

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Council of Europe Report
on the state of citizenship
and human rights education in Europe



2017

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**Council of Europe Report
on the state of citizenship
and human rights education in Europe**

**In accordance with the objectives
and principles of the Council of Europe Charter
on Education for Democratic Citizenship
and Human Rights**

Council of Europe

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FOREWORD

This report looks at the ways in which democracy and human rights are promoted through education in Europe today and puts forward priorities for action.

It shows that across Council of Europe member states, education is increasingly recognised as a tool for tackling radicalisation leading to terrorism, for successfully integrating migrants and refugees and for tackling disenchantment with democracy and the rise of populism. International co-operation in the area of education for democratic citizenship and human rights is growing, supporting national approaches by raising standards and allowing states to learn from each other's experiences.

But despite this growing understanding of the relationship between education and Europe's overall democratic health, challenges remain. In many countries, education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are not sufficiently mainstreamed. In some areas of learning, such as vocational training, they are often absent. Where they are present, in many cases not enough is being done to monitor their impact, meaning that they do not receive sufficient priority, with resources geared instead towards areas of education that are evaluated and ranked.

Concerted action is therefore needed on the part of politicians, government officials, education professionals and civil society, including young people, to support and embrace democratic citizenship and human rights within national education systems. To achieve this, we need to demonstrate the value of this education for our societies, whether for promoting democratic participation, helping young people learn to resolve conflicts respectfully or creating spaces in which controversial topics can be openly discussed. More needs to be done to share and learn from examples of existing practice. We need to develop reliable methods for evaluating what works in order to make best use of successful methods and approaches.

I hope that this report will inform the current debate around the role of education in our democracies and will encourage stronger take up of the models that have a positive impact. The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education provides a solid basis for action and co-operation among member states, and the Council of Europe remains committed to helping Europe's nations build education systems that support and strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Thorbjørn Jagland
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe supports the promotion of human rights and democracy through education, as a means of building peaceful societies where the human dignity of all people is respected. With the adoption of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7) the member states committed themselves to “the aim of providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education”. Although the charter is a non-binding legal instrument, it provides a unique common European framework of reference and is a focus and catalyst for action in the member states.

The present overview sums up the conclusions of the “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe”, which takes stock of the achievements and gaps in this area and recommends priorities for action. This review exercise is part of the follow-up to the conclusions of the 25th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Education (Brussels, 2016), which supported the development of a long-term strategy for a more coherent and comprehensive approach to education for democratic citizenship and human rights at European level and requested the Council of Europe to consider ways of increasing the impact of the charter.

The full text of the report is available at: www.coe.int/edchre, together with the results of the governmental and civil society surveys.

The review of the charter is also part of the Council of Europe’s contribution towards the United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education and the 2030 Education Agenda (Target 4.7) and the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, which was adopted by the EU member states in 2015.

Key conclusions

Between 2012 and 2016, substantial progress was made in the 40 countries that responded to the survey: education for democratic citizenship and human rights gained more importance around Europe. In particular, education is increasingly recognised as an essential response to the challenges that our societies are facing. At the same time, feedback from civil society shows that relevant policies need to be supported more effectively, that co-operation between governments and civil society needs to be further developed, and that recognition of the work done by civil society needs to be improved. Other concerns and issues raised include the following:

- 1) Inconsistencies between policies and their implementation were reported by 66% of government respondents in 2016 compared with 20% in 2012.
- 2) Over 80% of government respondents felt that greater awareness of relevance of citizenship and human rights education for addressing the current challenges in our societies is needed in order for such education to receive a greater priority in their countries.
- 3) Over a third of government respondents stated there are scarce or non-existent references to education for democratic citizenship and human rights in laws, policies and strategic objectives, in vocational education and training, and higher education (14 out of 40 respondents).

4) In almost two thirds of the countries, no criteria have been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in the area of education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

5) Only over half of government respondents stated that evaluations of strategies and policies undertaken in accordance with the aims and principles of the charter have been done or foreseen.

6) An overwhelming majority of government respondents felt that the Council of Europe provides encouragement or motivation for stronger action and higher quality, as well as opportunities for sharing and co-operation with other countries. More needs to be done to take into account specific needs and priorities of the countries.

7) The charter is a useful tool for non-governmental organisations both as a guideline for their internal policies and programmes and as a tool for advocacy towards national and local authorities. However, the charter appears little known to young people. The manuals on human rights education with young people and children, *Compass* and *Compassito*, remain central to the citizenship and human rights education work done by civil society.

8) The charter needs to be further developed as a shared framework for policy dialogue among and within countries.

Key recommendations

1. Include education for democratic citizenship and human rights education among the priority areas of education, youth and children policy and back it up with sufficient resources.

2. Ensure balanced provision of citizenship and human rights education in different areas and types of education, with particular focus on vocational education and training.

3. Strengthen the acknowledgment both of the work done in this area by education professionals and of the work done by civil society, including youth organisations.

4. Make full use of the data available and support systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of education programmes, including public debates and broad consultations.

5. Give citizenship and human rights education a solid position in the curricula and develop appropriate assessment tools, with a view to reinforce the status of such education while avoiding the pitfalls of standardised testing.

6. Increase the co-operation between state authorities and civil society.

7. Support and encourage international co-operation.

8. Collect and promote examples of good practice illustrating the relevance of citizenship and human rights education for everyday life.

9. Increase the levels of promotion of the charter to all the stakeholders involved, including examples of how it can be applied.

10. Further strengthen the charter review process, support the development of strategic goals for the next five years and facilitate the development of national indicators/benchmarks/priorities that can allow assessing progress achieved and guiding further action at national and international level.

PART I
OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

VIEWPOINT

“Every day, we are confronted with news of hatred and violence; and the response we witness to violence and terror often involves more violence and terror, in a spiral of degrading barbarity. We all need to better think through our strategies if we are to tackle the world’s challenges today, from poverty to conflict, discrimination, disease, climate change and beyond. We will only progress if our decisions are grounded in the common understanding that we all belong to one humanity and that all of us are equally deserving of dignity, respect and justice.”

Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Council of Europe promotes human rights and democracy through education, as a means of building peaceful societies where the human dignity of all people is respected. With the adoption of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE)¹ in 2010, the member states committed themselves to “the aim of providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education”. This text also outlines the member states’ agreement on the objectives and principles (section II); policies (section III); and evaluation and

co-operation in this area (section IV). Improving the effectiveness of such education is an imperative for the Council of Europe member states, and the main focus of the present “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe”.

DEFINITIONS

“Education for democratic citizenship” 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” 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.

Source: Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

1. Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

2. BACKGROUND

VIEWPOINT

“Signed in 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights, the first strong act of the Council of Europe, was also the first concrete expression of the ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... The Convention and the Court have been very successful. They have an influence that makes them a source of inspiration even beyond Europe; and through the protection and development of rights they have been a factor for peace, stability and the strengthening of democracy... However, progress still needs to be made. The essential point is that in the first place states take ownership of the Convention for the benefit of persons under their jurisdiction... It is principally at state level that this training in human rights must take place and I can only encourage the states to implement this. That is also part of shared responsibility.”

Guido Raimondi, President, European Court of Human Rights

The Council of Europe’s work on education for democratic citizenship and human rights benefits from the longstanding support of its member states:

- ▶ The charter was adopted 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 first charter review conference was held in the framework of the Andorran chairmanship (Strasbourg, 2012), in co-operation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre. The Andorran chairmanship consequently organised a conference (Andorra la Vella, 2013), which gave impetus to the work on competences for democratic culture.
- ▶ Finland hosted the 24th Conference of Ministers of Education (Helsinki, 2013), which called on the Committee of Ministers to “consider developing descriptors and a reference framework to assist member states in implementing a competence based education for democracy and intercultural dialogue”.
- ▶ Belgium hosted the 25th Conference of Ministers of Education (Brussels, 2016), where the Ministers undertook to support the development of a long-term strategy for education for democratic citizenship and human rights at European level. The Ministers also endorsed the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and requested the Council of Europe to consider ways of increasing the impact of the charter.²
- ▶ The 3rd Compass Forum on Human Rights Education (Budapest, 2016), provided initial input and proposals from non-governmental partners and governmental experts active in the Joint Council on Youth. Among other things, the forum called for the continuation of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme.

2. Council of Europe (2016), *Securing democracy through education - Final Declaration*, adopted at the 25th session Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (Brussels, 11-12 April 2016). www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Source/MED25/MED_25_Final-Declaration_en.pdf.

Today the charter is used as a basis for sharing expertise, evaluating the achievements and defining priorities for action. This learning process consists of a report and a conference organised every five years. The present report builds on the recommendations of the first review cycle (2012). While opinions were very diverse in relation to the need for and feasibility of stronger evaluation mechanisms, there was an emerging consensus on the benefits of ongoing dialogue among key actors in this area and on the added value of the charter as a clear framework and impetus for such dialogue.

In 2016, 40 countries³ responded to the survey on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe, organised by the Council of Europe Education Department. In preparing their responses, the governments consulted a broad range of partners.

Feedback from civil society organisations, including youth organisations, was also collected directly by the Council of Europe Youth Department through an online survey, with almost 100 responses received from 44 countries. The present overview sums up the conclusions of these surveys.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- ▶ [Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education \(Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)7\)](#)
- ▶ [Human Rights and Democracy in Action Looking Ahead: Conference proceedings \(2012\)](#)
- ▶ [Message of the 3rd Compass Forum on Human Rights Education](#)

3. Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

3. EUROPEAN COUNTRIES INCREASINGLY RECOGNISE EDUCATION AS AN ESSENTIAL RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES THEY ARE FACING TODAY

“If radicalisation is partially nurtured by a feeling of exclusion, is it not because we failed to transmit and promote our European values to uprooted young people yearning to build an identity? If social cohesion is jeopardised, isn't it because we forgot to build communities on common ground? If the integration of people with a migrant background is sometimes difficult, is it not because we also failed to provide a positive and confident identity, and we did not share our culture of democracy? ... In times of political turmoil, in times of uncertainty, the last thing we can afford is to neglect and forget the value of our values.”

Tibor Navracsics, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Between 2012 and 2016, substantial progress was made in the respondent countries: education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) is gaining more recognition in the education systems and in the school communities around Europe. In particular, education is increasingly recognised as an essential response to the challenges that our societies are facing.

The respondents from the governments and civil society organisations found EDC/HRE to be most relevant in addressing the following challenges:

- i. violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism;
- ii. deficit of democratic participation of both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups in society;
- iii. integration of migrants and refugees.

The economic crisis, austerity measures and social exclusion were in general seen as slightly less of an issue for EDC/HRE to address. It could be of interest to reflect on the possible reasons for this, as well as on the possible connection between social exclusion and disillusion leading to the rise of populism.

It was also pointed out by the respondents that while EDC/HRE can make an important contribution towards

addressing these challenges, it cannot do this alone and it must not be seen in isolation from the broader environment. The political, social and economic context influence people's values, beliefs and attitudes and EDC/HRE reforms are most effective when they are a part of a comprehensive strategy for social change.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: GREECE

In the framework of the economic crisis in Greece, as well as of the large influx of refugees and newly arrived migrants in the country, issues related to EDC/HRE are gaining increasingly more ground in education at all levels. As a result, several public and civil society stakeholders have initiated and are planning activities to promote it. These include, apart from the bodies of the Ministry of Education itself, the Greek Ombudsman for Children, the scientific societies of the EDC/HRE educators and university departments.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: ITALY

Italy's National Youth Council organised a national training course in human rights education based on *Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People*, which brought together young trainers and activists. The course led to the inclusion of human rights education in the main priorities of the National Youth Council and a very active network of human rights educators in Italy. It paid special attention to the role of young migrants and refugees as human rights educators.

USEFUL RESOURCE

[Final Declaration of the 25th Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education](#)
Brussels, 11-12 April 2016

4. DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO EDC/HRE

VIEWPOINT

"Human rights and citizenship education has been called upon in recent political statements to provide responses to the many challenges faced by our societies: extremism and populism, hate speech, discrimination and poverty, a general climate of fear and doubt. On the other hand, every day we note more cuts in education budgets, more human rights defenders and educators are facing danger and limited freedom in doing their work. It is time to match the political statements with policy measures, appropriate recognition and protection for the work of youth organisations active for human rights education."

Marko Grdošić, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

While according to government respondents the priority given to EDC/HRE is generally high across different types and levels of engagement and support, this perception was not shared by civil society respondents. In particular, the respondents considered that priority is given to EDC/HRE to a fair or to a large extent as follows: at the national government level (96% for government respondents and 29% for civil society respondents), at education institution level (91% for government respondents and 33% for civil society respondents), to supporting training about EDC/HRE for teachers and school heads (88% for government respondents and 41% for civil society respondents).

Moreover, only 17% of civil society respondents claimed that there was a shared definition of EDC/HRE in their countries, compared with 78% of government respondents. Only 30% of civil society respondents are aware of any measures or activities planned to promote EDC/HRE in their countries, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the charter, whereas 93% of government respondents report the existence of such measures.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- ▶ All 40 countries taking part in the survey reported that concrete measures had been taken to promote citizenship and human rights education, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the charter, compared with two thirds of respondents in 2012.

- ▶ There has been an increase of over 30% in the number of countries where action has been undertaken or is foreseen to evaluate strategies and policies in this area in the last four years.
- ▶ Almost all countries have the charter available in their language, and most countries have it available on the websites of their ministries of education or other relevant bodies.
- ▶ Only 30% of civil society respondents are aware of any measures or activities planned to promote EDC/HRE in their countries, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the charter, whereas 93% of government respondents report such measures.

The substantial differences in perception point to the necessity of improving the channels for information-sharing, feedback collection and analysis. In this respect, establishing a central focal point has proved to be effective in several counties.

One possible explanation to the discrepancies might be that it takes time to translate political commitment into practice. It will be interesting to see in the next review cycle to what extent the political impetus of 2016 has influenced education policy reforms in Europe. It will be important to include feedback from different partners, to ensure a balanced representation of different perspectives.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: LUXEMBOURG

In the light of failings related to the implementation of certain aspects of the EDC/HRE charter, an independent centre for EDC/HRE has been set up to better co-ordinate and plan different components of EDC/HRE.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: GEORGIA

The youth organisation Human Rights Association, in partnership with the Teachers Professional Development Centre, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Civic Education Teachers Forum and the European Wergeland Centre, developed a long-term training course for school teachers and youth workers on human rights and citizenship education, enabling the participants to further create common projects that would contribute to the inclusion and participation of young people in community life.

5. LONG-TERM APPROACH AND POLITICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PRIORITY ARE NEEDED

VIEWPOINT

"There is evidence that schooling systems in Europe have increased receptivity to inclusion of EDC/HRE approaches as one strategy to protect against discriminatory and prejudicial behaviours that undermine societies and contribute to youth alienation and potential radicalisation. I would argue that EDC/HRE is necessary for a healthy democratic society, regardless of the particular challenges faced at any given time. However, educational systems need to commit to carrying out EDC/HRE in a manner that is sustained and of high quality. This is consistent not only with the aim of the Council of Europe charter but also the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and the Global Citizenship Education initiative."

Felisa Tibbitts, Professor of Human Rights Education, University of Utrecht

While most respondents consider that there are no inconsistencies between EDC/HRE principles and national education policies, 66% of government respondents reported **inconsistencies** between policies and their implementation in 2016, compared with 20% in 2012. The most salient implementation issues according to the respondents relate to the lack of resources, lack of a long-term approach, lack of evaluation tools and lack of awareness among key partners.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Bulgaria: The educational standard on civic education (EDC/HRE) is taught across many subject areas at school. However, there is no monitoring mechanism in place to research and analyse the extent to which the standard is being applied in class, in what way and in which curricula.

Croatia: The curricular reform launched in 2015 at the political level and in the strategy declaratively advocates for citizenship education but on the implementation and curricular level citizenship education is marginalised and becomes one of the seven cross-curricular topics. This new approach is now in a process of public discussion.

Cyprus: Too few data are collected to assess whether what is decided at policy level is implemented successfully.

Estonia: Often there is lack of pedagogic awareness about hidden curriculum. This occurs when the knowledge obtained in civics classes about active and responsible citizenship in a democratic society is not supported by the school culture. EDC/HRE is often not valued in policy sectors outside education.

Greece: The greatest inconsistency exists between the curricula for EDC/HRE, the textbooks for use in schools and the teaching practices. While there are state-of-the-art statements of principle, the instructional materials are mainly academic-oriented and the teaching practices are sometimes traditional. More innovative and creative approaches are needed.

In the last two years, education has received unprecedented levels of political interest as an essential part of responses to current societal challenges. This has provided multiple opportunities for promoting citizenship and human rights education. Nevertheless, stronger continuity and stability in education policy is required to ensure that EDC/HRE programmes transcend political changes and diffuse the education curricula systemically so that they have an added value in the long run.

EDC/HRE must be given further political and pedagogical priority in the long term. This can potentially entail – among other avenues for such reinforcement – the mandatory provision of EDC/HRE at least in formal education in an effort to prioritise it, considering that the number of countries where EDC/HRE is not an obligatory subject at any age has remained unchanged in recent years.⁴

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: LITHUANIA

One of the major national programmes financed by the state is the Long-term National and Citizenship Education Programme, which allocates funds to the preparation of educational materials, teacher training, and research and collaboration with non-governmental organisations for promoting democratic citizenship. The Ministry of Education and Science has approved the Inter-institutional Action Plan of Civic and National Education 2016-2020, an indication that these education areas are among the priorities in Lithuania.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: CYPRUS

During the school year 2015-2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture set anti-racist policy as a goal for all schools, entitled Sensitisation of students against racism and intolerance, and promotion of equality and respect, in the context of the No Hate Speech Movement of the Council of Europe. The Code of Conduct and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents was produced aiming not to characterise or identify individuals as “racist” or “not racist”, but to identify any direct or indirect, purposeful or involuntary, acts and processes which lead to negative discrimination against individuals or groups based on their (perceived) diversity, develop urgent action for the prevention and treatment of racist incidents, and develop anti-racist culture.

USEFUL RESOURCE

Publication on [Curriculum Development and Review for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#), developed by the Council of Europe, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Organization of American States.

4. Comparing the 2012 *Report on the Implementation of the Charter* with countries' responses in 2016, as well as considering Eurydice (2012). *Citizenship Education in Europe*. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA P9 Eurydice and Policy Support). http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf.

6. CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION NEED TO BE CONNECTED TO EVERYDAY LIFE

VIEWPOINT

"Human rights may be deemed as abstract ideology or irrelevant and thus difficult to integrate in everyday life for teachers. In order for teachers to experience human rights education as relevant and prioritise to include it in their teaching, structures in teacher training and schools must systematically address relevance and responsibility. Further, clear and practical tools for teachers' everyday work need to be continuously updated and developed in co-operation with the wide array of actors in the educational system, including teachers, parents and students."

Jonas Christoffersen, Executive Director, The Danish Institute for Human Rights

Whereas government respondents considered that lack of support among education professionals, the media and the general public were the most important challenges to the promotion and development of such education, civil society organisations pointed to the lack of priority among decision makers.

While these issues are very closely interlinked, what is clear is that it is essential to demonstrate the relevance of democracy and human rights for everyday life, be it for resolving conflicts without violence, building cohesive societies through participatory decision making, successful integration of vulnerable groups or addressing disenchantment in democracy and the rise of populism.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- ▶ The Council of Europe educational video *Beat Bullying* explores what bullying is and how it affects us all, and shows how citizenship and human rights education can help us to make it stop. The video is available in English, French, German and Russian.

- ▶ *Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People.*
- ▶ [E-book: Shared Histories for a Europe without Dividing Lines](#). The e-book contains examples of teaching materials relating to significant historical examples of interactions and convergences within Europe.
- ▶ [Bookmarks](#) - A manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education.
- ▶ [Teaching controversial issues](#): A professional-development programme for teachers.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: UKRAINE

In February-March 2015, the non-governmental association Nova Doba organised civic education seminars in 20 regions of Ukraine. They were aimed at strengthening professional networks and communication, and at supporting the process of mutual understanding and reconciliation in Ukrainian society. The trainers were deeply impressed by the desire of educators from both East and West Ukraine to communicate, to learn and understand the situation and their willingness to solve problems.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: EUROPE

The Inclusion Express Campaign "Social rights are human rights too!" was developed by the Youth Express Network, together with young people facing exclusion and youth workers. The campaign advocated for access to social rights for young people facing discrimination, violence and exclusion. It built on the work done in the Enter project of the Youth Department and involved activities both online and offline all over Europe, drawing attention to the importance of social rights and of education about accessing social rights for young people.

7. PROVISION IN DIFFERENT AREAS AND TYPES OF EDUCATION NEEDS TO BE MORE BALANCED

VIEWPOINTS

"A mere focus on how society works, and the values of humanism and democracy might be perceived as irrelevant for students who have received these narratives earlier on in their education. There is a need to connect education for human rights and democracy to the academic field of each student. That's how we make the education relevant and effective in its use."

Chiara Patricolo and Helge Schwitters, European Students' Union

Over a third of respondents stated that there are scarce or non-existent references to EDC/HRE in laws, policies and strategic objectives, in vocational education and training, and in higher education (14 out of 36 respondents). Only seven respondents pointed out that citizenship and human rights education is promoted extensively in higher education institutions.

Respondents indicated that citizenship and human rights-related content is promoted mostly through specific departments at higher education institutions (e.g. law, educational sciences, history and psychology), but is rarely explicitly present elsewhere.

Unbalanced provision of EDC/HRE can be observed among the different areas of education level and types. Citizenship and human rights education appear to be less present in vocationally oriented education (where many disadvantaged and minority groups are found) as compared with general education. Recent research suggests that disadvantaged young people lose out on political learning when placed in vocational education and this could be one explanation about why this is the case.

Considering the importance of including citizenship and human rights-related issues in the whole education system and the need to further empower young people amid the socio-economic crisis, **the ethos of democracy and human rights needs to be more present and explicit both in vocational education and training, and in higher education.**

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: GERMANY

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is already an essential component and cross-cutting issue at all levels of formal and non-formal education, including (ongoing) teacher training, in the German education system. The measures and initiatives in EDC/HRE that already exist and are being further developed are consistent with the objectives and principles of the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE. Therefore, the implementation of the charter in Germany builds upon already existing educational policies and activities in EDC/HRE.

They receive further impulse from the Council of Europe charter according to the requirements at regional or state level as well as to requirements in the respective educational institutions.

USEFUL RESOURCE

[e-Pub - Higher Education for Democratic Innovation \(Council of Europe Higher Education Series No. 21\)](#)

8. CLEAR AND MEANINGFUL CRITERIA AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT TOOLS ARE NEEDED

VIEWPOINT

"[The Council of Europe Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education] states that the formal assessment of subject domains contributes to their status in curricula. We deeply share this view... We further acknowledge that the evaluation of citizenship and human rights education can be a sensitive area, yet demonstrates that a meaningful and internationally agreed-upon framework as well as corresponding tools and instruments for assessing knowledge, practices, value beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions is possible at the system, school, teacher and student level."

Dirk Hastedt, Executive Director, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

In almost two thirds of the countries, no criteria have been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in the area of citizenship and human rights education. Several respondents stated that they have yet to develop criteria for evaluation and that research in this area receives only moderate support.

There has been an ongoing debate as regards the assessment of citizenship and human rights education and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes. Evidence from other subjects taught in schools suggests that formal assessment contributes to their consolidated status in the curricula. Evaluating the effectiveness of programmes often helps enhance their effectiveness and secure resources. However, it is

often pointed out that citizenship and human rights education – like any other “values” education – is a sensitive area, and that there are certain dangers and concerns in relation to state involvement.

Clear and meaningful criteria and appropriate assessment tools are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of citizenship and human rights education.

A systematic formal national assessment for the effective implementation of policies in the framework of EDC/HRE using appropriate evaluation tools and instruments can help ensure that citizenship and human rights education is adequately assessed, reinforce the status of such education, and give it a solid position in the curricula.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: SPAIN

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport has recently devised a Strategic Plan for School Coexistence, with the collaboration of regional educational administrations (“autonomous communities”), of the Observatory for Racism and Xenophobia, the Institute for Women, and other tertiary-sector organisations.

Data collection to quantify the indicators of this general strategy for follow-up and assessment will take place steadily throughout the period of application of the Plan and will rely on the participation of civil society, the different departments of the central Government, and the autonomous communities.

9. SYSTEMATIC AND APPROPRIATE EVALUATION INCLUDING A BROAD PUBLIC DEBATE NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED

VIEWPOINT

“Civil society, by working collaboratively through broad coalitions, plays a key role in ensuring a high quality of human rights education, and needs to be given sufficient space for consultation and collaboration. A variety of stakeholders, including from marginalised groups, need to be integrated in consultations.”

Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International

Only over a half (55%) of the respondents stated that evaluations of strategies and policies undertaken in accordance with the aims and principles of the charter had been carried out or were foreseen. A more coherent and consistent approach is required to the assessment of progress in the area of EDC/HRE and to information, data collection and interpretation.

The replies received from the respondent countries show that collecting information from various actors is often difficult owing to the lack of established channels for such communication and to the data not being collected on a regular basis. On the other hand, the evidence suggests that including perspectives of different stakeholders is essential for the development of EDC/HRE. It enhances shared ownership and commitment, contributes to improved quality and strengthens effectiveness.

Citizenship and human rights issues and approaches need to be explicitly included in ongoing evaluations of education policy and practice and there should be effective ways of pooling such information from different sources.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: NORWAY

The Ministry of Education and Research evaluates policy documents and steering documents on a continuous basis, using recognised research institutions. The issues being evaluated are generally directed towards quality in education, i.e. more general than the charter’s contents, but often directly or indirectly relevant to the charter’s aims and principles.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: BULGARIA

A new standard on civic, intercultural and environmental education has been developed and will soon be enacted by the new curricula. The new curricula and educational standards have been subject to public discussions. They have been developed on the basis of extensive consultations and participation of educational professionals, academia and civil society organisations.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: TURKEY

The curricula of all courses have been reviewed and improved in the context of human rights and discrimination. With the new system of Turkish Board of Education, the curricula are examined by experts in educational programmes and are open to the public for 15 days for comment and critique in a web environment and then finalised. In addition, course books are examined by a group of experts chosen randomly among applicants. The experts examine the books with a view to assessing criteria such as human rights and discrimination.

10. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IS ESSENTIAL

VIEWPOINT

“International co-operation is key in sharing inspiring practices, and it would also be important to find the means to promote the upscaling of these methods and programmes by allocating balanced funding to this, shifting emphasis from innovation only. When evaluating good practice as well as citizenship and human rights education, it is important to introduce formative evaluation methods that support the formation of desired mindsets, and to avoid these crucial education areas falling victim of standardised testing.”

Eszter Salamon, President, European Parents' Association

The results show an increase in countries that either have, or are planning to take part in, international co-operation activities from 45% in 2012 to 73% in 2016. This is due in great part to initiatives driven by the Council of Europe and European Union – programmes such as Human Rights and Democracy in Action, which is open to all states party to the European Cultural Convention.

An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the Council of Europe provides a shared framework of reference, encouragement or motivation for stronger action and higher quality, in addition to opportunities for sharing and co-operation with other countries. More needs to be done in order to provide relevant support in accordance with specific needs and priorities of the countries.

FACTS AND FIGURES

There is a high level of co-operation among countries (73% in 2016), to a large extent due to initiatives of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

There has been a one-third increase in co-operation among countries (10 out of 30 replies) for those countries that participated in both cycles of the charter review.

Although co-operation among countries in the field of EDC/HRE has increased, opportunities for such co-operation are limited and do not meet the demand. Such co-operation ought to be further reinforced, as it can be instrumental in addressing the current, serious challenges to democracy and human rights in Europe. The pooling of expertise and peer-to-peer learning among countries are essential for addressing such challenges effectively.

More opportunities for co-operation with other countries is needed to strengthen relevant and innovative action, and to improve the quality of citizenship and human rights education. Given the countries' commitment to the values and principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, targeted co-operative actions can ensure sustainable progress and tangible results.

EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE: EUROPE

The Joint Programme of the European Commission and the Council of Europe on [Human Rights and Democracy in Action](#) supports co-operation projects between from three to eight countries with a view to exploring a topic of shared interest, collecting and analysing relevant data and producing practical tools for use in their education systems.

The projects cover a broad range of themes from teaching controversial issues and addressing violence at school, to digital citizenship and curriculum development.

11. THE CHARTER REVIEW PROCESS NEEDS TO BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED

VIEWPOINT

"The Council of Europe is perceived as one of the most significant organisations in Europe that systematically addresses the issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law [...] The adoption of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2010 marked a significant shift in defining these themes in member countries and in the way they are perceived in education."

Kateřina Valachová, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

A majority of the country respondents felt that the review process provided encouragement for stronger action and higher quality, an opportunity to promote good practice, a support tool for dialogue both with other countries and within the country, and access to expertise from other countries and from international institutions.

At the same time, according to the respondents from both governmental and civil society organisations, the charter is not well known in the countries. While the promotion of the charter is not an aim in itself, endorsement by the Council of Europe member states through a unanimous adoption in 2010, as well as its appreciation by civil society organisations (74 respondents claim that it is useful or very useful), make it a powerful tool for lobbying, advocacy and policy dialogue. Its broader dissemination and promotion are therefore essential and need to be supported.

FACTS AND FIGURES

About 80% of the civil society survey claim that young people in their countries have limited or no knowledge of the charter.

According to the conclusions of the civil society survey, many of the recommendations developed through the first review of the implementation of the charter in 2012 were accepted by the youth organisations and NGOs. It is clear from the data collected that they mainly co-operate in promoting and implementing the charter with other civil society organisations by organising common educational activities and advocacy campaigns or actions. This includes sharing and dissemination of good practices in EDC/HRE.

They also continue networking and sharing good practices at regional, national and European levels to promote the charter's implementation and ensure its dissemination to target groups so as to empower them to take action for the promotion and development of citizenship and human rights education. It is important to ensure that full use is made of the substantial potential of youth organisations and NGOs to support the implementation of the charter.

The "Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe" is expected to be a support tool for further development of EDC/HRE policy and practice. In particular, its findings will be used for the organisation of the Conference on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe (20-22 June 2017), for the development of the Council of Europe co-operation programme 2018-2019, and for fundraising with other donors for relevant projects and programmes.

It will be important to further improve the methodology of future charter reviews, in accordance with the substantial feedback received from the countries. In particular, the respondents provided the following recommendations:

- a) Further specify some topics and definitions and provide guidance well in advance for both qualitative and quantitative data collection;
- b) Include questions that allow the development of comparative indicators among countries;
- c) Conduct quality EDC/HRE studies in the countries to provide a more in-depth analysis of the situation;
- d) Focus on more thematic questions.

It is hoped that the report and the data that was collected during this exercise will be used extensively by many partners, researchers, education professionals and civil society organisations in Europe and beyond.

EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Austria: The focus should be on fostering co-operation with other players at EU/UNESCO/OECD level in order to avoid having similar questionnaires and surveys in times of limited resources.

Iceland: Submit the questionnaire on a regular basis and focus on elements that need to be worked on specifically.

Ireland: Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and indicator focuses only on formal education. It is crucial not to allow non-formal education fall off the agenda. There is a gap in research to support the use of indicators to map non-formal education and EDC/HRE, which means that at a time when the world is measuring the achievement of goals, the non-formal sector is silent – what gets measured gets treasured. It is crucial that this be addressed ... In addition, it would be very useful and appropriate to consult young people for/on this survey and have a line for comment from a young people's perspective throughout the survey.

Lithuania: We would suggest conducting the quality EDC/HRE studies in the member states. Such research would provide more accurate analysis of the situation.

Portugal: More effective support should be given to the EDC/HRE national coordinators to improve data collection. The next report should be a tool to inform policy making. Wide dissemination of the report through the Council of Europe and in each country could encourage progress in citizenship education.

12. FINAL COMMENT

"We must rethink education to ensure that it equips all learners with the skills, attitudes and behaviours that they need to contribute fully to their societies and global solidarity. Education must be more than transmitting information and knowledge. It must be about learning to live in a world under pressure and advancing new forms of cultural literacy on the basis of respect and equal dignity. It must be about connecting the dots between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Progress and challenges

Substantial **progress** has been made in the countries and education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are gaining increasingly more recognition in the education systems and in the school communities around Europe. Youth and other civil society organisations remain faithful advocates and practitioners of the charter.

At the same time, many important **challenges** need to be addressed. In particular, the survey demonstrates that lack of awareness of the relevance of such education to addressing the current challenges to the wellbeing of each individual and the wellbeing of our societies remain the main obstacles to promoting and developing such education effectively.

The key to making citizenship and human rights education relevant in everyday life is consistency between what we say about democracy and human rights and what we do to put this into practice – be it at school, in politics or in society at large.

The immediate social, economic and political **crises must not be an excuse** for the governments to neglect their responsibility "to provide every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education" (Article 5 of the charter). To quote the participants of the 3rd Compass Forum: "Human rights have to be promoted and defended at every level and at all times. We expect the Council of Europe and its member states to respond to the increase in violations and threats to human rights by stepping up their defence and promotion, in policies and in practice, at work and in classrooms, at borders and at sea, online and offline."

The universal agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals makes human rights education

an integral part of quality education and a **priority** for all governments. The charter review is an additional opportunity for the governmental and non-governmental partners in the Council of Europe to advocate citizenship and human rights education – by assessing what has been achieved, what lessons have been learned and what remains to be done.

It is important to make use of the current **political momentum** in order to highlight such relevance. From this perspective, the present review should be seen as an important contribution towards the Council of Europe Action Plans – on Building Inclusive Societies and on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism. At the same time, citizenship and human rights education must not only be seen as an emergency response in times of crisis, but also as a long-term tool for building democratic societies based on respect and dialogue.

The charter is the only international legal document that makes **explicit reference to both** education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. As such, it has potential for being further strengthened as a basic document for policy making and as a practical tool for promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law through education. It remains to be discussed how exactly this can be done, in a way that takes due notice of each country's context, needs and priorities, while making full use of the collective experience and expertise to strengthen Europe's defences against the rising threats and challenges.

What is clear is that citizenship and human rights education needs to be constantly questioned, tested, reviewed and updated, and that this process must be inclusive, respectful and democratic. It must not be about adding more content to education systems, but rather about doing things differently. And the Council of Europe member states can learn a lot from each other's experiences and achievements.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- ▶ [Council of Europe Action Plan on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism](#)
- ▶ [Council of Europe Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies](#)
- ▶ [Council of Europe Reference Framework for the Development of Competences for Democratic Culture](#)

PART II
KEY MESSAGES

At the invitation of the Council of Europe, a number of persons provided their feedback on the conclusions of the “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education”. Many of those who responded welcomed the progress made in the Council of Europe member states. As Costas Kadis, Minister of Education and Culture, Cyprus, points out, the Ministry “is committed to the important role education has in an increasingly changing world, hence it considers that the educational system should focus on the acceptance of difference, tolerance, the respect for other cultures as well as on the preparation of tomorrow’s citizens for living in a multicultural environment, in order to enable them to participate effectively in society”.

At the same time, many contributors agree that a lot remains to be done. “The most powerful way of learning is through participation and experience. Citizenship and human rights education is still a subject that is either taught theoretically and in fragment or is not included at all in the curriculum of many European schools”, says George Moschos, Deputy Ombudsman for Children’s Rights, Independent Authority “The Greek Ombudsman”.

The contributors also draw attention to the importance of inclusive public debates and vibrant civil society. “Nobody should be left at the margins, if we want to build pluralistic and open societies, if we want to prevent the populist threat and the establishment of authoritarian regimes”, say Anna Rurka, Sabine Rohman, and Michel Aguilar from the Council of Europe Conference of International Non-governmental Organisations. Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General of Eurochild, suggests that “the emphasis needs to shift from pressurising children to find the right answer over to encouraging an appetite for learning. They should be consulted on matters of concern to them, and the weight of their opinions should be respected by those who are working with and for them... Students need to be given a safe space to ask questions and develop critical thinking while building respect for difference”.

Many contributors also highlight the importance of a systematic approach. Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, calls on the countries to “design comprehensive policies to create a culture of human rights which permeates all strata of society, from schools to families and individuals, the media, the private sector, and state institutions. In this context, national action plans can prove particularly useful because they can mainstream the values of democratic citizenship and human rights in a coherent and systematic way”.

The full responses from all the contributors are included in the present chapter.

NURTURING THE UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ALL DESERVE DIGNITY, RESPECT AND JUSTICE

*Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein,
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Every day, we are confronted with news of hatred and violence; and the response we witness to violence and terror often involves more violence and terror, in a spiral of degrading barbarity. We all need to better think through our strategies if we are to tackle the world's challenges today, from poverty to conflict, discrimination, disease, climate change and beyond. We will only progress if our decisions are grounded in the common understanding that we all belong to one humanity and that all of us are equally deserving of dignity, respect and justice.

The purpose of human rights and democratic citizenship education is to generate and nurture this understanding. Human rights and democratic citizenship education help children and adults to identify their rights and claim them effectively; to make informed choices; to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner; and to participate responsibly in their communities and society at large. They support critical thinking and offer solutions to problems that are consistent with human rights principles.

To effectively perform this role, however, human rights and democratic citizenship education need to be relevant to the daily lives and experience of the learners. They must engage people, through participatory learning methods, in a dialogue about how human rights norms can be translated into social, economic, cultural and political reality. And they must take place everywhere, at all levels of education and training and in the context of any learning opportunity – whether in a public or private, formal, informal or non-formal setting. Also, they must contribute to inclusiveness and ensure in this regard that they are relevant and applicable to all members of a given society, regardless of their status.

Within educational systems, in particular, policies and legislation should ensure the inclusion of human rights and democratic citizenship education at all levels, not only in primary and secondary school systems. Higher education institutions, for instance, have the social responsibility not only to educate ethical citizens committed to the construction of peace and the defence of human rights, but also to generate global knowledge enabling us to address current world challenges with human rights-based solutions. Vocational training should prepare learners to perform their professional duties in line with human rights principles.

We should never consider human rights and democratic citizenship education as “optional extras” or routine obligations – they are vital undertakings to sustain social cohesion, promote inclusion and participation and prevent violence and conflict in our societies. They are an investment in our present and our future which we cannot afford to overlook.

WE MUST RETHINK EDUCATION TO EQUIP ALL LEARNERS WITH SKILLS TO CONTRIBUTE FULLY TO THEIR SOCIETIES AND TO GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

The Council of Europe “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe” makes the stakes clear. Today, more than ever, we must rethink education to ensure that it equips all learners with the skills, attitudes and behaviours that they need to contribute fully to their societies and global solidarity.

This is the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. This goal embodies a new vision of education for the 21st century – to advance human rights, empower citizens, bolster social inclusion and resilience, and mobilise innovation for sustainable development. Through Target 4.7 of the new goal, all countries have committed to ensuring that learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote human rights and global citizenship.

In this, UNESCO’s position is clear. Education must be more than transmitting information and knowledge. It must be about learning to live in a world under pressure and advancing new forms of cultural literacy on the basis of respect and equal dignity. It must be about connecting the dots between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Taking this vision forward calls for action across the board – namely in advancing global citizenship education, education for human rights and education to prevent violent extremism. UNESCO is working with Member States in Europe and across the world, to identify new competences for learners, to develop new curricula and pedagogical guidance tools, and to support new approaches to teacher training. For example, UNESCO’s 2017 Forum on Global Citizenship Education focuses on the role of teachers to advance citizenship and human rights education.

In turbulent times, education is essential to empowering women and men, girls and boys, with the values, attitudes and skills they need to withstand the pressures the change and make the most of its opportunities, to build more just, inclusive and peaceful societies.

NEED FOR INCREASED FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

*Jonas Christoffersen, Executive Director,
Danish Institute for Human Rights*

Clear structures for Human Rights Education (HRE) – especially for teachers and students – is crucial for carrying out principles set in, *inter alia* the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. It follows from the charter and national legislation that teachers play a crucial role in encouraging and teaching human rights in schools. Further, the charter points towards incorporating HRE as a central topic in the curricula of educational institutions.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has worked systematically with the strengthening of HRE in Denmark. The institute's extensive research on HRE illustrates that guidelines, policies and objectives for HRE are vague throughout the educational system spanning from school managements and teacher training colleges to municipality and state level actors.

For example, a study carried out by the institute shows that many lecturers at Danish teacher training colleges do not feel competent in teaching HRE, for example in teaching how to link human rights to the everyday work in schools. The study shows that 87% of the students in the teacher training colleges do not find that their education motivates them at all, or motivates them only to a lesser extent, to teach HRE. Furthermore, 74% responded that familiarity with concepts such as human rights, discrimination and equal opportunities is largely or to some extent a relevant factor for determining whether the topics will be included in the teaching or not.⁵

Human rights may be deemed as abstract ideology or irrelevant and thus difficult to integrate in everyday life for teachers. In order for teachers to experience HRE as relevant and prioritise to include it in their teaching, structures in teacher training and schools must systematically address relevance and responsibility. Further, clear and practical tools for teachers' everyday work need to be continuously updated and developed in corporation with the wide array of actors in the educational system, including teachers, parents and students.

5. Cecilia Decara and Lene Timm, The Danish Institute for Human Rights (2013), *Mapping of Human Rights in Danish Schools*, available at: www.humanrights.dk/publications/mapping-human-rights-education-danish-schools.

CONNECTING CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Human rights are founded on an inherent conception of human dignity. Citizenship encompasses a sense of “obligation to community”. These two inherent notions are embedded in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) approach to address the challenges undermining people’s dignity.

We see a culture of anger, fear, intolerance, mistrust and division prevail in today’s European context, and beyond. We see a collective responsibility to promote respect for human dignity and rights. However, such promotion cannot be confined to formal systems; it needs to inform everyday life however informal that may be. Skills- and value-based education needs to be systematically incorporated into all types of curricula – both formal and informal – and should be done from the earliest age possible.

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies’ experience as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the provision of humanitarian education testifies to the dire need to scale up investment and efforts in this area if we are to transform the way we think and relate to each other.

For this change to be genuine and sustainable, education systems need to create trust and ownership, and engage children, adolescents and young adults meaningfully, support inter-generational dialogue and collaboration, and contribute to building social capital. They need to put learners at the centre, to acknowledge and value their diverse knowledge, experiences and learning styles, and allow them to freely express themselves and participate actively in decision-making processes that affect their own learning and lives.

Learning to live together peacefully along with community engagement activities aimed at nurturing respect for diversity, fostering tolerance, intercultural dialogue and promoting social inclusion needs to form an integral part of the education system.

The impact of such a type of educational content and approach to individuals’ mindsets, attitudes and behaviours is evidenced by the IFRC’s global Agents of Behavioural Change (ABC) initiative.⁶ Youth and adults undertake a personal transformation process allowing them to then act as role models and peer educators. They will then help others develop self-awareness, understand societal issues as well as learn and practice important skills such as empathy, active listening, critical thinking, non-violent communication and mediation. The initiative has shown great results in changing participants’ perception of themselves and others as well as reducing levels of discrimination and violence where they live.

As the Red Cross Red Crescent family, we are strongly committed to encouraging and supporting individuals to take up an active role and responsibility in caring for themselves and others in their everyday lives.

6. For more information on the IFRC’s Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change initiative, see www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/principles-and-values/youth-as-agents-of-behavioural-change-yabc.

THE WEIGHT OF CHILDREN'S OPINION SHOULD BE RESPECTED

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General, Eurochild

With the growing levels of inequality, social mobility, societal fragmentation and isolation of different communities in Europe, Eurochild sees a growing need for investing in quality citizenship and human rights education. As advocates for the rights and wellbeing of children, we see the importance in including these in the curricula from an early age. With that we would hope to shape a new generation that understands and respects diversity and embraces social civility.

Integrating democratic citizenship and human rights education into all educational curricula is crucial. It needs to be actively promoted and advocated for by applying pressure on member states to uphold high standards of quality in this regard. Furthermore, its implementation needs to be monitored and evaluated. This is especially important now in light of increasing support for extreme political movements and the threat of violent radicalisation.

While integrating democratic citizenship and human rights education into children's curricula is important, it should not be our only focus. It is even more vital to embed participatory practices into all subject matters and across all forms of education, at all ages. It is not enough for children to be taught about their rights and responsibilities, they need to understand what these concepts mean in practice. The education system needs to respect children's rights; attend to the individual needs of each child; and nurture children's confidence so they listen to others opinions and trust their own judgment. The emphasis needs to shift from pressurising children to find the right answer over to encouraging an appetite for learning. They should be consulted on matters of concern to them, and the weight of their opinions should be respected by those who are working with and for them.

The growing involvement of young people in violent extremism in recent years highlights the importance of promoting counter-narratives and introducing value-based education. Building children's understanding of the root causes of violent extremism (such as discrimination, prejudice and intolerance) is a good example of something that cannot simply be taught. It has to be practised and facilitated on a bilateral level. Teachers need to receive training on how to educate children on such sensitive topics and have the skills to attend to the needs of individual students while managing conflict. Students need to be given a safe space to ask questions and develop critical thinking while building respect for difference. Reforming education systems to allow for increased engagement and participation of children themselves is therefore crucial.

EVALUATION OF CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CAN BE A SENSITIVE AREA, BUT IT IS NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE

Dirk Hastedt, Executive Director, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

On behalf of the IEA, I would like to congratulate the Council of Europe for preparing this important report on the state of citizenship education. In our view, the report illustrates the diversity of approaches taken towards citizenship and human rights education, progress towards aims at the system and policy level yet also a set of apparent gaps in terms of scope, implementation and evaluation.

In the context of formal education in schools, the IEA's primary area of activity, the information provided by the council's members echo findings from our ongoing research into civic and citizenship education, which started more than 40 years ago. Our current International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) 2016 corresponds to a large number of the areas in the report as well as the underlying charter for EDC/HRE and framework of competencies. We therefore welcome the members' interest to initiate and promote research to describe the current situation at various levels and generate comparative information to advance.

In particular, the report states that the formal assessment of subject domains contributes to their status in curricula. We deeply share this view and include an array of domains in our studies, especially civic and citizenship education and computer/digital information literacy, besides the most prominent domains such as reading, mathematics and science. We further acknowledge that the evaluation of citizenship and human rights education can be a sensitive area, yet demonstrated that a meaningful and internationally agreed-upon framework as well as corresponding tools and instruments for assessing knowledge, practices, value beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions is possible at the system, school, teacher and student level.

I am convinced that the results of IEA's ICCS 2016 study, released in late 2017, will provide an opportunity to study important connections and similarities between the findings in this report and student outcomes – as well as for fruitful collaboration in the future.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM SHOULD FOCUS ON RESPECT FOR OTHER CULTURES

Costas Kadis, Minister of Education and Culture, Cyprus

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus is committed to reforming the educational system with a view to turning into reality the vision of a better and more modern system that will meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) gives special emphasis on re-defining the aims and the content of curricula as well as the different school subjects, in order to form a more unified educational approach, aiming to create a system that will offer high quality education to pupils, thus assisting them to maximise their potential and acquire skills and knowledge which will enable them to become active citizens. The curricula are based on the principle that children should not only be aware of their rights and responsibilities but also be able to safeguard, respect, accept and tolerate the rights of others. A key point for this long-term approach is the appreciation of the personality of every child; through the commitment to the respect and safeguard the implementation of human rights.

The general aim of education in Cyprus is the development of free and democratic citizens with a fully developed personality, who contribute to the social, scientific, economic and cultural progress of the country and to the promotion of co-operation, mutual understanding, respect and love among individuals and people, for the prevalence of freedom, justice and peace. The MOEC is committed to the important role education has in an increasingly changing world, hence it considers that the educational system should focus on the acceptance of difference, tolerance, the respect for other cultures as well as on the preparation of tomorrow's citizens for living in a multicultural environment, in order to enable them to participate effectively in society.

Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) are among the political and pedagogical priorities of the MOEC, therefore specific actions are undertaken to incorporate them in school curricula. These actions include educational policies, policy implementation measures, learning environment changes and opportunities for professional development of teachers.

THE MOST POWERFUL WAY OF LEARNING IS THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND EXPERIENCE

*George Moschos, Deputy Ombudsman for Children's Rights,
Independent Authority "The Greek Ombudsman"*

The most powerful way of learning is through participation and experience. Citizenship and human rights education is still a subject that is either taught theoretically and in fragment or is not included at all in the curriculum of many European schools.

The Greek Ombudsman, after consulting numerous students, has addressed various proposals to the Ministry of Education, asking for measures to be taken to strengthen the democratic character of schools and to promote participation of students in decision making in all classes and in all levels of education. These proposals include among others the organisation of regular class assemblies and discussions, the promotion of dialogue in classrooms during lessons, the familiarization with children's rights through practical examples and role playing, the involvement of students in the agreement and implementation of class and school rules, the operation of students' councils, the participation of students in conflict resolution procedures, the operation of peer mediation teams, the promotion of school activities on issues that are attractive and interesting for students, such as physical and mental health issues, environmental awareness, artistic and cultural expression, etc. Relationship and sexuality education should also be included in such activities.

It is essential that teachers will be trained to organise classroom relations and communication in ways that strengthen personal commitment and responsibilities and at the same time promote the values of listening, mutual respect and reaching agreements through dialogue. Sitting students often in circle in the classroom and organising small groups with specific tasks that are expected to be fulfilled through collaboration is very important.

We should carefully explore ways both in formal and in non-formal education to make children more aware and active about the role they are expected to play in their local communities, in order to have their human rights recognised and respected by everyone.

COMPASSION AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ARE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ENSURING DIGNITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Nils Muižnieks, Human Rights Commissioner, Council of Europe

Democratic citizenship and human rights education are very close to my heart. At the start of my career in human rights I pored over UN and Council of Europe manuals to organise teachers' seminars and discussions with secondary school students. Today, as Commissioner for Human Rights, I continue devoting a great share of my work to promoting these values to the wider public. In the majority of my country visits, for example, I meet with university and high school students to discuss the human rights protection system, its origins and relevance to the contemporary issues that our societies face. I promote these values also in my meetings with ministers, parliamentarians and law enforcement officials. At the same time, my office engages all year round in meetings with judges, prosecutors, media professionals, and high school and university students to contribute to their formal and informal education programmes.

In an era where a large amount of information flows on the Internet and through social media, I have given increasing prominence to my engagement on social media to promote human rights and democratic citizenship also via these platforms.

European countries have made tangible progress in increasing awareness about human rights and democratic citizenship, but this needs to be done on a continuous basis. We need to keep on nurturing these values and transform them into action. Governments should design comprehensive policies to create a culture of human rights which permeates all strata of society, from schools to families and individuals, the media, the private sector, and state institutions. In this context, national action plans can prove particularly useful because they can mainstream the values of democratic citizenship and human rights in a coherent and systematic way.

Democratic citizenship and human rights education do not only teach norms: they also make us more compassionate, more human, more socially engaged, thus providing the building blocks to ensure dignity, freedom and justice for all. We have to invest more in our own democratic citizenship and human rights education and those of others.

EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR NURTURING POSITIVE IDENTITIES AND BUILDING SOCIETIES ON COMMON GROUND

Tibor Navracscics, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Our common values are at the core of our communities. They are the backbone that makes the difference between cohesive societies and an aggregation of communities that live parallel lives, close but never together. For diversity to blossom and bear fruit, it takes common inspirations, a set of unnegotiable principles.

This is everything but an abstract discussion. If radicalisation is partially nurtured by a feeling of exclusion, is it not because we failed to transmit and promote our European values to uprooted young people yearning to build an identity? If social cohesion is jeopardised, isn't it because we forgot to build communities on common ground? If the integration of people with a migrant background is sometimes difficult, is it not because we also failed to provide a positive and confident identity, and we did not share our culture of democracy?

Our values are not a given. They must be learned, understood and owned by every citizen. Democracy is more than a process. Democracy is a mentality, an ethos, a reflex. It is a commitment that nurtures a system, and it is a sense of responsibility. That is why it must be secured. Considering that today's education is tomorrow's society, I firmly believe there is no a better place to promote and pass on those values than families and schools – and no better vector than education to secure democracy.

This task is at the core of my mandate. That is why I, together with all EU Member States, several weeks after the *Charlie Hebdo* and the HyperCasher attacks, signed the Paris Declaration in March 2015 to reaffirm our commitment to promote our common values and citizenship. Two years later, the balance shows how strong this commitment is. More than 1200 projects are committed with Erasmus+ funding, a network of role models has been launched, e-Twinning, the largest teachers' platform in the world, is being extended to third countries, and our co-operation with the Council of Europe is stronger than ever. And there is still a lot more to come. I am convinced that together, we have launched a movement that will not stop. In times of political turmoil, in times of uncertainty, the last thing we can afford is to neglect and forget the value of our values.

IN HIGHER EDUCATION WE NEED TO CONNECT EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY TO THE ACADEMIC FIELD OF EACH STUDENT

*Chiara Patricolo, Member, Executive Committee, and Helge Schwitters,
Rights and Solidarity Coordinator, European Students' Union*

What is, and what should be, human rights education and education for democratic citizenship within higher education? Only seven respondents report that citizenship and human rights education is promoted extensively in higher education institutions, and when it's done it's mostly provided in the faculties of law, social sciences and the humanities. The last observation is hardly surprising as it is obviously connected to the curricula of its students. The question then arises: What is, and what should, human rights education be in higher education? How can we make it relevant? Students within higher education study for other purposes than children and young people in primary and secondary education. We want to specialise ourselves within a specific field, we want to earn competencies we deem relevant for our professional lives, and develop our critical thinking and understanding of the world. There's an inherent curiosity in each and every student that drives us towards finding the truth, new approaches, unfound knowledge and innovation. We should make use of this as the starting position for emphasising the relevance of human rights and democracy.

Students move on to employment as highly skilled workers with capacities to shape, and reshape our societies. Knowledge that can transform the world we live in, and offer new solutions to existing challenges, further develop our understanding and tools, and increase our understanding of ourselves and our surroundings. In all of this lies the power of education and knowledge. It shapes the world, and it empowers the ones that can access it. Human rights and democracy should be taught on these premises. We should teach our students how to use the knowledge they're seeking and developing, for the good of all society. They should constantly assess how science can be used, but also misused, to change the world we live in. We should stand up for truth in times of alternative facts, and share our knowledge democratically. A mere focus on how society works, and the values of humanism and democracy might be perceived as irrelevant for students that have received these narratives earlier on in their education. There is a need to connect education for human rights and democracy to the academic field of each student. That's how we make the education relevant, and effective in its use.

TRANSLATING COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS INTO REALITY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Guido Raimondi, President, European Court of Human Rights

Signed in 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights, the first strong act of the Council of Europe, was also the first concrete expression of the ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention also established an international mechanism to ensure compliance with the commitments of States parties. Since 1998, this role has been played by an independent judicial body, the European Court of Human Rights. The Convention and the Court have been very successful. They have an influence that makes them a source of inspiration even beyond Europe; and through the protection and development of rights they have been a factor for peace, stability and the strengthening of democracy. Nowadays the Convention is much better known by judges, lawyers, the academic world, civil society actors.

However, progress still needs to be made. The essential point is that in the first place states take ownership of the Convention for the benefit of persons under their jurisdiction. The Convention now forms part of the domestic law of the states. Citizens must therefore be able to invoke their rights before national authorities. The Court strives to play a role in human rights training. It has prepared themed fact sheets as well as guides on jurisprudence or admissibility. It has developed a highly efficient HUDOC database. Each year, it welcomes more than 18,000 visitors who attend hearings and receive training. However, the states must also, with the help of the Council of Europe, take initiatives in training, and in the translation of the Strasbourg judgments. It is principally at state level that this training in human rights must take place and I can only encourage the states to implement this. That is also part of shared responsibility.

WE NEED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Anna Rurka, President, Sabine Rohman, Chair of the Education and Culture Committee, and Michel Aguilar, Chair of the Human Rights Commission, Conference of International Non-governmental Organisations, Council of Europe

Education for active democratic citizenship and human rights constitutes the essential instrument for the effectiveness of rights. Nobody should be left at the margins, if we want to build pluralistic and open societies, if we want to prevent the populist threat and the establishment of authoritarian regimes.

We must raise the democratic voice, a voice that respects the diversity of the population that makes up our societies. The desire to reinforce each individual's capacity to act so that he or she has control over his or her own life, his or her participation in the public decisions that concern him or her starts with education and leads to taking on responsibility. This can be learned from a very young age, in all areas of normal life and through multiple supports, in particular digital technologies.

On the one hand, digital technologies accelerate and amplify the spread of human rights education; on the other, they favour the systematisation of applications that generalise and standardise the behaviour of each individual. This process, which is largely unnoticed, erodes fundamental values and consequently the moral authority of the institutions which guarantee them. Civic space is formed either outside the institutionalised bodies, or in the gaps left by them. In this context, these institutions can no longer fulfil their functions without civil society and NGOs.

We must understand in a much deeper way the link between human rights and the needs of individuals. This knowledge can only be genuinely achieved through peer-to-peer activities, more horizontal actions that constitute a real remedy for the future of democracy within the member states of the Council of Europe. The Conference of INGOs assumes its responsibility in this field, both on the ground and within the Council of Europe, and is ready to play its part in this development.

EVALUATION SHOULD HELP US GROW, AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IS KEY

Eszter Salamon, President, European Parents' Association

Citizenship and human rights education must start in early childhood, in the family, and it must start as learning by doing, followed later by formal education efforts to strengthen and support the right habits and routines by adding theoretical background in the form of civic studies or similar curriculum items. The learning by doing approach helps not only children, but also professional educators and parents to become more engaged and conscious active citizens, to apply the human rights approach in all aspects of their lives.

Citizenship and human rights education should be an overarching, transversal element and should not be taught as an isolated subject. It should be given priority politically and also in formal education, in a way that offers each and every child and their parents a meaningful engagement in all aspects of school leadership, from design to execution and evaluation, regardless the school type, the track or any other aspect. It is a most unfortunate trend that while the European Union and its institutions have realised that this engagement is the key to educational success and also the right means to foster active participation in other areas, such as elections, as well as the key to fighting xenophobia, exclusion and populism, more and more countries are restricting the rights of children and parents in decision making in education.

International co-operation is key in sharing inspiring practices, and it would also be important to find the means to promote the upscaling of these methods and programmes by allocating balanced funding to this, shifting emphasis from innovation only. When evaluating good practice as well as citizenship and human rights education, it is important to introduce formative evaluation methods that support the formation of desired mindsets, and to avoid these crucial education areas to fall victim of standardised testing.

WE NEED SYSTEMATIC INVESTMENT AND AN EMPHASIS ON THE APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN DAILY LIFE

Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International

Human rights education is key to addressing the underlying causes of injustices around the world. The more people know about their rights and the rights of others in society, the better equipped they are to protect them.

Amnesty International welcomes the “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe” and its key conclusions. This report comes at a crucial time, when discrimination, racial profiling and extremism are widespread across Europe. Several European countries are seeing an increase in hate crimes, especially targeted towards asylum seekers and other marginalised groups.⁷

Amnesty International sees numerous challenges in the current political environments in Europe to implementing a long-term, sustainable human rights education strategy. For example, communities such as Roma still face discrimination in accessing their economic, social and cultural rights.⁸ There is an urgent need to challenge this, combat discrimination, and change narratives. As stated in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, Article 2,⁹ human rights education can make an important contribution to this.

Civil society, by working collaboratively through broad coalitions, plays a key role in ensuring a high quality of human rights education, and needs to be given sufficient space for consultation and collaboration. A variety of stakeholders, including from marginalised groups, need to be integrated in consultations.

Amnesty International reaches around 430 000 people in Europe and Central Asia through our human rights education work, the majority of projects being in formal education. Our work in 25 European countries across a range of educational spaces has shown that there can be a significant gap between policies, curricula and what is actually happening in everyday life in schools. Textbooks and interactions between school management, teachers and pupils may reinforce stereotypes and prejudices. Teachers may not feel confident and may not have the necessary knowledge to teach about and through human rights.

There is no one simple solution to address the complex societal issues of today. However, to create societies that respect the rights of all people, we need systematic investment and an emphasis on the application of human rights in daily life.

The second review cycle of the charter is an important reference point for Europe regarding commitment towards human rights education and a step towards systematic and comprehensive information about implementation.

7. Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2016/17*.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, *inter alia*, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.

SCHOOLING SYSTEMS NEED TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE AND A SHARED VISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Felisa Tibbitts, Professor of Human Rights Education, Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, University of Utrecht

There is evidence that schooling systems in Europe have increased receptivity to inclusion of EDC/HRE approaches as one strategy to protect against discriminatory and prejudicial behaviours that undermine societies and contribute to youth alienation and potential radicalisation. I would argue that EDC/HRE is necessary for a healthy democratic society, regardless of the particular challenges faced at any given time. However, educational systems need to commit to carrying out EDC/HRE in a manner that is sustained and of high quality. This is consistent not only with the aim of the Council of Europe Charter but also the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and the Global Citizenship Education initiative.

I would like to offer two recommendations for the "Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe". The first is for schooling systems to organise democratic spaces for a wide range of stakeholders to dialogue and come to agreement about the specific ingredients and strategies for EDC/HRE. Such dialogues might take place at the highest level but also at the school level, where learners, educators, school support staff and families must co-exist in a shared community. A meaningful and dynamic EDC/HRE framework will be developed through a shared vision that includes human rights values and ways of working democratically and inclusively in classrooms and whole schools.

My second recommendation is to underline the importance of introducing and sustaining quality EDC/HRE in vocationally oriented education. This sector can be neglected in EDC/HRE-related curriculum reforms, thus reinforcing a structural inequality among groups of students who differ in their career choices. Every learner deserves citizenship education that is based on human rights values and promotes inclusion, agency, respect and skills for positive engagement in society.

DEMOCRACY IS BEST TAUGHT IN PRACTICE

Kateřina Valachová, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

The Council of Europe is perceived as one of the most significant organisations in Europe that systematically address the issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I highly appreciate the fact that the Council of Europe protects and defends these values. I am also happy to acknowledge that they are reflected in its activities in the field of education. The adoption of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2010 marked a significant shift in defining these themes in member countries and in the way they are perceived in education.

In the Czech Republic, citizenship education is enshrined in the documents of the curricula for primary and secondary education. We consider it to be an inherent component of what children have already been learning for many years. Thus, we see the “Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe” as a convenient opportunity to get acquainted with the approaches to the topic of education for democratic citizenship in other European countries as well as with new trends and forms of work with pupils. It is also a good opportunity to share our good practice with others.

Democratic administration, which covers one of the important parts of Chapter III of the charter, has triggered deepening of our activities aimed at further strengthening the participation of all actors, parents, educators, professionals and the general public, and also pupils and students themselves, in the management of educational institutions. On that account, in the Czech Republic, we are currently implementing a project “Systematic support of civil education in schools (stabilising the role of pupils’ parliaments in civic education)”, which aims to verify in practice the conditions for effective functioning of pupils’ parliaments in primary and secondary schools. It remains true that democracy is best taught in practice. Students assigned to this project actively use in specific situations the skills acquired on the basis of learned theoretical knowledge, they learn to engage in democratic debate and to join the search for acceptable solutions. We will be happy to share the project outputs with the other nearly 50 member states of the Council of Europe.

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Analytical summary of replies from governments (available on-line):

- ▶ Katerina TOURA, Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Directorate of European and International Affairs in Education, EDC/HRE Coordinator, Greece: author
- ▶ Bryony HOSKINS, University of Roehampton, London: reviewer
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Results of the 2nd review with non-governmental and youth organisations (available on-line):

- ▶ Dariusz GRZEMNY, Poland, expert with the Youth Department
- ▶ Edouard PORTEFAIX, France, expert with the Youth Department

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- ▶ Marko GRDOŠIĆ, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe
- ▶ Jana HAINSWORTH, Secretary General, Eurochild, UK
- ▶ Dirk HASTEDT, Executive Director of the IEA, The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
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- ▶ Nils MUIŽNIEKS, Human Rights Commissioner, Council of Europe
- ▶ Tibor NAVRACSICS, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
- ▶ Chiara PATRICOLO and Helge SCHWITTERS, European Students' Union
- ▶ Guido RAIMONDI, President, European Court of Human Rights
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The Council of Europe promotes human rights and democracy through education, as a means of building peaceful societies where the human dignity of all people is respected. With the adoption of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in 2010, the member states committed to “the aim of providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education”. The state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe is reviewed every 5 years with member states and civil society with the aim to identify achievements and challenges and to propose action at European, national and local level. This report covers the second review for the period 2012-2017.



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The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.