



## **STEERING COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION (CDEDU)**

### **STATEMENT**

### **ON THE EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

**Unanimously approved at the 1st Plenary session on 15-17 March 2022**

We, the members of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg for its first meeting, governed by Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe on 15-17 March 2022,

- after considering the consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine for the continuity of education of children and young people in Ukraine or displaced in the neighboring countries, as well as the impact of population displacement on the education systems of host countries,
- having taken note of Resolution CM/Res(2022)2 on the cessation of the membership of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 March 2022 at the 1428<sup>ter</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies);
- noting that the Committee of Ministers condemned in the strongest terms this aggression, which is unprecedented of in the history of the Council of Europe over the last seventy years,
- having taken note of the priorities of the Council of Europe's Action Plan on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025),

Emphasise that in today's divided Europe, the aims outlined in the European Cultural Convention (1954) remind us of the crucial role that education plays in peacebuilding by learning about each other's languages and histories,

Express our deep concern about the flagrant jeopardizing of the right to education by the aggression of the Russian Federation, which creates conditions that make it impossible to enjoy and exercise this fundamental right enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments,

Reassure the Ukrainian people, schoolchildren, students, teachers and the Ukrainian educational community of our unwavering solidarity and support in these dark days of their history,

Extend our gratitude to Ukraine's neighbouring member States, which have welcomed and provided support to the Ukrainian refugees,

Call on Council of Europe member and observer States to provide support to the Ukrainian people and all displaced/refugee persons by this conflict without discrimination, in particular those currently enrolled in school and higher education, in order to enable them to have access to education, training and higher education,

In particular, call on Council of Europe member and observer States to ensure the access of learners who have had to flee from Ukraine to quality education within their respective education systems in accordance with Recommendation CN/Rec (2012)13 on ensuring quality education,

Invite the governing bodies of the Partial Agreements with education-related activities (ECML, OHTE, North-South Centre) to consider appropriate measures within their respective mandates,

We commit to prioritizing within the framework of the Council of Europe's Education for Democracy Programme, and while respecting the constitutional structures, national and local contexts, actions aimed at educational continuity for displaced/refugee persons through the following initiatives:

1. Develop psychological support programmes for children and young people impacted by war trauma and displacement.
2. Strengthen and diversify the training offer for the teaching and non-teaching staff who will be directly involved in the reception and integration of refugee children and young persons in the education systems.
3. In this respect, promote the training modules developed by the Council of Europe in the framework of its Education for Democratic Citizenship and Education for Digital Citizenship programmes and in particular the Learning Modules Online courses such as "How to Welcome Newcomers to the Classroom" or "The Key to Media Literacy: Creating Safer and More Democratic Schools in the Digital Age" to support the integration of refugee and displaced children and young people in schools and to fight against misinformation.
4. Promote the linguistic integration of children and young people in national education systems by enhancing the variety of instruments of the Council of Europe's Linguistic Integration programme for migrants and refugees in countries where it is most required.
5. Pay specific attention to materials that provide practical assistance to school leaders and teachers in their challenging duty of addressing current events in classrooms across Europe in a way that improves education for democratic citizenship.
6. Ensure the visibility of the Council of Europe's platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education, including those on languages of schooling, language as a subject, language in other subjects and intercultural education, and the corresponding ECML thematic areas.
7. Ensure the right to fair recognition of qualifications as provided for under Article 7 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention of the Council of Europe and UNESCO.
8. Accelerate the use of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), a tool set up to assess the qualifications of displaced and refugee students for which documents are insufficient or missing, in order to improve

their access to further education and work and invite those member and observer States that have not yet done so to join the EQPR.

9. Initiate without delay and in accordance with its mandate as adopted by the Committee of Ministers the work on the elaboration of a standard-setting instrument to ensure the right to education for all in times of emergency.
10. Increase collaboration with other international organisations in order to develop coordinated shared responses for the benefit of all affected countries' educational stakeholders.

The Committee expresses gratitude to those countries that have already made voluntary contributions and invites Council of Europe member and observer states consider additional voluntary financial contributions to fund the aforementioned initiatives, which should be tailored to national contexts and specific circumstances.