

COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDING CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

26TH SESSION

28-29 SEPT. 2023



**MINISTERIAL
RESOLUTIONS**

**The Transformative Power of
Education: Universal Values
and Civic Renewal**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CONTENTS

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"MINISTERIAL RESOLUTIONS :
The Transformative Power of Education:
Universal Values and Civic Renewal"

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2

FOREWORD

5

OVERVIEW

6

RESOLUTIONS

1 — RENEWAL OF THE CIVIC
MISSION OF EDUCATION

6

2 — EDUCATION IN TIMES
OF EMERGENCIES AND CRISIS

8

3 — HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

10

4 — COUNCIL OF EUROPE
EDUCATION STRATEGY 2030

13

5 — EUROPEAN YEAR OF DIGITAL
CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN 2025

16



FOREWORD

During the **26TH SESSION** of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in Strasbourg on 28 · 29 September 2023, leaders emphasised the critical role of education in fostering resilient, democratic societies amidst technological and societal changes. This gathering underscored a **UNIFIED COMMITMENT** to uphold education as a key promoter of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

As we navigate through times of uncertainties and crises, be they socio-political, or environmental, the resolutions contained within this document offer a directional beacon. They are **a call to action for all member states to renew their dedication to the civic mission of education**, ensuring that it is resilient, inclusive, and adaptable to the ever-evolving landscape of our societies.

The inclusion of cutting-edge topics such as the role of Artificial Intelligence in education underscores our recognition of the need to **harmonise technological advancements with our enduring values of democracy and human rights**.

The Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030 *“Learners First – Education for today’s and tomorrow’s democratic societies”* is a forward-looking framework that places learners at the centre, preparing them not just for the challenges of today, but also for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Furthermore, the establishment of a **European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025** marks a significant step towards embracing the digital transformation in our educational systems.

This initiative aims to foster digital literacy and responsible digital citizenship, equipping learners with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital world with confidence and a sense of responsibility.

This document is a call to educators, policymakers, and all stakeholders in education to collaborate, innovate, and take bold steps towards realising an educational landscape that is dynamic, inclusive, and capable of nurturing the next generation of democratic citizens.

As we present these resolutions and strategies, we invite you to join us in this endeavour – an endeavour that promises to **shape the future of education and, in turn, the future of our democratic societies**.

#

ADAPTABILITY

DIGITAL



CITIZENSHIP

INCLUSIVITY



Each resolution contains detailed action plans, principles, and recommendations for member States to implement in their national education policies and strategies.

OVERVIEW

Through the resolutions, a strong emphasis is placed on democratic values, human rights, digital transformation, and the adaptability of education systems to address a range of **SOCIETAL CHALLENGES**.

1 Renewal of the Civic Mission of Education

The resolution discusses the importance of education in **promoting democratic values**, human rights, and rule of law, emphasising **the role of young people** in democratic life and decision-making processes.

2 Education in times of Emergencies & Crisis

This resolution focuses on the challenges and strategies for providing **quality education during emergencies and crises**, such as natural disasters, pandemics, and conflicts.

3 Harnessing the Potential of AI in & through Education

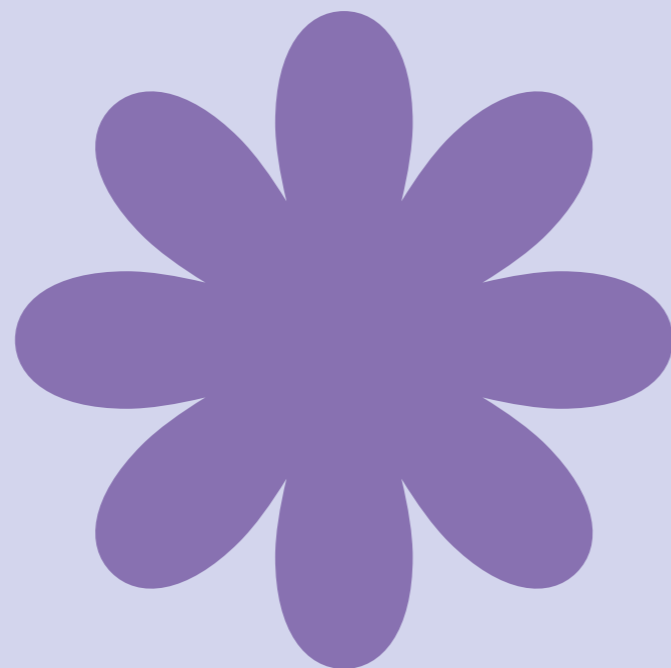
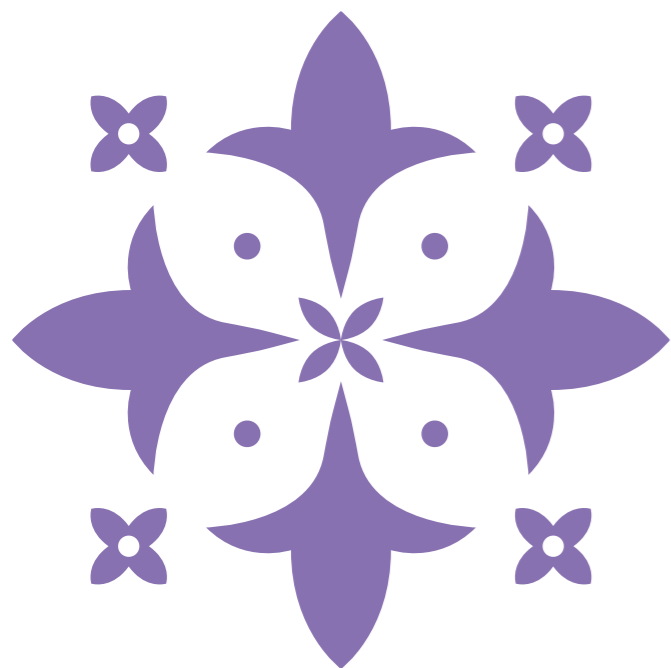
This resolution addresses **the impact of AI** on education, advocating for curricula that encompass both technological aspects of AI and its **societal implications**, ensuring the **protection of human rights** and democratic values.

4 Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030

This strategy outlines the Council of Europe's **long-term vision for education**, focusing on democratic citizenship, social responsibility, digital transformation, and more.

5 Establishment of a European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025

This resolution proposes **dedicating the year 2025 to digital citizenship education** across Council of Europe member states, emphasising the importance of digital literacy and the **responsible use of technology** in education.





Renewal of Civic Mission of Education

Ministers emphasise education's key role in promoting democracy and human rights, advocating for innovative solutions to societal challenges, and aligning with UN SDGs for inclusive, equitable education.

The Ministers advocate for expanded implementation of democratic citizenship and human rights education.

Acknowledgment of the Steering Committee for Education's Contributions

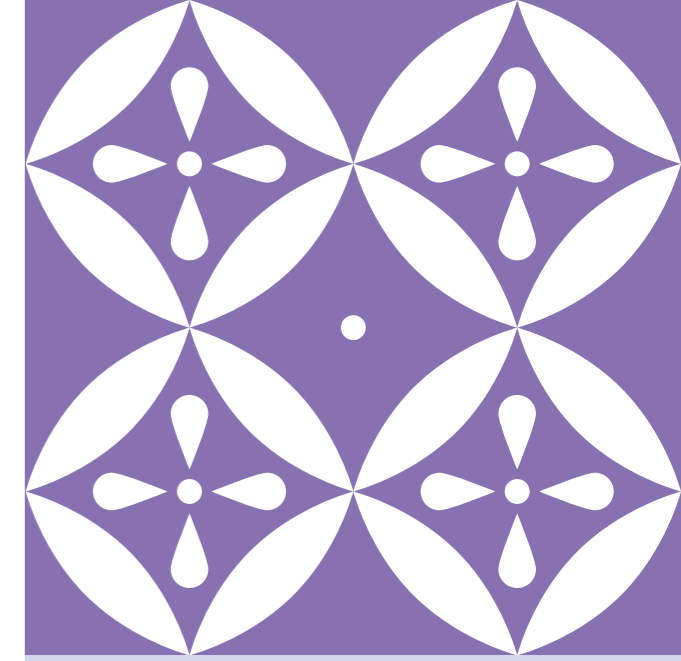
The Ministers commend the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) for its crucial role in instilling democratic values and human rights across the educational spectrum. This recognition acknowledges the Committee's success in **weaving a culture of democracy into every level of education, confronting societal shifts, populism, and authoritarian nationalism.** The CDEDU's initiatives are lauded for their alignment with the Council of Europe's overarching goals to cherish human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, resonating with the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy. This also underscores the commitment to actively **involve young people in democratic processes,** reflecting a response to the Secretary General's observations on the state of democracy and the rule of law in Europe and the recommendations from the High-level Reflection Group to fortify democracy through education.

Encouragement for Further Implementation

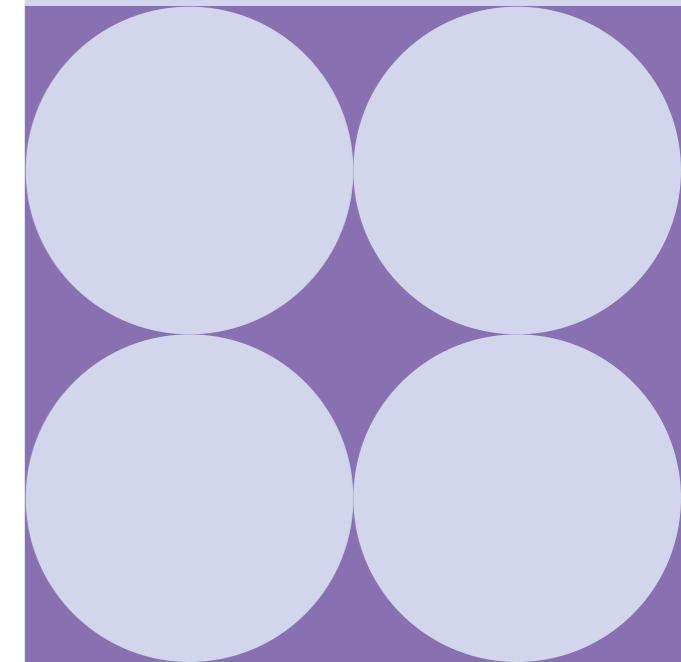
The Ministers advocate for the expanded implementation of the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, alongside the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). This encouragement stems from an acknowledgment of the evolving societal challenges that demand adaptive education systems—challenges such as democratic erosion, questions surrounding the rule of law, and threats to human rights. The push for further adoption reflects a deep-seated belief in **empowering the youth and children in democratic decision-making, fostering inclusivity, diversity, and intercultural dialogue.** It also acknowledges the global framework of the UN's SDGs, particularly SDG4, and the need for education to play a pivotal role in addressing issues like intolerance, the environmental crisis, and the promotion of sustainable development, thereby ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Mandate for a European Space of Citizenship Education by 2030

By directing the CDEDU to form a European Space of Citizenship Education by 2030, the Ministers set forth a vision for a unified and extensive approach to democracy education across Europe. This ambitious directive aims to **establish foundational principles of citizenship education** and to explore the **creation of a fund dedicated to democracy education.** It seeks to broaden the application of the RFCDC across various educational levels and sectors, with an eye towards fostering a robust democracy education, enhancing education for sustainable development, and guaranteeing the right to quality education for all, especially vulnerable groups. The envisioned European Space of Citizenship Education embodies the strategic goals of the Council of Europe's Education Strategy (2024-2030), aiming to confront the multifaceted social challenges that threaten democratic societies in Europe by advocating for sustainable development and fostering an inclusive, equitable educational framework.



#DEMOCRACY





Education in times of Emergencies & Crisis

Amidst educational challenges presented by crises, the Education Ministers gathered in Strasbourg pledged to enhance stability, inclusivity, and resilience through the initiatives of the Council of Europe.

Support the development and further implementation of a Council of Europe’s Toolbox on Resilience for Education in member States

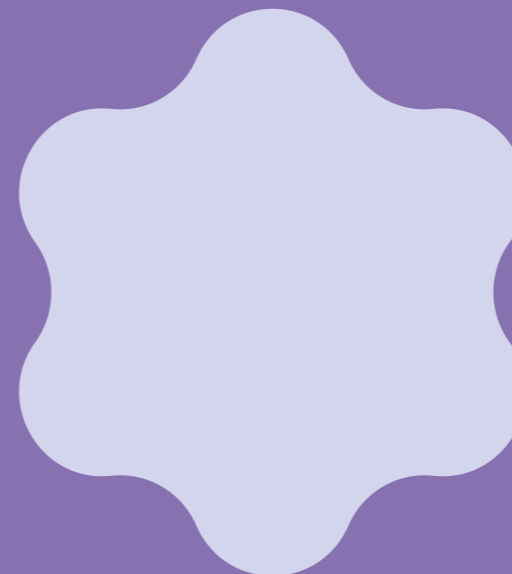
The endorsement of the development, piloting, and implementation of the Council of Europe's Toolbox on Resilience for Education underscores a significant commitment to practical solutions for education resilience. This toolbox, based on the resilience principles, aims to **provide member states with digital resources and methodologies to enhance their educational systems' preparedness and response capabilities during emergencies and crises**. Supporting this initiative indicates a proactive approach to not only theorise resilience but also to operationalise it through tools that can be adapted and applied within diverse educational contexts, ensuring that all learners have access to inclusive and equitable quality education, irrespective of the circumstances.

Welcome the work of CDEDU on resilience in education in times of emergencies and crisis

The Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) has been pivotal in addressing education during emergencies and crises. Its thematic focus group has co-developed resilience principles, which serve as the foundational goals for educational systems and communities. These principles aim to **ensure policy and actions are inclusive and maintain quality education across all levels of governance, regardless of the crisis type**. This initiative reflects the collective acknowledgment of the urgent need for educational systems to adapt and respond to crises effectively, demonstrating the Council of Europe's commitment to strengthening education's role in fostering resilience among learners.



#RESILIENCE



Recognise the importance of resilience principles for building resilient educational ecosystems

The Council of Europe’s approach to education in times of emergencies and crisis promotes a holistic understanding of the role of education for community resilience and robustness through the six principles for building resilient educational ecosystems and the toolkit thereto, notwithstanding differences between contexts and types of emergencies and crisis:

- 1 STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE
- 2 ENSURING CONTINUITY
- 3 EXPANDING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION
- 4 INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY
- 5 FOSTERING CO-OPERATION
- 6 INCREASING EFFICIENCY

In particular, the co-development of the 6 resilience principles of education at times of emergencies and crisis, representing the overarching goals of educational systems and communities for policy and actions at all levels of governance, and promoting inclusiveness and provision of quality education at all times, would provide a step-by-step guidance and frameworks that would allow for the assessment of strategies and mechanisms. On the one hand, public authorities are empowered in assessing the resilience of educational systems under stress, thus identifying relevant actions needed to improve it. On the other, the competences and assets of education systems should complement resilience-oriented emergency and strategic planning conceived at community level.

3

Harnessing the Potential of Artificial Intelligence in & through Education

The Education Ministers are committed to unlocking Artificial Intelligence's potential in education, prioritising human rights, and embracing regulatory measures for its ethical use and integration.

Acknowledge the impact of AI on education and human rights

AI's growth in education offers significant benefits, including **personalised learning and better access for vulnerable groups**. Yet, its deployment demands stringent consideration of human rights to ensure that privacy, equality, and non-discrimination are upheld. Acknowledging AI's potential alongside its risks is vital for **responsibly integrating technology into education**, emphasising the need for a balanced approach that fosters innovation while safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. This balance is crucial in leveraging AI's transformative power for educational advancement without compromising on fundamental human values.

Recognise the need for regulation of AI use in education

The integration of AI in education highlights the critical need for regulations to protect human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Regulations should mitigate AI's potential negative impacts on rights and freedoms, promoting transparency, accountability, and fairness. This need reflects efforts like the Council of Europe's AI Committee's development of a **Framework Convention on AI, Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law**. Effective regulation is essential to safeguard individuals and build trust in AI technologies, ensuring their responsible use enhances educational outcomes without compromising ethical standards or legal protections.

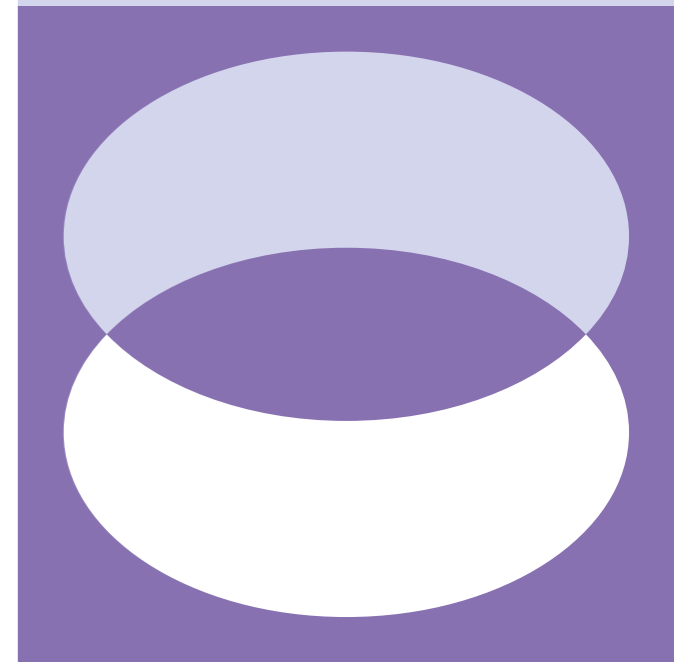
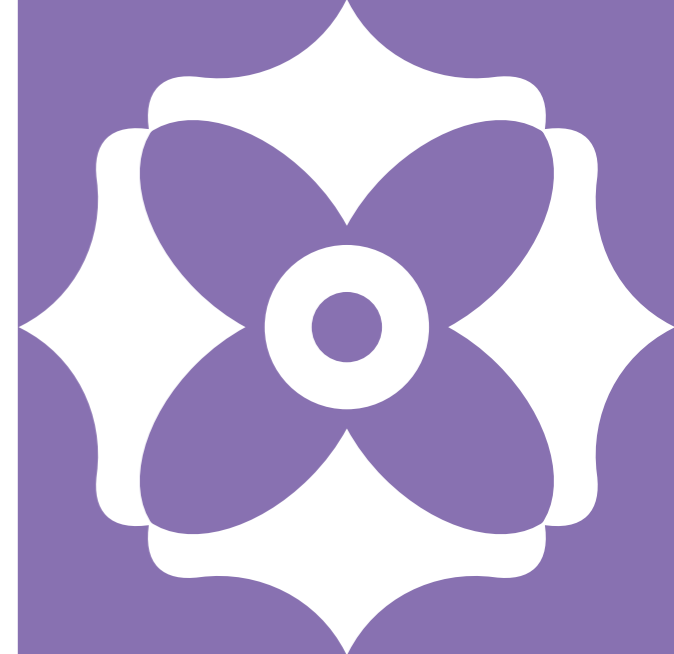
Support the development of legal frameworks to regulate AI in education and teaching processes

The proposal to **develop legal instruments for regulating AI in education** is a critical step forward in ensuring that AI technologies are harnessed responsibly. These instruments are envisaged to align with the provisions of the future Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law of the Council of Europe, specifically tailored to the education sector. By **establishing clear guidelines and standards for AI use in education**, these legal instruments aim to protect human rights and promote democratic values, while also encouraging the integration of AI in ways that enhance teaching and learning processes. This initiative reflects a commitment to not only addressing the ethical challenges posed by AI but also to leveraging its potential to improve educational outcomes.

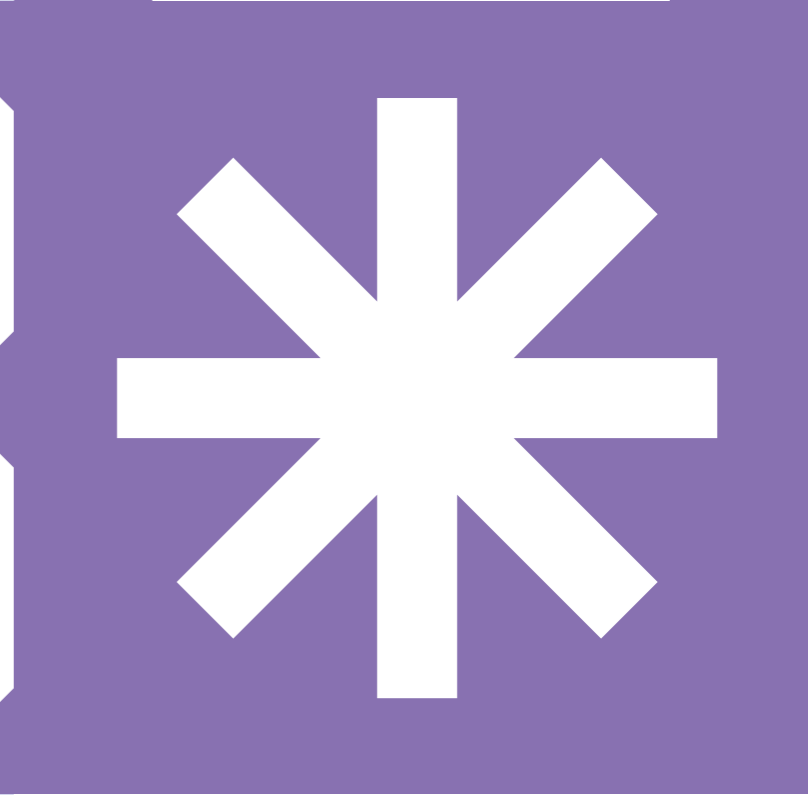
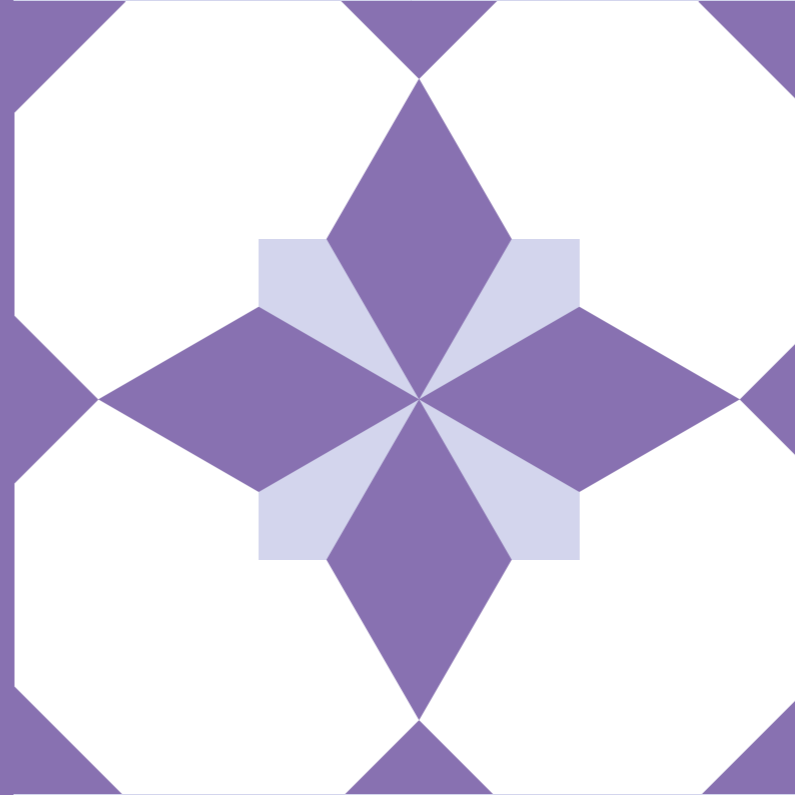
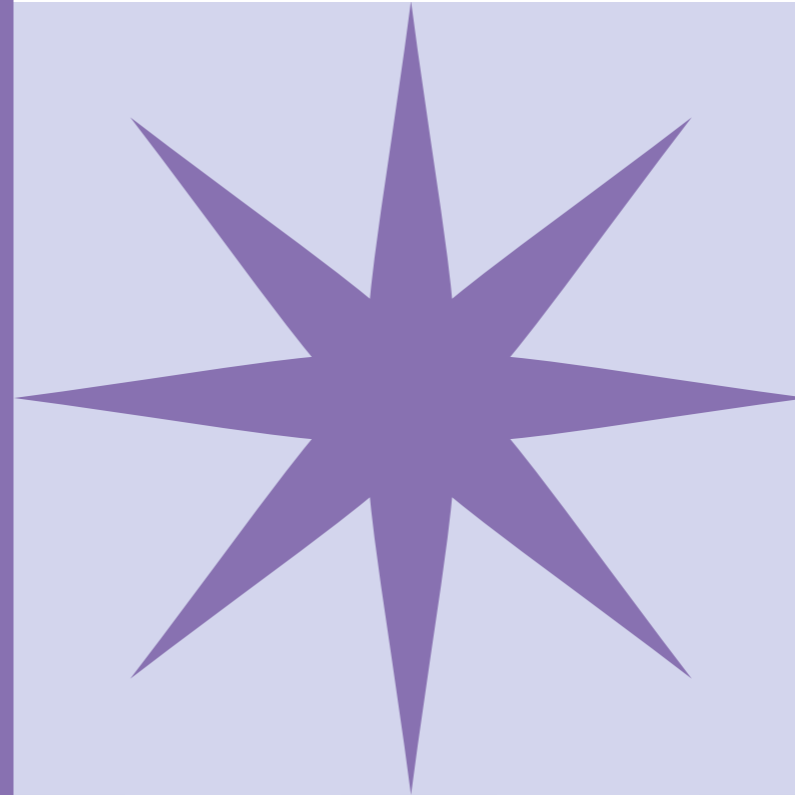
Invite collaboration for the implementation of this resolution

The successful implementation of this resolution requires **cooperation with member States and key international actors and stakeholders**. By working together, stakeholders can ensure that the development and use of AI in education are guided by principles that prioritise human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Collaborative efforts are essential to create a regulatory framework that is both effective and adaptable, capable of responding to the evolving landscape of AI technologies and their applications in education. This cooperative approach underscores the **collective responsibility to harness AI's potential** in a manner that is ethical, equitable, and aligned with the shared values of European and international communities.

#TRANSFORMATION



Acknowledging AI's potential in education alongside its risks is crucial for a balanced approach that fosters innovation while safeguarding human rights, emphasising the need for regulation to ensure privacy, equality, and non-discrimination.



4

Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030

The Education Ministers are committed to advancing the Council of Europe Education Strategy 2030, centring on *Learners first* to champion democracy and rights through education.

Endorse the new Education Strategy 2030 “Learners first”, its 3 pillars and Implementation Action Plans

The new Education Strategy 2030, themed "Learners first," is endorsed to address contemporary and future educational needs. It focuses on 3 pillars: renewing the democratic and civic mission of education, enhancing education's social responsibility and responsiveness, and advancing education through a human rights-based digital transformation. These pillars are supported by comprehensive Implementation Action Plans designed to operationalise the strategy's objectives. This endorsement represents a commitment to adapting education systems to promote democratic values, social responsibility, and digital literacy, ensuring that **education remains relevant and impactful in today's and tomorrow's democratic societies.**

Resolve to enable learners to actively uphold, defend, and benefit from democratic values

A central resolution is to empower learners across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote, and benefit from the core values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. This involves **creating curricula and study programmes** that not only meet learners' needs but also focus on **building self-confidence and developing competencies required to live in democratic and pluralistic societies.** Initiatives aim to raise awareness of learners' rights, improve the status and professional development opportunities for educators, and provide learning environments that enable learners to exercise their rights and responsibilities effectively.

Emphasise the integration of democracy and democratic citizenship at all levels of education

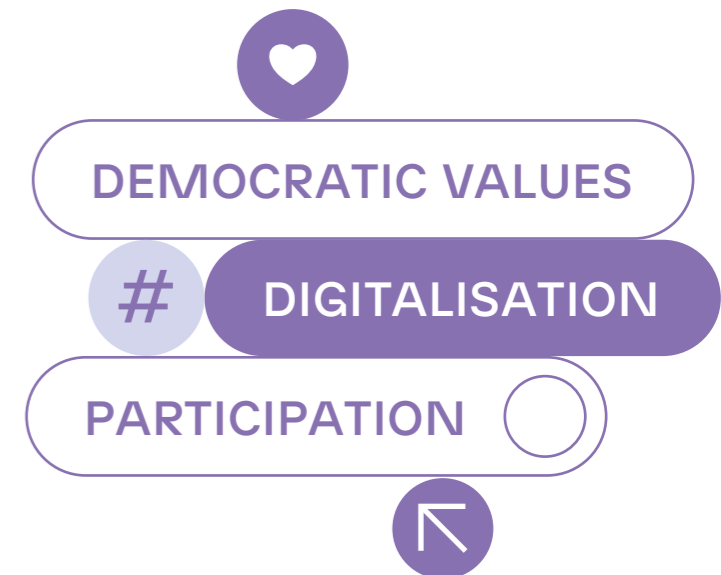
The strategy places significant emphasis on embedding democracy and democratic citizenship at the heart of education at all levels. This includes promoting the development of competencies that foster a democratic culture and intercultural understanding across all subject areas and beyond the formal curriculum, through a holistic institutional approach. The aim is to **protect fundamental values across the Europe Higher Education Area**, fostering active citizenship and competencies for democratic culture in all study programmes, ensuring that **academic freedom is safeguarded.**

Enhance educators' competences for promoting democratic culture and intercultural understanding

Enhancing educators' competences is crucial for promoting democratic culture and intercultural understanding. The strategy calls for **initiatives to raise educators' capacities** to support participation, equality, equity, inclusion, plurilingualism, interculturalism, and sustainable development. This also involves enhancing trust between sciences and society and **building synergies between formal, non-formal, and informal learning activities** to foster a culture of democracy and human rights within educational institutions and the broader community.

Promote the democratic participation of all learners and members of the educational community in the governance of educational systems and institutions

Promoting the democratic participation of all learners and educational community members in the governance of educational systems and institutions is a key objective. This approach recognises the value of **involving learners and educators in decision-making processes, enhancing the transparency, accountability, and inclusivity of educational governance.** It aligns with the broader goals of fostering active participation in democratic life and ensuring that educational institutions reflect the democratic principles they aim to instill in learners.



5

European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

Support the crucial initiative to inaugurate the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025, aimed at empowering citizens for effective participation in the digital era.

Welcome the proposal to establish a European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025

Welcoming the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education proposal, we recognise it as vital for tackling digital complexities. It focuses on **enhancing digital literacy and citizenship, especially among youth, to navigate the digital world responsibly**. This initiative by the Council of Europe aims to boost awareness, promote digital skills, and deepen understanding of digital citizenship across Europe, addressing the rapid advancements in technology.

Invite member States to promote and support this initiative at national and international levels

Member States are invited to actively promote and support the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education both nationally and internationally. This involves creating targeted campaigns, providing

necessary resources, including funding, and involving all relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation, and evaluation of digital citizenship education activities. Governments are encouraged to **pursue cooperation at the national level, designing and implementing strategies and initiatives that advance digital citizenship education** and leverage digital technologies to enhance education.

Encourage cooperation and sharing of educational resources and best practices in digital citizenship education

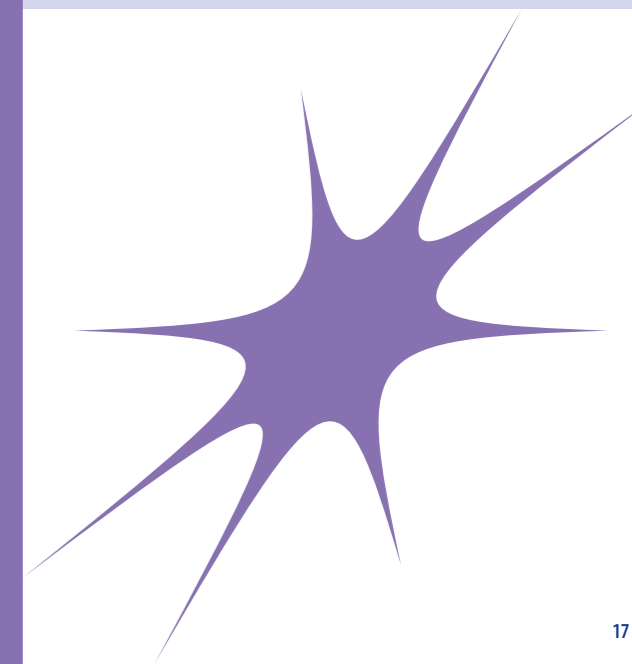
Cooperation and resource sharing are key to the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education's success. Member States are encouraged to **exchange innovative teaching methods and digital resources**, supported by the Council of Europe. Pooling expertise will amplify digital citizenship education's impact, meeting European citizens' needs and fostering competencies for a democratic culture in the digital era.

The Council of Europe's proposal for a European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025 aims to enhance digital literacy and citizenship, focusing on youth. It encourages member States to support and promote digital skills through campaigns and resources, advocating international cooperation and resource sharing.

This initiative seeks to prepare citizens to navigate digital complexities responsibly, fostering a democratic culture in the digital age through awareness and education.



#DIGITAL25




SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN EUROPE



The Council of Europe Education Strategy

2030, *Learners First* aims to foster resilient, democratic societies through learner-centred and digital citizenship education, highlighted by the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship Education. It calls for collaboration and innovation to prepare learners for future challenges and opportunities.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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