

Key definitions

The Charter: The Council of Europe [Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#) was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2010 in the framework of the Swiss chairmanship as one of the decisions intended to provide follow-up to the Action Plan adopted at the Committee of Ministers conference (Interlaken, 2010) on the future of the European Court of Human Rights as a text that supports the prevention of human rights violations by strengthening the culture of human rights. The charter asks governments to frame their policies, legislation and practice with the aim of “providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education.”

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.”

The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (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 EDC/HRE 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.