education, higher education institutions, and public offices (Ibid). Further, Reșceanu et al. (2020) argue that even though these concepts may be subject to controversy and continuous debate, it is of utmost importance to preserve the "theoretical and practical reflection on this subject" (Ibid: 160) in particular in the face of recent developments around the issue of global citizenship.

Previous reports mapping the state of HRE in some European countries appear to confirm this need for collective reflection about democratic citizenship and human rights. In Latvia, human rights issues are still considered "very loaded and sensitive within the society…the most sensitive human rights topic in Latvia still relates to sexual orientation. Similarly, the rights and the involvement of the Russian-speaking audience is a tense issue. So is the aspect of refugee rights." (Lorence 2018: 4). In the Western Balkans region, a key area for action is to introduce controversial topics in the curriculum, including issues that may be considered sensitive in society: "to that end, local and national issues which are relevant to human rights should be covered so as to avoid leaving the impression that they are vague international issues." (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 21).

Participants in the focus groups also shared some views on this matter, stressing on the "highly politicised" nature of the discussion. For instance, in Slovenia the translation of the term 'civic' generates some difficulty, and there is a need to clarify and differentiate the concepts - citizenship/civics includes patriotism, and this raises a heated debate at national level. In the United Kingdom, new reforms have emphasized the need for teachers to remain "neutral", which may make it difficult to implement citizenship education at school.

Undoubtedly, addressing these concepts in formal and non-formal education is a complex task that requires a degree of diversity consciousness from teachers and educators (Rutigliano 2020). However, policy makers have an even more important task in supporting the implementation of EDC/HRE at school by providing resources and materials that integrate democratic citizenship and human rights as key concepts – for instance, in textbooks and guidelines (UNESCO 2020a). As noted by focus groups participants, using other concepts or topics as 'entry points' to discussing human rights in the classroom – such as education for

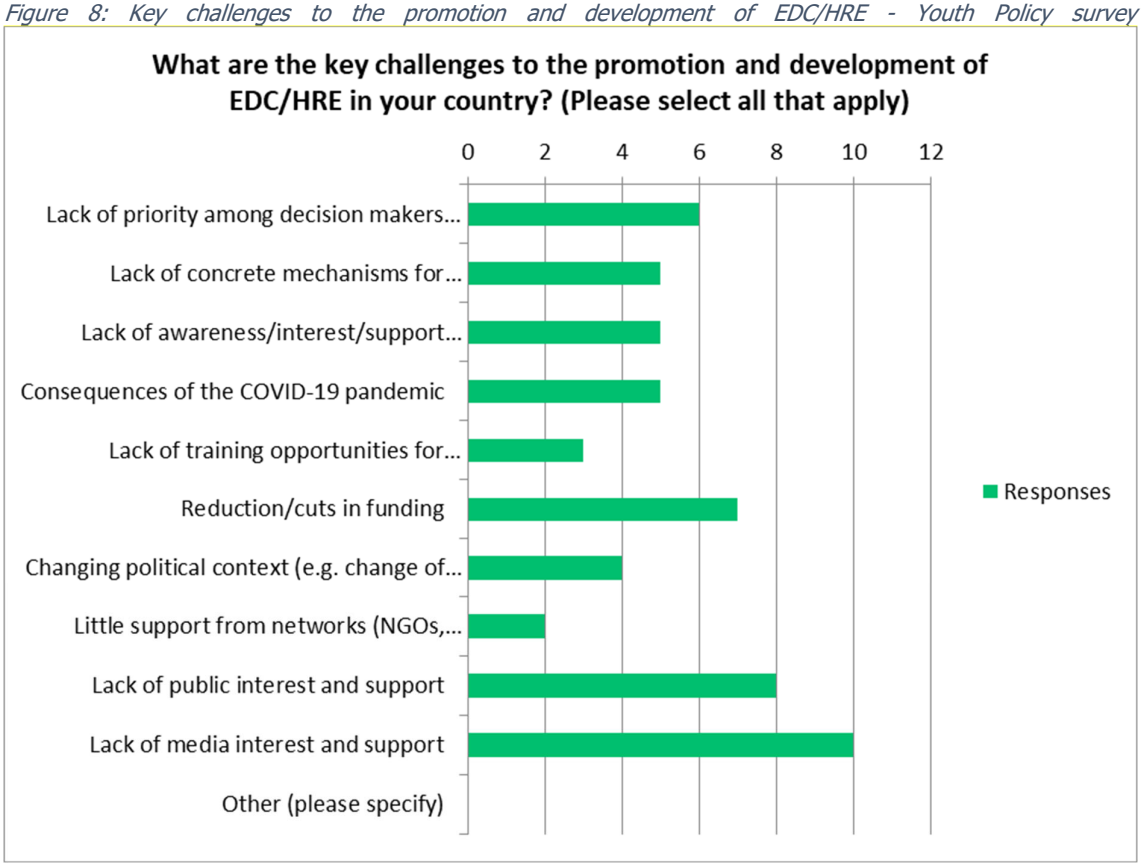
sustainable development, global citizenship education, critical youth citizenship, etc. – may also help teachers and educators in undertaking this task.

c. Contextual factors

A third challenge to consider as a transversal issue affecting the implementation of EDC/HRE in Europe are contextual factors, in particular in relation to the complex and varied political landscapes. According to Gouëdard et al. (2020), such factors will have a great influence in the development and implementation of education policies (e.g. the curriculum) and "need to be factored in the policy design" (Gouëdard et al. 2020: 42). Data collected for this survey appears to partially confirm this need, considering the responses from education and youth policy surveys with regards to the key challenges to the promotion and development of EDC/HRE. While youth policy respondents indicated that the lack of priority among decision makers is the fourth most important challenge (6 out of 11 replies), for education policy makers the same issue is considered mostly as 'somewhat important' (10 out of 21 replies). Further, participants to the focus group highlighted the importance of making EDC/HRE as relevant as possible to all stakeholders involved, specially by keeping informed the society at large about the importance of developing democratic competences. Some participants suggested that local authorities and the school community should be involved in the process through public consultations, in order to increase ownership also at the local level. Indeed, the political organisation of some member states (centralised/decentralised) may have an impact on the dissemination and sharing of good practices. A participant from Germany underlined that, due to the federal structure of Germany, where education is under the responsibility of the Laender (states), there is a multitude of activities carried out by the ministries of education or local authorities/educational institutions in co-operation with NGOs, youth organisations, community groups etc., "most of which are not reported back to the coordinating body (the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)." It's worth noting that among respondents to the youth policy survey, the perception is that the promotion of EDC/HRE at a regional/local level is not a priority for government authorities – seven respondents out of 11 indicated that this is a priority to a small extent.

Nonetheless, for education and youth policy respondents one of the big challenges is the attention given by the media and the general public to EDC/HRE. As shown on Figure xx, for respondents from the youth policy sector the lack of media and public interest and support are two of the most important challenges to the promotion of EDC/HRE, followed by the reduction in funding and the lack of priority among decision makers. Interestingly, for respondents from the education policy sector the key obstacle to the promotion of EDC/HRE were the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared, however, the perception about public support and the lack of priority among decision makers as important challenges, whereas cuts in funding were not seen as a major obstacle to the promotion of EDC/HRE. Nevertheless, funding remains a crucial factor for the development of EDC/HRE in Europe as it will be discussed further in the upcoming pages.

Figure 8: Key challenges to the promotion and development of EDC/HRE - Youth Policy survey



The issue of media attention is crucial to create a sense of ownership and shared priority among policy makers and the society as a whole. As noted by UNESCO (2020), "the media are a powerful force, capable of perpetuating and dismantling stereotypes…coverage of vulnerable groups can be a bellwether, leading changes in attitudes." (Ibid: 185). Therefore, policy strategies in EDC/HRE should seek for accurate and timely coverage in order to reach all stakeholders involved in the learning process, as well as the society at large.

Another contextual issue not less important is the phenomenon of shrinking spaces, that has widely affected the NGO sector in recent years. As noted by Amnesty International (2022), there has been "an increase in legal and policy restrictions on HRE such as banning HRE in schools, restricting access of NGOs to schools to conduct HRE, censorship of HRE (e.g., in sexuality education, LGBTI, gender, racism, etc)." (Amnesty International 2022: 1). This observation is supported by several organisations, including the Asia-Europe Foundation[8] and the Networking European Citizenship Education network.[9] Moreover, participants in the focus groups highlighted the impact of this phenomenon on their work, in particular in non-formal education:

> *Actions from the government have scrubbed all things related to EDC/HRE from schools. They can't write it in the law, but they encourage schools not to have connections with NGOs.*

[8] https://asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ASEMHRS19-Key-Messages-1-1.pdf
[9] https://eence.eu/2020/06/14/citizenship-education-in-eastern-europe-status-and-future-trends/

General political atmosphere is hostile towards human rights which also influences the way human rights are perceived. There are already students questioning the value of human rights because they've heard it in the public discourse.

After the political crisis in 2020, international co-operation was stopped and previous EDC/HRE developments in formal education were put on hold. A majority of NGOs (including those working in EDC/HRE) were de-registered in 2021 and had to limit their activities.

[Human rights] It hasn't been the most favourable topic, in particular in terms of working with vulnerable groups. It became a taboo concept.

EDC/HRE has fallen down the policy agenda in the last five years. There are different priorities and the co-operation between countries is lower. There is no line of support from policy makers to support the good work of NGOs.

During the focus group discussions, some NGOs indicated that in their countries access to schools is limited due to the position of the government. When a conservative political agenda is dominant, the space for the EDC/HRE work of civil society organisations starts shrinking, and instead of a transformative EDC/HRE experience, countries put forward a more nationalist or patriotic perspective. Also, an increasing pressure is put on human rights advocates and NGOs working in this field due to potential legal issues; this fear translates into the non-formal education sector restricting their contact with the media. This is another indicator of the value of the integration of EDC/HRE into the national norms through co-operation with NGOs. It helps to make certain that EDC/HRE implementation cannot be limited or eliminated due to a particular political agenda. As one of the focus group respondents remarked, non-formal education actors support schools in seeing young people as partners in the process of their own education. Several participants suggested that preventing schools from cooperating with civil society ultimately limits the development of the essential skills and attitudes related to the social and political engagement of students. As it is discussed in the following point, cross-sectoral co-operation is vital for the progress in the promotion of EDC/HRE, in particular in difficult contexts where spaces for civil society action have been shrunk.

d. Co-operation across and within sectors

Another area where particular attention should be paid is co-operation across and within sectors, including governments, the third sector, and the main actors involved in the learning process. In this regard, the Charter stresses the importance of co-operation activities between Member states in pursuing its aims and principles (Art. 15), as well as encouraging the sharing of good practices in EDC/HRE at an international level (Art. 16).

Since the adoption of the Charter, EDC/HRE in Europe has been mainly implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including youth organisations. This trend was independently demonstrated by the results of two previous Charter implementation review cycles, and it remains to be the case according to the data obtained in terms of this review. Many focus group respondents emphasized that awareness-raising, capacity-building, and

advocacy activities on the regional, national, and local levels are predominantly conducted by NGOs. In terms of the focus groups and surveys, we received many examples of innovative EDC/HRE projects organised and implemented by NGOs with the support of international funding. Often, it was the expertise of the non-governmental sector that served as a foundation for putting EDC/HRE instruments to practice on the state level. In some countries, the valuable role of NGOs was acknowledged into the legal state frameworks in the spirit of the EDC/HRE Charter.

At the same time, certain issues that were identified in the previous review cycles emerge once again in this review. The surveys indicate that the level of recognition of the important role of NGOs and youth organisations in the provision of citizenship and human rights education is limited (Q 20 NGO and YO). The same results were obtained in terms of the previous Charter implementation review. In the comments to the most recent survey, the respondents clarify some of the limitations: according to NGOs, while in many European countries the authorities recognise and officially support NGOs efforts in the EDC/HRE provision, they expect that NGOs will implement EDC/HRE "on their behalf".

According to the surveys, the NGOs representatives consider it to be the most important condition for assuring the accessibility of EDC/HRE for all (Q 16 NGO). Youth organisations consider it to be the most important along with the political will (Q 16 YO). As one of the focus group participants said, the structures and content of formal education are rigid and change slowly, while non-formal education provides a small possibility for a reflection on what has been learnt over a long period of time. Another expert pointed out that even a large number of innovative projects does not lead to sustainable results without an overall national or regional strategy, as it is required by the EDC/HRE Charter. It is only with the co-operation of the two sectors that the universal and sustainable implementation of EDC/HRE can be assured.

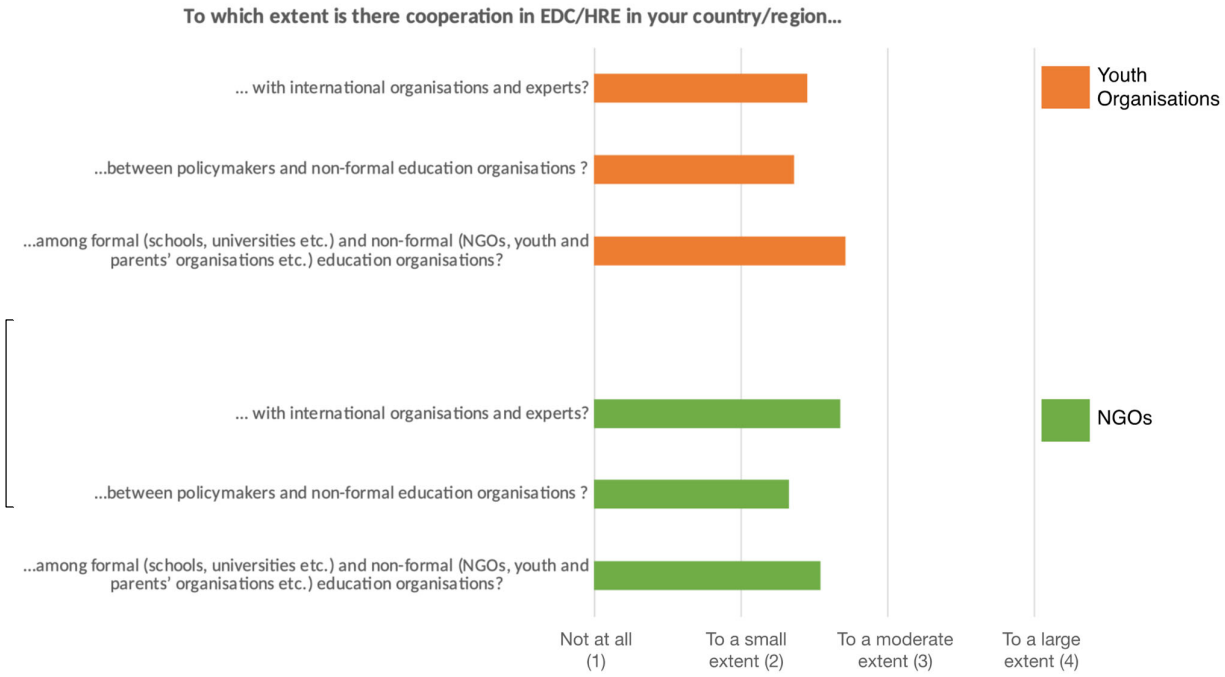
An important observation on the role of the RFCDC was made by one of the participants of the focus groups. The participant saw the valuable potential of RFCDC to provide a common EDC/HRE language for formal and non-formal actors, thus building bridges between the professionals from both sectors. Box xxx presents an example of this cross-sectoral collaboration in three countries.

Box XX: Building bridges between formal and non-formal education through RFCDC

The "Rede" project (Resilience through Education for Democratic Citizenship) is conducted with the co-operation of two NGOs and two universities representing three countries - Austria, France and Poland. The project is aimed at the capacity-building of "university teachers, trainers and social workers who work with young people outside the school environment, with the aim of further developing their competences for democratic culture (CDC)". The project uses RFCDC to connect formal and non-formal education approaches. More information on the project can be found here: https://rede-project.org/

As shown in Figure xx, both youth organisations and education NGOs indicate that co-operation among non-formal organisations and policy makers exists only to a small extent (Q 19 NGO and YO).

Figure 9: Co-operation in EDC/HRE in countries/regions



Findings from the previous review showed that co-operation with the governments was on a moderate level. However, "governments" is quite a general term. As we can see from the data collected in 2022, the co-operation of formal (e.g., schools, and higher education institutions) and non-formal educational organisations (NGOs and youth organisations) indeed remains at a moderate level, but when it comes to policy makers as such the level of co-operation is lower. Youth organisations consider that the participation of NGOs in EDC/HRE policymaking and policies implementation along with better funding is the action area that needs to be prioritised to better implement the Charter (Q 24 YO). When asked how often their own organisation cooperates with schools, higher and vocational education institutions, youth organisations indicated that they do it only rarely or sometimes (Q 30 YO). NGO and EPAN representatives' organisations cooperate with schools often, but only sometimes or rarely with other formal education institutions (Q 31 NGO).

Box XX: Co-operation of schools, universities, and NGOs to promote democratic competences at schools

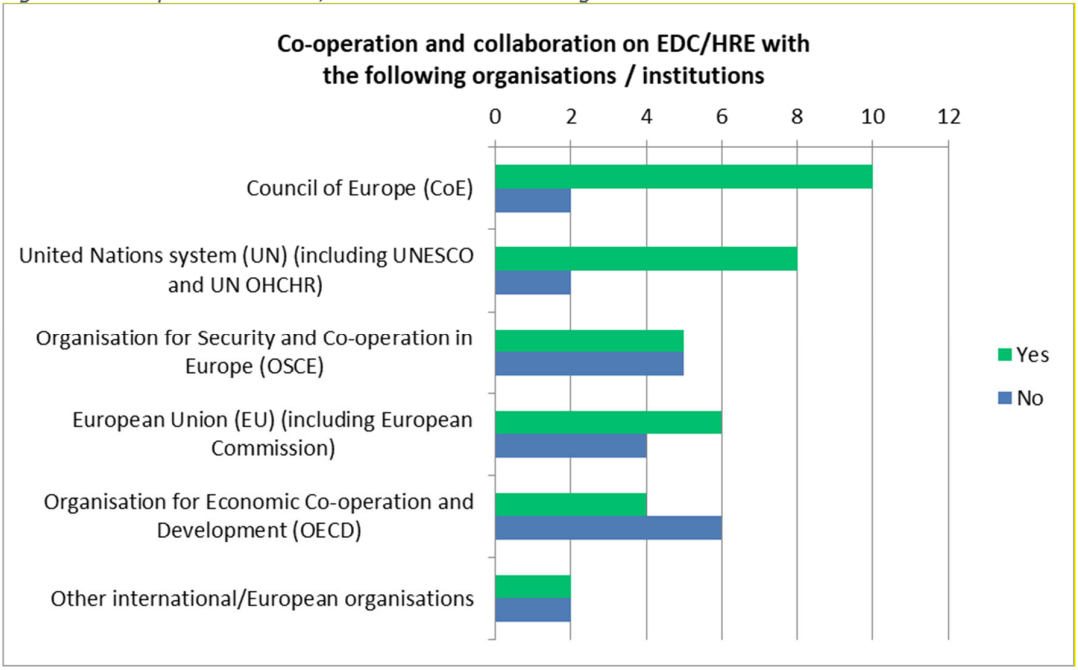
"Competences for a democratic culture - a tool for an open society" is a project conducted by the Multicultural Centre in Prague, Czech Republic to develop a democratic, participatory and pro-inclusive environment in schools through an educational program for youth workers. Teachers, teaching assistants, lecturers, youth workers and students of pedagogical universities and colleges learn about competences of democratic culture to act as multipliers at school. More information can be found here: https://mkc.cz/cz/projekty/kompetence-pro-demokratickou-kulturu-nastroj-pro-otevrenou-spolecnost-ii

According to the focus group participants, a lack of co-operation exists not only between formal and
non-formal education but also between the areas of education and youth. Regular exchanges among the authorities responsible for education and youth policies are rare. This means that if progress on EDC/HRE implementation is achieved in one policy area, it does not necessarily concern the other. As one of the respondents mentioned, this division is supported by the separate ways that the Council of Europe presents youth and education EDC/HRE initiatives.

The Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, adopted in the result of the previous Charter implementation review called for strengthening "the commitment of, and co-operation, co-ordination and shared ownership" of EDC/HRE among all major stakeholders. The data provided above demonstrate that the divide between formal and non-formal, youth and education sectors is a persisting issue to be addressed. The equal ownership of EDC/HRE provision on the national level is yet to be achieved. However, the data also show that the tools necessary for establishing systematic collaboration are in place – such as the common language provided by RFCDC, as well as the co-operation among schools, universities, and NGOs.

As shown on Figure xxx, in terms of international co-operation, the trend from the two previous review cycles remains steady. A majority of respondents to the youth policy survey indicated that co-operation on EDC/HRE is primarily with the Council of Europe (10 out of 12 replies), followed by the United Nations (8), the European Union (6), and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (5).

Figure 10: Co-operation on EDC/HRE with international organisations



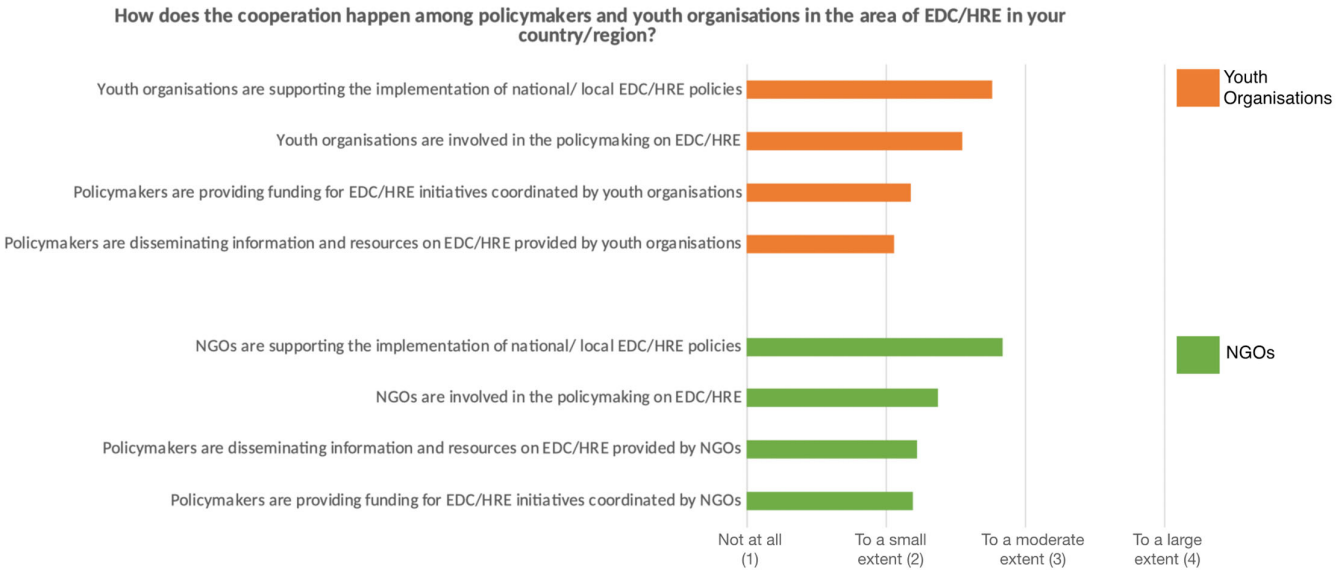
e. Funding

Reductions/cuts in funding comes as the third main challenge according to the respondents to the youth policy survey, followed by lack of priority among decision makers (other areas given more priority) and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's likely that all three challenges are related since a lower priority given to EDC/HRE in education and youth policy could translate into less funding for further initiatives. Moreover, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on EDC/HRE were reflected also in the funding made available for the youth sector, as stated by participants in the focus groups. One of the participants explained: "the 'priority list' of subjects to be taught online during the pandemic also applies to funding. Contingency measures in the face of the pandemic in terms of financing greatly affected the work of NGOs."

It has been widely illustrated that the availability of funding for EDC/HRE initiatives has an impact on both formal and non-formal education sectors. Capacity building opportunities for teachers and educators, filling the gaps in formal education to provide EDC/HRE, and issues of sustainability of EDC/HRE initiatives in the long run are some of the main recurrent issues in relation to funding. Dependence from external sources such as international donors and organisations (e.g. Council of Europe and European Union) may condition the sustainability of projects from civil society organisations, hence affecting the development of a comprehensive approach to EDC/HRE as a society (Gavrielides et al. 2018).

Data collected among NGOs and youth organisations demonstrates that the most common way of co-operation between NGOs, youth organisations, and policymakers is the implementation of EDC/HRE policies by non-governmental state actors. Also, even if EDC/HRE standards exist at the state level, their implementation largely depends on the initiatives of non-governmental actors. However, as illustrated in Figure xxx the provision of funding for EDC/HRE initiatives is the least common way of co-operation between non-formal education actors and policymakers - it is only taking place to a small extent.

Figure 11: Co-operation among policy makers and youth organisations on EDC/HRE



"Hunting for funding" is an important issue for all NGOs as mentioned by the focus groups participants. According to the quantitative data, the priority is being given to the financial support of EDC/HRE initiatives only to a small extent. Thus, the level of financial support offered to non-governmental actors remains as low as in 2016. One of the key recommendations as a result of the previous review was to support the EDC/HRE policies implementation with sufficient resources. Various funding schemes are available on the European level, but not on the national level. The funding for EDC/HRE implementation in Europe is mainly provided by the regional organisations for short-term projects. The shortage of systematic funding for the implementation of EDC/HRE policies can lead to issues of both provision and quality. For this reason, NGOs give an important place to funding as a way to overcome the challenges of EDC/HRE implementation. Both education NGOs and youth organisations believe that measures need to be taken by the state to allot more resources to EDC/HRE projects (Q 23 YO and Q 24 NGO). The lack of funding also leads to a lack of visibility of the NGOs in research on EDC/HRE implementation. In the next chapters, we will discuss how the lack of funding affects the EDC/HRE capacity-building, as well as research, and evaluation.

3. Training and professional development

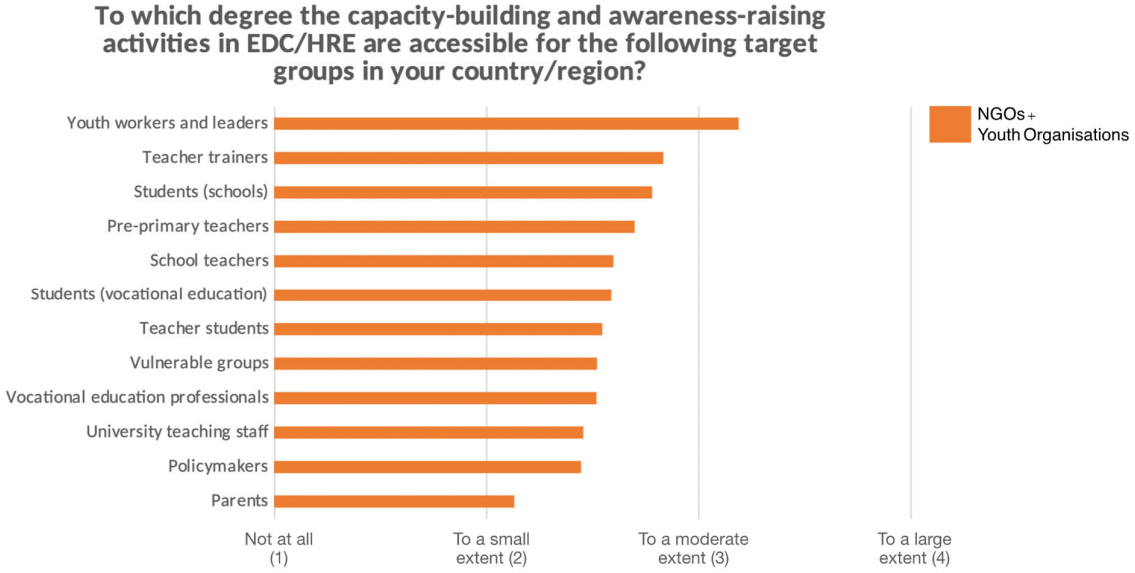
Article 9 of the EDC/HRE Charter emphasizes the importance of training educators to implement EDC/HRE successfully, therefore training and professional development of education professionals and other actors in formal and non-formal education is one of the focal points of this review. EDC/HRE training is aimed at "thorough knowledge and understanding of the discipline's objectives and principles and of appropriate teaching and learning methods, as well as other key skills appropriate to their area of education". Just like in terms of the previous review, the issues of capacity-building remain to be highly important for all EDC/HRE stakeholders. According to the focus group participants, capacity-building in EDC/HRE is the most critical mechanism for EDC/HRE policies implementation. Both NGOs and youth organisations consider the lack of training opportunities for educators and youth workers to be a fundamental challenge for the EDC/HRE implementation (Q 22 NGO and YO).

NGOs are still the leading providers of capacity-building opportunities on the national level in Europe (Q 25 YP). Among the general challenges that the focus groups participants indicate for the provision of capacity-building for all educators are the issues strongly related to the lack of political will and co-operation with the authorities. In the countries where the provision of EDC/HRE training is only limited to the initiatives of non-formal education actors, the capacity-building is unsystematic and unsustainable. The NGOs do not have the necessary resources to reach out to all educators at the state level and offer them additional trainings when required. The focus group participants mentioned other general challenges, such as a lack of financial and time resources for teachers' EDC/HRE training and no official accreditation for training provided by NGOs.

EDC/HRE training needs to be universal and obligatory at the state level. Key action 2 defined in the result of the previous Charter implementation review goes as follows: "Ensure quality, balanced provision of EDC/HRE in all areas and types of education, with specific attention paid to areas where EDC/HRE is less present such as pre-school education, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education". The data collected in 2017 showed that the availability of the EDC/HRE training opportunities was limited to youth workers and youth trainers, teacher trainers and teachers. As the focus groups participants added in 2022, it is often the teachers of civics who are reached by EDC/HRE activities on the state level, while the teachers at other school subjects are left behind.

The survey data collected in 2022 show a similar trend to the results obtained in 2016 (Q 14 NGO and YO, presented below combined).

Figure XX.



Training opportunities are still primarily available to youth workers, teacher trainers, students at schools, and teachers. It is important, however, to mention the availability of EDC/HRE training to pre-primary schoolteachers. Even though there is no data from the previous review cycle specifically on this target group, one can assume that there is growing attention to this group in EDC/HRE field. The availability of the training for them is allegedly around the same level as for the schoolteachers who have been at the centre of EDC/HRE capacity-building initiatives for a long time. However, when NGOs are asked how often their own organisations work with the same target groups, pre-primary teachers appear to be at the bottom of the list (Q 29 NGOs).

Since the EDC/HRE training is mostly conducted by NGOs, it might be that the general availability of capacity-building for pre-primary teachers is overestimated. As the focus groups participants pointed out, pre-primary education is not compulsory in many countries and often there are no specific national standards. However, the research conducted in this field confirms that EDC/HRE should begin in early childhood. The researchers emphasize the adaptability of EDC/HRE approaches for young children and the value of these approaches for developing social and emotional skills in kindergartens (Kemple 2017; Casey, DiCarlo & Sheldon 2019; Farini 2019; Phillips et al. 2019).
The data on the availability of capacity-building opportunities for students on the vocational education track to a fair extent are highly important. The existing research confirms that young people educated in vocational programs are significantly less politically engaged than the ones who studied at universities (van de Werfhorst 2017). Considering that in some European countries up to one-third of students are in tertiary education and are on vocational education track (Eurostat 2020), this can have significant negative effects on the equality of civic and political participation in Europe.

The Charter emphasizes the importance of both continuing professional development and initial teacher training. The fact that teacher students have access to EDC/HRE training to a fair extent is an essential factor for the universal provision of EDC/HRE. It is worth noting that

the research shows a lack of consideration for the education of teacher students, while EDC/HRE provision for this target group can prepare them for many challenges they will encounter at school (ter Avest & Stedenburg 2019; Jasper & Abs 2019; Kasa et al. 2021). According to policymakers, moderate progress was made in terms of EDC/HRE provision in all areas of education mentioned above (Q 7 EP). Box xx below provides some examples of provision of EDC/HRE training for teachers at the national level, as reported by respondents to the education policy survey.

Box xx: Examples of teacher training initiatives in European countries

Montenegro: The course Teaching Methodology includes the competences from RFCDC to be developed through achieving the learning outcomes. A Manual was developed for primary and secondary schools for the integration of key competences into teaching and learning at ISCED levels 1,2,3.
Albania: A national teacher training has been provided on the topic of Education against violent extremism and media literacy.
Georgia: In 2018, State Program "Democratic Culture and Human Rights Education in Schools" is established in the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development, with a state budget and independent human resources.
Finland: The national pilot project in schools to foster the implementation of EDC/HRE linked with the will be carried out in co-operation with the teacher training departments of the University of Jyväskylä and Turku.
Latvia: EDC/HRE topics are included both in teachers' initial training and continuous professional development.
Slovenia: In the school year 2021/22, as many as 98 from 551 continuing education and training programmes were made available to the professionals in the field of education, focusing on sustainable development and active citizenship. The Ministry has identified this area as one of the priority topics in the field of continuing professional development.
Spain: The new education law includes an additional provision that education for sustainable development and global citizenship should be considered in the teacher training process and in the access to the teaching profession. Furthermore, by 2025 all teachers in compulsory education should be qualified for the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Despite these valuable steps forward, the collected quantitative data shows that the level of the EDC/HRE training provision for the university staff and VET professionals is still very low. Assuring the systematic EDC/HRE work with students at the universities and at vocational education institutions is only possible with the involvement of the teaching staff.

Training university lecturers and school mentors to improve the quality of teacher education in the whole region

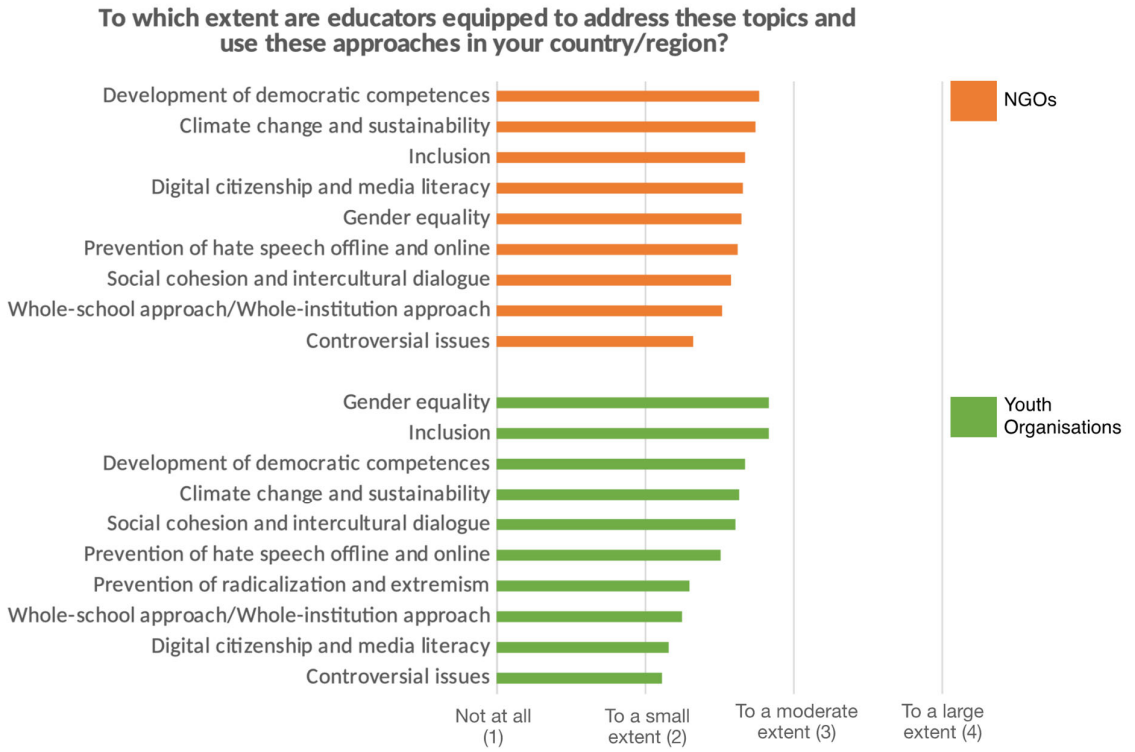
"Preparing Future Teachers in the Western Balkans" project provides support for 12 higher education institutions and universities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, that are interested in modernizing their teacher education modules with a focus on practice-oriented teaching promoting citizenship, democracy and human rights. University lecturers and school mentors are trained to support the capacity-building of teacher students in the area of human rights and democratic citizenship education. More information on the European Wergeland Centre website: https://theewc.org/projects/preparing-future-teachers-in-the-western-balkans/

To make the necessary steps forward in providing EDC/HRE capacity-building through all levels of education suitable materials and guidelines are important. At the same time, the NGOs indicate that the Council of Europe materials are scarcely useful for VET, higher education, and pre-primary education (Q 29 YO and Q 30 NGO).

The RFCDC "Guidance document for higher education" can be seen as the first step towards closing this gap. It provides the necessary theoretical ground for implementing EDC/HRE on the institutional level in higher education. At the same time, as the data demonstrates, this RFCDC volume was published in 2020, but still appears to be not well-known by the stakeholders. Just like in 2012-2017, Compass and Compasito remain central to EDC/HRE training activities. "Living in Democracy" and RFCDC are also often mentioned by the participants in the survey comments.

Another tendency that remains to be relevant compared to the previous review is very limited involvement of parents and policymakers in EDC/HRE training (Q 14 NGO and YO, Q 26 YP). The implementation of the whole school approach (WSA) promoted by RFCDC is not possible without the participation of these two target groups. The scholarship points out that educational institutions need to be the places where children and young people experience democracy and human rights (Robinson 2017; Lieberkind 2020). This goal requires the participation of all education stakeholders, policymakers, school leaders, teachers, students, parents and community representatives, and policy implementation strategies ought to take all these groups into account (Larsen 2021). The collected quantitative data demonstrates that the educators at the moment are poorly equipped to work with the WSA (Q 35 NGO and YO).

Figure 12: Extent to which educators are equipped to address these approaches



According to NGOs and youth organisations, the educators are equipped to a fair extent to address such traditional EDC/HRE topics as gender equality and inclusion. The same can be said about the development of democratic competences. This fact can be related to the long-term focus on the competences approach in education in general and to the role of RFCDC in the promotion of the concept of competences for democratic culture. Nevertheless, digital citizenship and media literacy that the youth organisations name as highly relevant for young people today (Q 34 YO), is one of the topics that the educators are the least prepared to work with (Q 35 NGO and YO). Box xx below provides some examples of approaches and resources for digital citizenship education.

Box XX: Approaches and resources for digital citizenship education

Variety of approaches to digital citizenship education

European Schoolnet projects cover a multitude of ways to work with digital citizenship through education. Projects focus, for instance, on academic research to address the issues of digitalization, on practices for the prevention of hate speech online or on the development of resources for educators to work with digital citizenship in their context. More information on the projects:
http://www.eun.org/projects/digitalcitizenship

Council of Europe materials on Digital Citizenship Education
In 2016, Digital Citizenship Education project was launched by the Council of Europe. The aim of the project is to help reshape the role education plays in enabling children and young people to acquire the competences they need to participate actively and responsibly in democratic society as digital citizens, both online and offline. Lesson plans, books and leaflets for teachers, parents and policymakers are available on the organisation's website:
https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/e-library

During the focus groups, the discussion on the role of EDC/HRE in addressing emerging issues came up. One of the participants pointed out that addressing the emerging issues in line with the objectives and principles of the EDC/HRE Charter would be highly advantageous for the development of values and attitudes of young people. The emerging issues often fall under the category of controversial issues since they can be emotional and divisive. The fact that the educators in Europe are the least equipped to work with controversies is deeply concerning especially considering the war in Ukraine that started in February 2022. This event still unimaginable on the eve of its beginning directly or indirectly affected all young people in Europe. Educators need to be able to address this topic in their work with young people in accordance with the EDC/HRE principles.

Another important issue was brought up regarding the quality of the provided training. One of the focus group participants emphasized the importance of the ownership of the EDC/HRE materials developed by the Council of Europe. Assuring the application and adaptation of the EDC/HRE Charter and materials in the local context is possible through the multiplier effect of the training events conducted on the European level. Therefore, a European network of trainers is needed under the auspices of the Council of Europe. This network's structure and functioning should enable a stable mechanism for supporting the dissemination and the adaptation of the materials to the local level and then collecting the lessons learnt to update the approaches on the European level. The quantitative data supports this idea. The majority of the respondents see the most important role of the Council of Europe in the provision of capacity-building opportunities (Q 41 NGO and YO).

Another participant pointed out the value of international and national networks of EDC/HRE professionals to assure the quality of the projects. In many cases, several EDC/HRE projects take place in the same country. The coordination of the EDC/HRE projects can create possibilities for a wider and better provision on the national level.

4. COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for education systems worldwide. It led to the disruption of the educational process, thereby posing a threat to the respect of the right to education of millions. It has particularly affected the most vulnerable groups who lacked access to technology that would allow them to continue their education (UNESCO 2020b). In Europe, the periods of schools' and other education institutions' closures varied from several weeks to a whole year. Issues of access were in the spotlight of both policymakers and researchers. The scholarship on the effects of the pandemic on schools (Harris 2020; Kuhfeld et al. 2020; Masonbrink & Hurley 2020) and higher education (Aristovnik et al. 2020) is abundant. The studies are focused on the issues of access and solutions, mainly technical, offered for the future (Cahapay & Anoba 2020; Carius 2020; Tadesse & Muluye 2020). Unfortunately, very little information can be found on the place of EDC/HRE during the pandemic and the role of EDC/HRE in addressing the COVID-19 aftermath.

a. EDC/HRE implementation during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

Policymakers, youth organizations and NGOs see the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as an important challenge for EDC/HRE implementation (Q 12 P-s, Q 15 YP, Q 22 YO, Q 23 NGO). The focus groups' participants indicate three main types of developments regarding EDC/HRE provision during the pandemic. The first option was that the provision stopped completely. Usually, in this case, EDC/HRE was taught only in terms of one subject – civics. Some respondents mentioned that civics was the first subject to be dropped during the crisis and that the emphasis was mainly on STEM and other subjects seen as basic in the curriculum. The second option was the continuation of the EDC/HRE provision in terms of civics. The third was the implementation of EDC/HRE through a cross-curricular approach if it was introduced at schools before the pandemic. Many of the focus groups' participants pointed out that the EDC/HRE was left behind in terms of the online lessons provided by formal education institutions. The crisis evoked by the pandemic demonstrated that it is only the third option of EDC/HRE integration into formal education that allows for the systematic and sustainable provision of EDC/HRE.

According to the quantitative data, most policymakers believe that there was no difference in RFCDC and Charter implementation before and after the pandemic (Q 13 P-s, Q 16 YP). The most popular response among the non-formal education actors is that the attention to EDC/HRE on the national level dropped, but it was not excluded from the agenda. In the comments, the respondents clarify that this impression of continuity is related to the provision of EDC/HRE in the new formats.

Comments in the surveys and the focus groups results suggest that most EDC/HRE training events were conducted online during the pandemic. The new conditions of EDC/HRE provision led to the evolution of the produced resources, making online courses the most common type of developed EDC/HRE resources in the last five years (Q 45 YO, Q 45 NGO).

Box XX: Example of online platform for HRE used during the COVID-19 pandemic

Online platform on European Human Rights Law for all

Human Rights Workout is an interactive micro-learning platform which provides young learners with gamified cases of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). It was released in 2019 and as of December 2021, Human Rights Workout reached 10,000 learners. The platform has three interactive modules in English, Ukrainian, Romanian, Italian, Slovak and Russian. Access the platform: https://www.eduworkout.org/en

While the provision of EDC/HRE online is on the rise in non-formal education, the surveys show that educators are generally equipped to promote EDC/HRE online only to a small degree (Q39 NGO, Q 39 Youth). The focus groups data explain that this fact is not only related to the low level of digital literacy of many teachers in Europe but also to the lack of understanding if and how certain topics can be addressed in the digital format. For example, one of the focus groups participants was aware of cases when teachers tried to work with controversial issues online because they could do it successfully before the pandemic in the classroom. Nevertheless, some teachers couldn't manage specific discussions online, which led to conflicts

among the students. This example, as well currently available research allow arguing for the inclusion of digital components of EDC/HRE both in initial teacher education and continuing professional development (Ata & Yıldırım 2019; Dedebali & Dasdemir 2019; Choi & Cristol 2021).

Despite the rapid rise of the quantity of the EDC/HRE online courses and events, the face-to-face format remains the most common for the promotion of RFCDC and the Charter (Q 38 YO and NGO).

The comments to the surveys clarify that many participants would not be able to take part in the events due to their lack of digital literacy or simply the lack of access to necessary equipment. Furthermore, not all donors were flexible enough to reimburse the NGOs for the organisation of online events – many funding schemes considered only face-to-face events. Focus groups participants added that many learning outcomes especially when working with young people cannot be achieved in a purely online format. One could presume that the blended format would be a suitable alternative for the EDC/HRE implementation in post-pandemic conditions. The existing studies confirm that the combination of face-to-face and digital learning encourages students' collaboration (Serrano et al. 2019; Austin & Turner 2020), critical thinking (Keržič et al. 2018; McDougall 2019), and social responsibility (Şentürk 2021). Educators who had blended learning experiences during their initial professional training are more likely to use this format in the classroom and to continue learning when they work at school (Üniversitesi, Dergisi & Karataş 2016; Parisi et al. 2019; Şentürk 2021).

However, according to the quantitative data, blended learning is the most unpopular among all the formats used for the EDC/HRE implementation (Q 38 YO and NGO). Many focus groups participants asserted that blended learning is perceived as a hybrid model of teaching and learning when students can choose whether they will be present online or face-to-face in the classroom. In their experience, this type of learning is highly problematic for teachers because it requires equally involving all participants in the discussion in two different formats simultaneously. Such a perception might be the reason why blended learning is seen as the most complex to use for EDC/HRE provision. Therefore, educators need more information about various options for organising blended learning environments and about the ways that blended learning can support EDC/HRE implementation.

Box XX: Blended learning course on EDC/HRE for pre-schools, Ukraine

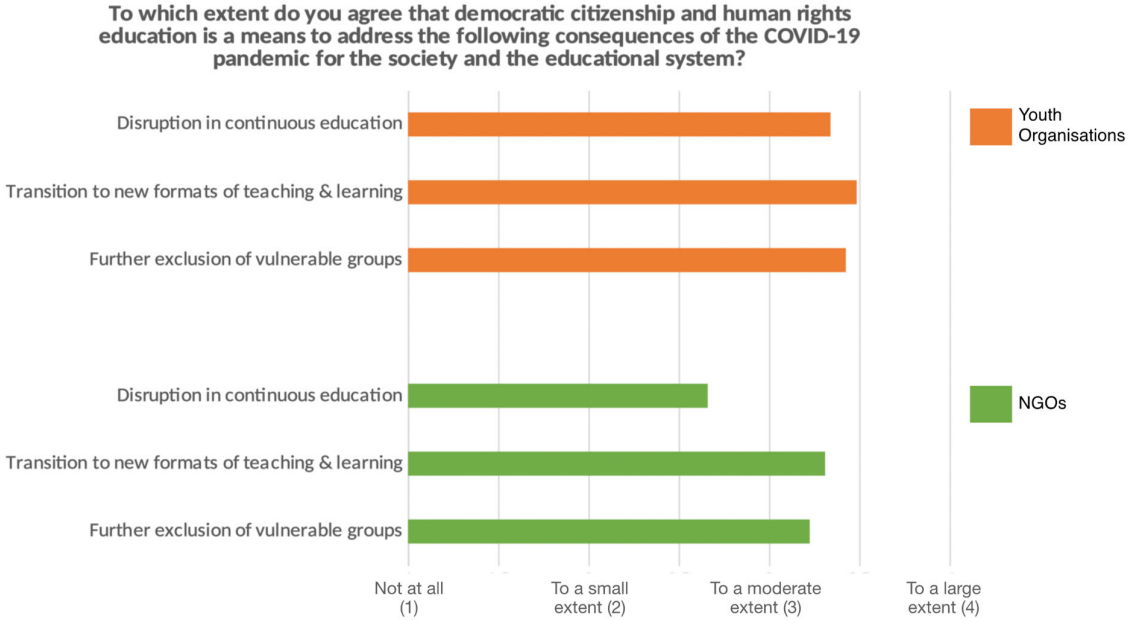
Blended learning course on EDC/HRE for pre-schools

In autumn 2021, the blended learning course "Listening to children's voices: the culture of democracy in pre-school education" took place in Ukraine. The course was organised for the pre-school professionals to support the implementation of the democratisation component of the new Pre-School Curriculum. One face-to-face training was followed by a number of online meetings of trainers and participants, as well as by independent work conducted by the participants in between the meetings. The course was aimed at introducing the requirements of the new curriculum related to the development of democratic competences and the culture of democracy, as well as building the capacity of educators to organize effective interaction with the child, partnership with parents and the community, ultimately creating a safe and inclusive learning environment.

b. Role of EDC/HRE in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

In addition to the emergence of new formats for education about, through and for human rights and democracy, the pandemic induced other developments that are strongly related to the EDC/HRE objectives. These developments demonstrate the effectiveness of EDC/HRE for addressing various challenges generated by the pandemic. Surveys' respondents claim that EDC/HRE is an essential means to address such consequences of the pandemic as disruption in continuous education, further exclusion of vulnerable groups, as well as transition to new formats of teaching and learning (Q 36 YO and NGO).

Figure X.



These data are supported by evidence from the field. Several focus groups participants mentioned that the schools that developed civic competences of their students through WSA before the pandemic continued to do so in the online format without significant disruption. These schools also had better communication with their students and parents. In many communities, schools have become the centres of support for their students' families, particularly for vulnerable groups. Community members relied on schools that helped them go through the pandemic if the family breadwinner lost the job, if they couldn't reach necessary information or if they simply needed a safe space. Some focus group participants called these tendencies the WSA in action.

At the same time, the involvement of youth in their communities, as well as their political literacy has increased both face-to-face and digitally (Mitra et al. 2020; Arya & Henn 2021; Paiva et al. 2021; Wilf & Wray-Lake 2021). For many young people involved in their communities during the pandemic, social responsibility turned into political literacy. Both in and outside of the classroom young people started asking questions about the role of the

state and society in times of crisis. The question is how to make this effect sustainable and address the needs of young people through EDC/HRE to ensure that their engagement is based on the values of human rights and democracy (Gabriel et al. 2021).

Among other issues that emerged were the well-being of young people and their mental health. The data from all over the world confirm that COVID-19 has had a horrific effect on young people's mental health (Courtney et al. 2020; Liang et al. 2020; Power et al. 2020). Consequently, the authors emphasize that however education in the future will look like, it will need to address the issues of mental health. Furthermore, health professionals are calling for including young people in the decision-making processes related to their well-being (Efuribe et al. 2020). In this sense, the value of EDC/HRE was emphasized by the focus group respondents from the point of view of developing social and emotional competences and making the voices of the young people heard.

The learning divide created by the pandemic between those with and without access to digital technology evokes an important discussion on digital inequalities and the digital dimension of citizenship. Years before COVID, it was through a digital citizenship education perspective that the digital gap among students was clearly identified (Atif & Chou 2018), but it is only now that digital citizenship is in the spotlight of policymakers and educators. As the focus groups' participants mentioned, the divide between digital citizenship and citizenship as such is no longer relevant, because now digital inequalities are an inalienable component of actual social inequality. The exclusion of vulnerable groups at schools was visualized through the digital divide and now inclusion goals are more important for many schools than before the pandemic. Other topics that the participants mentioned as highly relevant after the pandemic are hate speech online, privacy and data protection. However, according to the survey respondents, the educational approaches and teaching methods promoted on the national level enable young people to critically assess the information they encounter in the media or online only to a small or moderate extent (Q 40 NGO and YO, Q 23 YP).

To sum up, the pandemic led to many EDC/HRE implementation challenges. At the same time, it attracted attention to various issues that have traditionally been addressed or can yet be addressed by EDC/HRE. This role is often recognized on the policy level by including EDC/HRE in the recovery packages for COVID. More evidence on the value of EDC/HRE for addressing the aftermath of the pandemic is needed to advocate for EDC/HRE in the post-pandemic reality.

III. Emerging issues (to be finalised after the Forum)

1. Conceptual issues

a. The variety of concepts related to EDC/HRE, including Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). These are reflected in the policies of many European countries. Which notion is getting precedence? How do we promote EDC/HRE by emphasizing the complementary nature of EDC/HRE with other international concepts?

b. Interrelationship between HRE and citizenship education. In many countries, HRE is taught in civics as a subject. How do we assure the strong presence of HRE in teaching and learning about citizenship and democracy? How does HRE fall into competences-based learning and formal education? curriculum development, assessment, teacher training?

c. Education actors might not know that what they are already constitutes EDC/HRE. Therefore, there is explicit and implicit EDC/HRE implementation. Is the explicit implementation of EDC/HRE more efficient than the implicit one?

2. Implementation gap between policy and practice

a. One of the essential mechanisms of the European EDC/HRE policies implementation is the ownership of RFCDC and the Charter on the national and local levels. Translation of the EDC/HRE materials is another important condition to enable access to EDC/HRE and its ownership on the national and local levels. A European network of multipliers is needed for assuring contextual implementation and feedback. Can the Council of Europe become a hub for such a network?

b. Co-operation between formal and non-formal education is still highly limited. This leads to issues of access and sustainability. RFCDC has the potential to serve as a bridge between formal and non-formal education. How can RFCDC be promoted for addressing this issue? What are other steps that can be taken to improve intersectoral co-operation?

c. Education professionals working at pre-school and vocational education and training (VET) institutions lack access to EDC/HRE training. They are rarely involved in the EDC/HRE initiatives coordinated by non-formal education actors, as well as in the training provided by state authorities. What is needed for the provision of capacity-building for these two groups?

d. Parents and policymakers are two groups with the lowest level of involvement in EDC/HRE training, this situation remains unchanged since the previous review. The development of the whole school or whole institution approach is impossible without the inclusion of these two groups. Sustainable EDC/HRE implementation on the institutional level is closely related to the cross-curricular approach, for which the role of both policymakers and parents is fundamental. How do we address the challenges for the involvement of parents and policymakers in EDC/HRE capacity-building?

e. Monitoring and evaluation is an important condition for quality EDC/HRE provision. Often, non-formal education actors lack resources for regular assessment and evaluation. Despite growing interest in EDC/HRE in academic research, non-formal education actors remain invisible. What steps can be taken for assuring the quality of EDC/HRE through monitoring and evaluation? How to secure a regular exchange between policymakers and non-formal education actors on lessons learnt?

f. Online and blended formats will remain integral to the implementation of EDC/HRE in the post-pandemic realities. Educators need to learn about the methods of EDC/HRE provision in new formats, as well as about the topics that are of great relevance for the digital component of citizenship, such as prevention of hate speech online, digital inequalities and data protection. How to ensure quality provision of EDC/HRE through online and blended learning? How to integrate digital citizenship education into teacher training in Europe?

3. The role of EDC/HRE in context of crisis

a. COVID-19 presents a great challenge for continuous EDC/HRE implementation, but also a great opportunity for bringing forward the value of EDC/HRE. Such issues as civic responsibility, democratic participation, students' well-being, inclusion, co-operation of schools with communities, and critical thinking are now in the spotlight. How to use the momentum to promote the implementation of EDC/HRE for addressing the aftermath of the pandemic?

b. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, millions of people were forced to leave their homes, and many fled the country. Hundreds of educational institutions were destroyed. Russia's invasion suspended the implementation of reforms aimed at the democratization of the education system on the national level. How can the consequences of this horrific event that shocked the whole of Europe be addressed through EDC/HRE? How can continuous education of refugee children, young people and the professional development of Ukrainian teachers be supported through EDC/HRE? What can be done to support the people of Ukraine in deciding on their independent future – sovereign, democratic and based on values of human rights?

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