# Third Review of the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

## DRAFT **REPORT**

# Third review (2022) of the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
## [CM/Rec(2010)7]

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*Prepared by*

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The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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## Executive Summary

This report presents the main findings from the third review cycle of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The review started in November 2021 and finished at the event "The art of Learning Equality, Dignity, and Democracy – Forum on the present and future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe", which was held in Turin, Italy, on April 11-13, 2022.

The present study considered the extent to which the issues identified and recommendations from the last review cycle (2016) have been addressed.  Three main aims guided the review process : 1) further strengthening the Charter implementation; 2) supporting the development of strategic goals for the next five years; and 3) facilitating the development of national indicators/benchmarks/priorities that can allow assessing progress achieved and guiding further action at national and international level.

Chapter 1 of the report offers a brief overview of the conceptual definitions guiding the study, as well as a description of the research design used. Chapter 2 analyses the main trends observed in relation to the Charter implementation, including national level policy developments, investments in capacity building and implementation, as well as disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Then a discussion of key transversal challenges is offered to complete the findings from the five sub-sections. Chapter 3 presents emerging issues to be considered for further research, as well as recommendations for improving the Charter implementation process. Finally, the epilogue to this report provides a summary of key points to be considered in relation to the war in Ukraine.

**Key findings**

The key findings of this review address  the three main aims stated above, along with the recommendations stemming from the review process and the conclusions of the Forum held in Turin, Italy, in April 2022.

- While substantial progress was observed in terms of the inclusion of EDC/HRE in European education systems, a systemic approach specifically addressing HRE is still absent in most education policy frameworks. The strong emphasis on the development of citizenship competences poses the question whether schools, teachers, and educational staff are adequately prepared to support learners in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values related to this competence.

    *Recommendation: Emphasis should be given to the relevance of EDC/HRE at the national and local levels of policy action, without losing sight of the universality of human rights values*

- In formal general education and initial vocational education and training (VET), the persisting challenge is to provide access to EDC/HRE to students in school-based VET, that are perceived as not as open to including EDC/HRE in the curriculum. Moreover, teachers in VET

schools appear to have less access to training on these topics in comparison to their peers in formal general education.

*Recommendation: EDC/HRE should be present across all levels of education, but particular attention should be paid to vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.*

- In a majority of countries there is still work to do in relation to democratic governance, involving all actors – e.g. students, teachers, parents, school leaders, etc. In relation to student participation, countries that submitted their replies to the surveys for this review provided examples of practice to promote the participation of all pupils and students in school governance.

*Recommendation: Schools are important learning environments.  They should be encouraged to move away from the "tokenistic" approach to EDC/HRE in favour of long-term strategies and programmes. Youth workers and other EDC/HRE practitioners can have a key role in supporting schools to build a more democratic environment.*

- When it comes to parents and school leaders, the data collected for this review paint a different picture; co-operation between governmental agencies and civil society organisations, NGOs, and other community organisations was pointed out as a key challenge by the focus groups participants. This observation was made in particular with regard to co-operation with parents and other members of the school community such as school staff, teachers, and school leaders.

*Recommendation: Parents are one of the hardest groups to reach according to NGOs and youth organisations. Strategies and tools to help parents and the broader community to understand the value of EDC/HRE need to be developed.*

- Supporting teachers in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address EDC/HRE in the classroom remains a key challenge, in particular when it comes to teachers translating EDC/HRE policies into practice. It is also important to take into consideration that teachers' perceptions and values may not always align with the values promoted in the curriculum.

*Recommendation: Teachers' involvement not only in training opportunities, but also in the policy design and implementation processes, could help to improve the provision of EDC/HRE at school. Exploring the intersection between teacher agency and EDC/HRE can provide more empirical evidence about their professional autonomy and the ways in which they deal with the translation of policies related to EDC/HRE in the curriculum and the school community.*

- Much as in the last review cycle, higher education and research are still underlined as areas of particular importance for EDC/HRE. Data collected for this review shows that progress made in terms of provision of EDC/HRE in higher education is still limited. In terms of research on EDC/HRE, more studies about EDC/HRE implementation are needed to understand the current gaps and avenues for improvement, in particular at school.

*Recommendation: Research should be a key area of further action in the next five years. Gathering data on EDC/HRE implementation across sectors would allow to systematise and exchange good practices.*

- Learner assessment in EDC/HRE remains an area for further improvement. While there has been progress as described in the last Eurydice report (2017), countries have provided very little information on assessment methods aligned, in particular with regard to student assessment in initial VET.

*Recommendation: Recent guidelines support the implementation of the RFCDC as research on appropriate assessment methods for EDC/HRE.*

- Training and professional development was noted as a high priority for all EDC/HRE stakeholders during the last review, given that it is the critical mechanism for EDC/HRE policy implementation. Both NGOs and youth organisations consider the lack of training opportunities for educators and youth workers to be a fundamental challenge, although NGOs are still the leading providers of capacity-building opportunities at the national level.

*Recommendation: training should have greater presence in initial teacher education (ITE) and training for teacher educators (e.g. university lecturers, teacher trainers, etc.). A concrete recommendation is to establish a European network of trainers under the auspices of the Council of Europe. This would ensure there is a stable mechanism to support the dissemination and the adaptation of the materials at the local level and then to collect the lessons learnt to update the approaches on the European level.*

- The previous review highlighted three areas of education where EDC/HRE training was less available – i.e. pre-school, VET, and higher education. Pre-primary education is not compulsory in many countries and often there are no specific national standards regarding EDC/HRE. When it comes to higher education and initial VET, EDC/HRE training is moderately accessible both to VET students and teacher students. For teacher students, access to EDC/HRE training is an essential factor for the universal provision of EDC/HRE; however, data collected show that the level of the EDC/HRE training provision for the university staff and VET professionals is still very low.

*Recommendation: Particular attention should be paid to VET and higher education, two areas where EDC/HRE is still lagging behind, and key educational actors should have a greater involvement in decision making processes regarding EDC/HRE.*

- Policy makers, youth organisations, and NGOs see the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as having created important challenges for EDC/HRE implementation. Three main types of developments regarding EDC/HRE provision emerged during the pandemic: first, provision stopped completely in some countries; second, EDC/HRE provision was continued through civic education; and finally, EDC/HRE was implemented through a cross-curricular approach where it existed before the pandemic. Third, while the provision of online

EDC/HRE is on the rise in non-formal education, the surveys show that generally educators are minimally equipped to teach with the EDC/HRE online format.

***Recommendation:*** *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on provision and quality of EDC/HRE should be considered in the development of strategic goals for the upcoming five-year cycle.*

- There are several common challenges to policy implementation process in EDC/HRE and that should be considered in the development of indicators and priorities at the national level. These challenges relate to:

  - Conceptual discrepancies about EDC/HRE: Implementing activities in EDC/HRE outside the non-formal education sector is difficult – more than is the case for any other topic.

    ***Recommendation****: Countries should strive to harmonise the conceptual definitions and methodologies for implementing EDC/HRE at the national, regional, and local level*

  - Lack of monitoring and evaluation data: An important challenge reported in the last review cycle (2016) was that gathering information from various actors was difficult due to the lack of established channels of communication and the absence of planning with regard to data collection. Based on the findings from the surveys and focus groups, the situation hasn't changed substantially.

    ***Recommendation****: A stronger commitment from countries to better monitoring and reporting on EDC/HRE is crucial for improved planning and implementation of EDC/HRE initiatives. In the non-formal education sector, providers should add monitoring and evaluation to the training for educators and facilitators and further share information about EDC/HRE activities and their impact.*

  - Unequal access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups: The policy/practice gap in the provision of EDC/HRE to vulnerable groups became visible in this review. According to focus groups participants what is *"written on paper"* in legal and policy frameworks is not necessarily what ends up being implemented, and marginalised groups are usually most affected by the setbacks in the implementation process.

    ***Recommendation****: A stronger emphasis on reaching out to all audiences (and more specifically, to marginalised groups) is needed. EDC/HRE training needs to be accessible for all young people with different abilities and backgrounds.*

  - Need for more co-operation between and within sectors (e.g. government, civil society, private sector, etc.): The level of recognition of the important role of NGOs and youth organisations in the provision of EDC/HRE is limited. The co-operation of formal (e.g., schools, and higher education institutions) and non-formal educational organisations (NGOs and youth organisations) remains at a moderate level, but when it comes to policy makers as such the level of co-operation is lower. Youth organisations consider

that the participation of NGOs in EDC/HRE policymaking and policies implementation along with better funding is the action area that needs to be prioritised to better implement the Charter.

*Recommendation: Suitable policy frameworks for ensuring co-operation are paramount for EDC/HRE. Governments should foster sustainable and long-term partnerships with other sectors (e.g. civil society, labour market, academia, etc.) with the aim of ensuring the provision of EDC/HRE through formal and non-formal learning.*

- Funding: Reductions/cuts in funding are among the main challenges for EDC/HRE implementation as it was identified in the previous review cycle. Funding for EDC/HRE initiatives is a low priority, and the financial support offered to non-governmental actors remains as low as in 2016.

*Recommendation: Increasing funding for the non-formal education sector is vital to ensure EDC/HRE provision in the long-term.*

# 1. Introduction

Since the last review cycle of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (hereafter "the Charter") was conducted in 2016, a growing interest in the promotion of democratic citizenship at school has taken over the European education agenda (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017; Joris, Simons & Agirdag 2022). Concepts such as global citizenship education (GCED), education for sustainable development (ESD), and education for democratic citizenship (EDC), all of which refer to attitudes and values needed for learning to live together and actively engage in the societies we live in, have gained prominence in European education policy. Different international actors have taken stand to promote the importance of values-based education (e.g. UNESCO), while at the regional level, the European Union and the Council of Europe have strongly promoted "European values" such as freedom, equality, solidarity, and respect for human rights (Zygierewicz 2021).

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 has contributed to bringing forward the importance of an education that promotes human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, and peaceful coexistence in the global education agenda. In Europe, the Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (Council of the European Union 2018) includes citizenship as one of the eight key competences. Citizenship competence is defined as the "ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability." (Council of the European Union 2018: 10). The Council of Europe, with the introduction of the Reference Framework of competences for democratic culture (hereafter, "the RFCDC") in 2018, reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education and offered a competence-based approach to these topics.

The developments cited above are evidence that citizenship and human rights education are now more prominent at the international level. However, the translation of these developments into national policy has not been a uniform across Europe, as observed in this study. Important challenges at a political, social, and economic level are testing the capacity of policy makers to meet these challenges while supporting principles such as democratic participation, equality, and respect for human rights. The continuing waves of migrants and refugees seeking safe haven have been met by the so-called "fortress Europe". Populist, xenophobic, and discriminatory discourses increased along with hate speech in Europe (European Commission for Racism and Intolerance 2021). Civil society organisations are confronted with shrinking spaces in Europe, in particular those who work with human rights issues and youth organisations (Deželan, Laker & Sardoč 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic revealed striking inequalities in access to rights, starting with the basic human right to health (Etienne 2022). The climate emergency, unfolding before our eyes, is a loud cry for climate justice in order to avoid a looming catastrophe that will affect thousands around the world (Aliozi 2021).

These complex factors are forcing us to think critically about the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that present and future generations need to overcome these challenges. In this regard, the Council of Europe has promoted education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE) as fundamental educational practices that could contribute to address and confront

these challenges by fostering holistic learning experiences for all. The Charter on EDC/HRE, adopted in 2010, has been a key instrument in this endeavour and aims at "providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education" (Council of Europe 2010). Along with the RFCDC, the Charter provides a unique common European reference framework when it comes to mainstreaming EDC/HRE in formal and non-formal education.

In the last review cycle, substantial progress was observed in terms of the inclusion of EDC/HRE in education policies across Europe. However, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education were highlighted as critical areas for further action. Other areas such as funding, co-operation across sectors – i.e. governments and civil society organisations – and monitoring and evaluation of EDC/HRE initiatives were highlighted as a key levers for improvement. Through this review, we were able to track whether there were changes in these areas and if so, in which direction.  Moreover, the review also considers developments in the last five years, including responses to/the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and access to EDC/HRE for systematically marginalised groups.

This review is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 offers a brief overview of the conceptual definitions guiding the study, as well as a description of the research design used. Chapter 2 analyses the main trends observed in relation to the Charter implementation, including national level policy developments, investments in capacity building and implementation, as well as disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, a discussion of key transversal challenges is offered to complete the findings from the five sub-sections. Chapter 3 presents emerging issues to be considered for further research, as well as recommendations for improving the Charter implementation process. Finally, the epilogue to this report provides a summary of key points to be considered in relation to the war in Ukraine.

## 1.1. About the Charter and the RFCDC

The Charter was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2010 and became the first European document setting out the principles and standards to support implementation of education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE). Encompassing both formal and non-formal education sectors, the Charter provides guidance to the Council of Europe Member States to implement EDC/HRE at the national level. The RFCDC originates in an initiative from the government of Andorra during its Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2013. The RFCDC is a set of materials that can be used by education systems to equip young people with  the competences needed to defend and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, to participate actively and effectively in a culture of democracy, and to live peacefully in culturally diverse societies. With its competence model and descriptors, it provides a framework to realising the principles of the Charter and of the Council of Europe's call for quality education, and to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture, and introducing them into education systems in ways that are coherent, comprehensive, and transparent. The RFCDC is intended for use by education policy makers, especially those working within ministries of education, and by education practitioners in all sectors of education systems,

from pre-school through primary and secondary schooling to higher education, including adult education and vocational education.

### 1.1.1. Conceptual definitions

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

- **Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC):** According to the Charter, EDC "means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law." (Council of Europe 2010).

- **Human Rights Education (HRE)** means "education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms." (Council of Europe 2010).

## 1.2. About the review

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

This review aimed to
1. further strengthen the Charter implementation,
2. support the development of strategic goals for the next five years
3. facilitate the development of national indicators/benchmarks/priorities that can allow assessing progress achieved and guiding further action at national and international level.

This review considered the extent to which the issues identified and recommendations from the last review cycle have been addressed. Developments subsequent to the 2016 review were also covered in this third cycle review, including the Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights adopted following the recommendations of the second review, and the 2018 RFCDC. It is worth noting that the ongoing war in Ukraine started during the data collection phase and is therefore addressed in the epilogue to this report.

### 1.1.2. Research Design

This review was based on three main data collection methods:

a. **A literature review** to identify the main trends across countries as well as the opportunities and challenges that have facilitated and/or hindered the progress of EDC/HRE in the last five years. A keyword search was conducted on articles and grey literature (e.g., reports, policy documents, working documents, etc.) from the last five years of the following terms: "human rights education"; "citizenship education"; "education for democratic citizenship"; and "competences for democratic culture". The geographical scope included all the State parties to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe, and the sources analysed were in English and French.

b. **Seven (7) online focus groups.** These were intended to help us collect qualitative data and to triangulate findings. The goal was to gather in-depth information among participants using the following guiding questions:

> 1) What have been the main enablers and challenges to the **provision and quality** of EDC/HRE through formal and non-formal education?
> 2) How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of EDC/HRE in the Council of Europe Member States? How have countries responded to the new challenges in relation to EDC/HRE?
> 3) How have countries supported the implementation of the Charter on EDC/HRE and the RFCDC in their education systems?
> 4) How have countries supported capacity building for schools/programmes and teachers/trainers?

In addition, participants provided concrete examples from policy and practice in EDC/HRE which they consider as effective in their own contexts. Finally, we gathered information to support the development of recommendations and guidelines for the next five-year period. Representatives from different sectors were invited to join the online focus groups: public officers, civil society representatives, youth workers, education stakeholders (e.g. teacher associations, student organisations, parent organisations, etc.), and experts in the field of EDC/HRE. The two-hour focus groups gathered a total of 60 participants and were structured as follows:

- A maximum of 12 participants per session including people from different sectors.
- Two moderators.

● Six focus groups in English and one in French.

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

c. **A survey consisting of four questionnaires** for the different stakeholder groups, shared online through the SurveyMonkey platform with the following actors:
   ● civil society organisations working in the area of EDC/HRE. In addition, some EPAN members who are not directly employed by the education authorities in their respective countries responded to the questionnaire.
   ● civil society organisations working with youth.
   ● policy makers working in governmental institutions and bodies in the area of youth policy (e.g. Ministries of Youth, National Institute of Youth, etc.).
   ● members of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) of the Council of Europe.

The surveys, available in English and French, were disseminated by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe at the end of January 2022. The surveys for members of the CDEDU were shared by mid-February 2022, also in English and French. All four surveys were based on the questionnaires used during the second review cycle, and also included questions related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EDC/HRE. It's worth noting that that in addition to the EDC/HRE Charter 40% of NGOs and 30 % of youth organizations responding to the survey use other additional international frameworks for their work in EDC/HRE. Among them are the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education, the ETS frameworks for youth workers and trainers, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and other UN human rights treaties on education and World Programme for Human Rights Education.

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

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

### 1.1.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on two key areas for EDC/HRE – i.e., provision and quality of the implementation of the Charter and the RFCDC. Within these two areas, other sub-areas explored during the analysis were the following:

   ● Relevance and adaptability of EDC/HRE, especially in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Inclusiveness of EDC/HRE for all learners.
- Sustainability and implementation of EDC/HRE initiatives in formal and non-formal education.
- Capacity-building and co-operation between the main actors involved in EDC/HRE provision.
- Monitoring and evaluation of EDC/HRE initiatives in formal and non-formal education.

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

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

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

*Source: Authors' own.*

For the analysis of responses from non-governmental organisations, the weighted average was applied. As in a Likert-type scale, every label was assigned a weight, for example, "not at all" (1) "to a small extent" (2) and so on. Considering the large amount of entry points (198 responses), for the purposes of visual clarity and comparability with the previous findings, analysis of the weighted average was used for every question where responses were displayed over a Likert scale. In most cases, the responses of NGOs and youth organisations are presented in the same graph. Only in question 14 the responses of these two groups are combined because of an insignificant discrepancy and the common level of analysis – policies. More details about the respondents including the countries that they represent are provided in the Annexes section.

### 1.1.4. Limitations

A note of caution is due with regard to the limitations of the findings. The review was designed keeping in mind the time constraints and potential challenges that could come up during the data collection and analysis. First, the reviewers acknowledge that using only the two working languages

of the Council of Europe (English and French) may have left out a considerable number of resources available in other European languages. A second limitation is related to the focus groups. All participants were present on a voluntary basis, and though efforts were made to have as many representatives from different sectors as possible, the reviewers relied on purposeful sampling to recruit participants from their own networks, as well as those from the Youth Department and Education Department. The seven groups were created keeping in mind the importance of ensuring gender and geographical balance to obtain data as relevant as possible for all Member States. Finally, although the surveys were intended to collect quantitative data that would help support the analysis of qualitative data, the low number of responses from the education and youth policy representatives makes it difficult to generalise the findings and compare them with those of previous review cycles. However, the information provided by countries on the open-ended questions is used to illustrate good practices at the country level and to compare them with the information provided by the non-governmental organisations and institutions. Hence, the reviewers have refrained from drawing conclusions based solely on the quantitative data collected from policy makers.

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

This chapter is structured around the main areas of action in terms of policy, evaluation, and co-operation as stated in sections III ("Policies") and IV ("Evaluation and Co-operation") of the Charter (Council of Europe 2010). Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the promotion and development of EDC/HRE in Europe is considered. There are four main sections: policies and practices; key transversal themes to consider; training and professional development; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EDC/HRE. The first three sections follow the main issues highlighted during the last Charter review (2016), and the fourth section addresses a major disruptive event that has unfolded over the last three years.
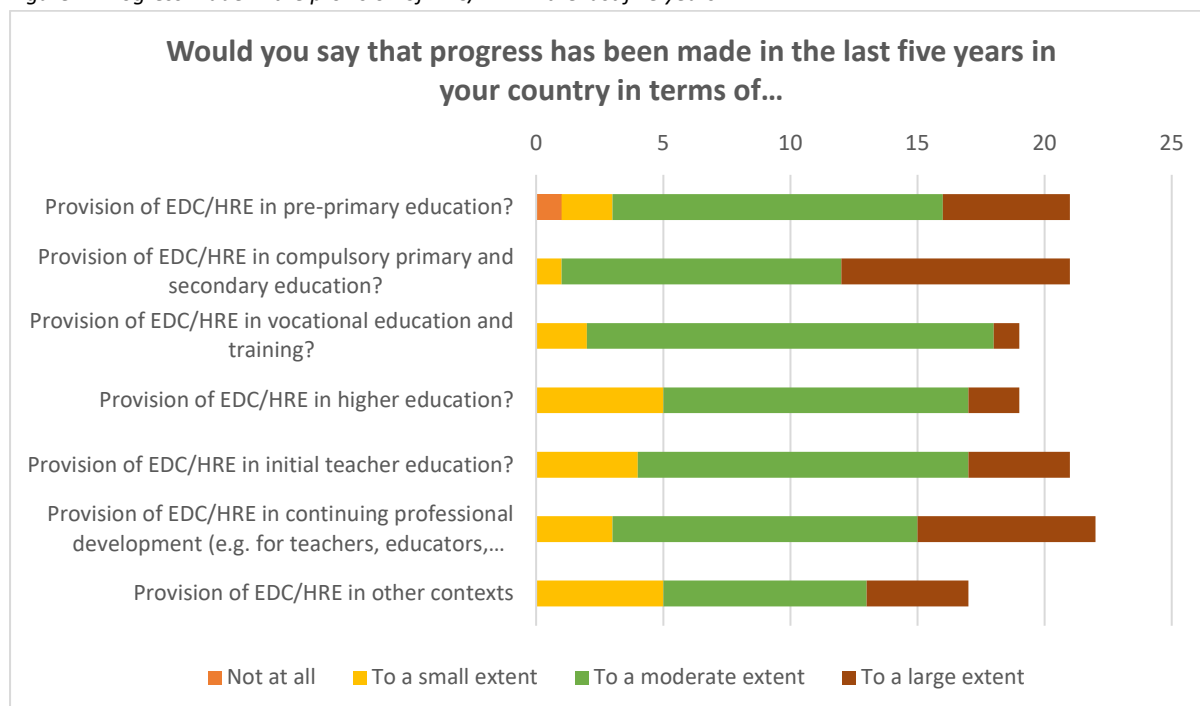
### 2.1. Policies and practices

The objectives, principles, and policies set out in the Charter are to guide Member States in the design of laws and policies relevant to providing access to EDC/HRE through formal, non-formal, and informal education. Stakeholders involved in the process include policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, educational authorities, civil servants, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), youth organisations, media, and the general public. This section addresses the main findings related to EDC/HRE policies and practices in formal general education and initial vocational education and training (VET), key actors of the school community, democratic governance at school, higher education and research, and student assessment.

According to the report from the last review cycle conducted in 2016, substantial progress had been made in promoting EDC/HRE in the 40 countries that responded to the survey. However, countries indicated that little or no reference was made to EDC/HRE in laws, policies, and strategic objectives pertaining VET and higher education (Council of Europe 2017). Although concerns about the policy/practice gap remain, survey data collected for this review reflect a rather positive perception among respondents With regard to the progress made since 2016.

In terms of policy developments at the national level, about half of the countries (12 out of 22 respondents) indicated that EDC/HRE is considered in their education policies to a large extent, whereas eight countries indicated that EDC/HRE is considered to a moderate extent. Further, when it comes to **provision** of EDC/HRE, a positive perception seems predominant about the progress made in the last five years. The key sectors are pre-primary and compulsory primary and secondary education, as well as continuing professional development (e.g. for teachers, educators, school/university staff); a majority of respondents (16) perceive moderate progress in provision of EDC/HRE in VET. However, in relation to higher education and initial teacher education (ITE), the responses revealed a rather mitigated perception, as shown on Figure 1.

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



**Would you say that progress has been made in the last five years in your country in terms of…**

Legend: Not at all (orange), To a small extent (yellow), To a moderate extent (green), To a large extent (dark red)

Categories:
- Provision of EDC/HRE in pre-primary education?
- Provision of EDC/HRE in compulsory primary and secondary education?
- Provision of EDC/HRE in vocational education and training?
- Provision of EDC/HRE in higher education?
- Provision of EDC/HRE in initial teacher education?
- Provision of EDC/HRE in continuing professional development (e.g. for teachers, educators,…
- Provision of EDC/HRE in other contexts

In terms of EDC/HRE **quality**, a majority of respondents (18 of 21) indicated that progress has been made since the last review across educational levels. Some of the examples provided by country respondents that illustrate this trend refer to curricular reforms introducing EDC and/or HRE as a school subject (Slovenia); the development of school projects using the RFCDC (Georgia); the mainstreaming of EDC/HRE in vocational education and training (VET) educational institutions (Armenia); and the implementation of the RFCDC through a whole school approach (Montenegro), to name a few. Although these initiatives reflect that progress is being made to promote EDC/HRE in European education systems, there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation data specifically focused on EDC/HRE which might provide further insight on how effectively these new programmes are being implemented.

In terms of **concrete activities and measures** implemented in the last five years to promote EDC/HRE (see Figure 2), a significant number of countries responded positively, notably in terms of promoting EDC/HRE at a policy level (17 replies); making resources/materials related to EDC/HRE available, such as the RFCDC (15 replies); and supporting co-operation with NGOs, including youth organisations, in the field of EDC/HRE (17 replies). Interestingly, respondents to the youth policy survey indicated co-operation with NGOs as one of the key areas of action since the last review.

*Figure 2: Measures and activities implemented since 2016 in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter*
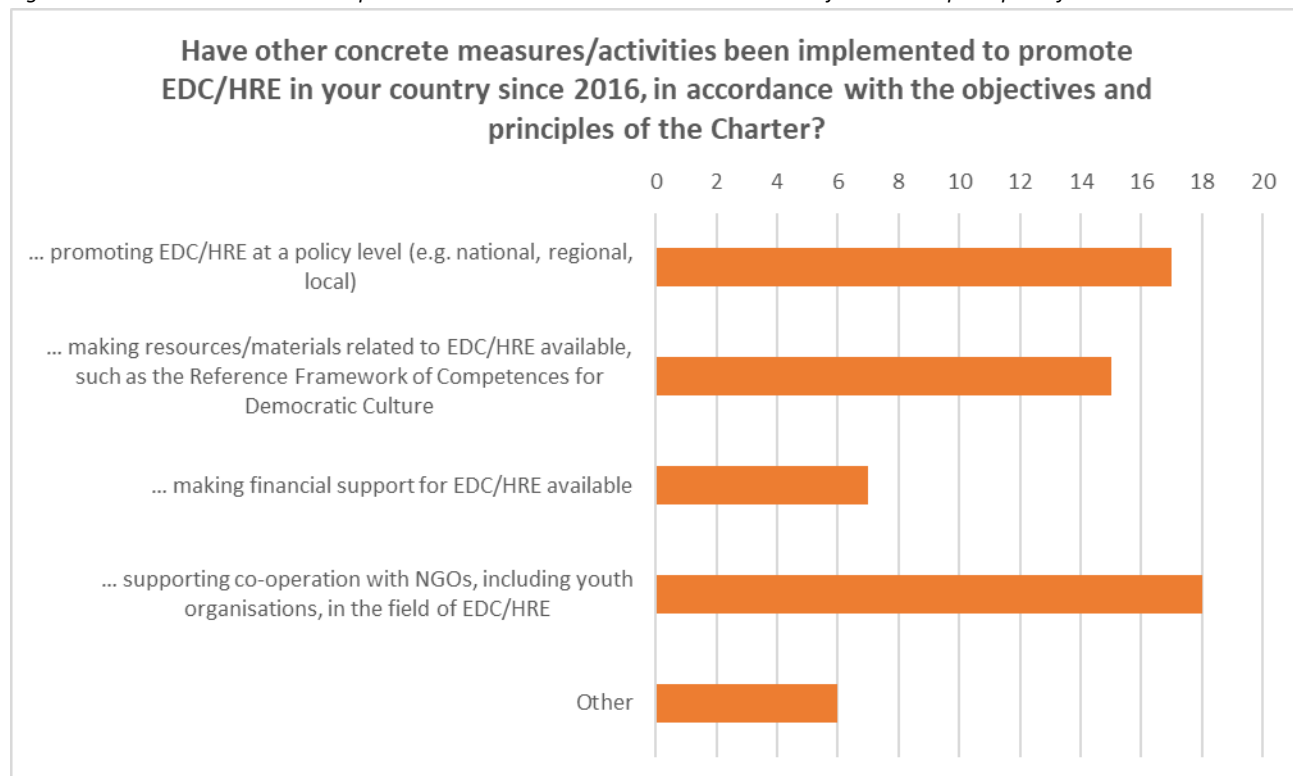
Data collected outside the surveys, however, point to the **absence of policy frameworks or strategies explicitly promoting EDC/HRE in European countries**. This may be explained partly by the focus on education and training first as a means to improve access to employment and citizenship education taking a secondary role in education policy (Pornschlegel and Zels: 2020). Also, while EDC might have been 'boosted' in European Union countries through the progressive adoption of the EU framework for key competences for lifelong learning (Council of the European Union 2018), which includes citizenship competence among the eight key competences "needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion" (Zygierewicz 2021, p.7), an approach specifically addressing HRE is still absent in most education policy frameworks. The citizenship competence refers to the "ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability." (Council of the European Union 2018: 10).

However, as noted in a study on the state of HRE in Serbia, though HRE as a concept may be present in educational policies, the knowledge about HRE contents and impact in formal general education is very limited, and thus a change in the concept of human rights education in the normative framework is needed to enable the development of comprehensive knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 21). Finally, a number of participants from the focus group stated that while some progress has been made, there is no longer a strong focus on HRE as it *"has fallen off the policy agenda"* in the last five years, which has had a direct impact on the priority given to EDC/HRE in educational and youth policies. For civil society organisations working with EDC/HRE, this lack of strategy might translate into a multiplication of activities that lack a coherent approach as a whole. For educators and teachers working in formal education, this translates into expanded demands in

terms of the curriculum, without providing the necessary training or additional resources needed to implement the changes required to introduce EDC/HRE at school. Notwithstanding the lack of explicit EDC/HRE policy frameworks, some examples of 'HRE-friendly' strategies have been developed in the last years, as shown in Box 1.

*Box 1: Examples of 'EDC/HRE-friendly' policy frameworks*

> **Iceland:** In 2021, a policy and action plan on Child Friendly Iceland was adopted to further strengthen the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including by strengthening child participation, implementing a child rights impact assessment, and increasing education about the children's rights at all school levels and throughout society. This is to include a development of an integral policy on matters concerning children and young people. The objectives are for public authorities to engage in systematic and frequent consultation with children and young people on education and take their views into consideration in their decision making; to encourage students to influence their education and public debate; and to strengthen democratic competence and active student democracy at all school levels, in both formal and informal learning contexts.
>
> **Spain:** The new Education Law (LOMLOE, 2020) adopts several approaches that are key to adapting the education system to the demands and challenges of the 21st century. Among these approaches is the effective fulfilment of children's rights as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and education for sustainable development and global citizenship, which includes education for peace and human rights, as well as the prevention of any kind of discrimination or violence. At the same time, the new law fosters a curricular reform for all educational stages (early childhood education, primary and secondary Education, baccalaureate) by promoting a competence-based curricular model and holistic learning through active and collaborative action-oriented methodologies. The law includes an additional provision that states that education for sustainable development and for global citizenship should be considered in the teacher training process and in the access to the teaching profession.

*Source: Questionnaire for members of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) of the Council of Europe, 2022.*

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

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

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

### 2.1.1.  EDC/HRE in general education and initial VET

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

A current trend in research on EDC/HRE at school is to look at EDC/HRE throughout primary education (Yamniuk 2017) to secondary levels. The studies conclude on the relevance of EDC/HRE throughout school education and the pertinence of many EDC/HRE issues in the everyday life of students from an early age. There is a growing number of studies on the whole school approach (WSA), that confirms the effectiveness of the WSA for addressing, for example, bullying (Lester et al. 2017), and fostering sustainable development (Mogren, Gericke & Scherp 2019; Bosevska & Kriewaldt 2020), inclusion (Roberts & Webster 2020; Carrington et al. 2021), professional development and well-being of the staff (Young, Cavanagh & Moloney 2018; Lester et al. 2020), as well as students' learning (Goldberg et al. 2019). There is, however, a  scarcity of research addressing the challenges of the WSA  implementation and its contextualisation within concrete education systems (Restad 2020) and educational institutions.

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

Even if human rights-related themes are present in the curriculum, these are not always explicit, and so a note of caution is due. Several authors have studied the relationship between policies promoting EDC/HRE in the curriculum and its integration in schools, observing a loose connection between the written curriculum and classroom practices (Struthers 2016; Rinaldi 2017; Santibanez 2019). Moreover, as highlighted in the country reports from the Erasmus+ project "Youth for Human Rights"(2018), HRE in formal education curricula usually focuses more on learners acquiring knowledge *about* human rights rather than on developing skills and attitudes *through* human rights (Gavrielides, Nemutlu & Şerban 2018). And while in recent years some countries have taken the

initiative to embed EDC/HRE in their curricula through legal and policy reforms, in other countries such as Greece, Kosovo*, and Poland the provision of EDC/HRE through formal education is far from assured, as reported by participants in the focus groups.

As noted before, the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union 2018) has had an influence on the shift to a competence-based approach, even beyond the EU countries. This shift implies moving from a knowledge-based curriculum to a competence-based approach, in which the focus is on the learner's ability to apply knowledge in specific contexts rather than on the content delivered. With regard to EDC/HRE, this approach requires curriculum developers to strike a balance between the content delivered and allowing learners to develop skills and attitudes related to citizenship and human rights (Decara et al. 2021). Moreover, the competence-based approach could support non-formal education so that a conscious design of the learning process involves "head (knowledge dimension), heart (attitudes dimension) and hands (skills dimension), taking place in an area between theoretical reasoning and practical experience, and practised in a mix of individual and social forms" (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker: 2020: 23), thus encouraging a holistic learning experience focused on the individual learners' capacities rather than on delivering content.

The RFCDC offers a competence framework that encompasses human rights, citizenship, and democracy showing how EDC/HRE can be integrated into formal education. Country replies to the education and youth policy surveys provide some examples of the introduction to the competence-based approach in the curricula from primary through secondary education, including subjects related to EDC/HRE such as active citizenship (Slovenia), civics, ethics, and social education (Romania, Slovakia, and Spain), and competences for democratic culture (Andorra). Some countries have included EDC/HRE as part of the transversal competences in the curriculum (Estonia, Finland), and other countries (Montenegro and Romania) have also adopted the competence-based approach from pre-primary to university-level education. Latvia included a module on social and civil literacy in adult education and VET. This shift, however, poses the question regarding whether schools, teachers, and educational staff are adequately prepared for it. As part of the last review cycle, the 2017 Conference on the future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe[1] called Member States to take further measures promoting EDC/HRE in particular at the pre-school level, VET, and higher education. Nonetheless, in the latest Eurydice report on citizenship education at school (2017), the authors concluded that **in comparison to formal general education, citizenship education is given less attention in school-based VET**.

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

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to training on these topics in comparison to their peers in formal general education. The unbalanced provision of EDC/HRE in VET could have a stronger impact on vulnerable groups due to the lack of access to opportunities for learning about citizenship and human rights outside school. As noted in the study on the implementation for citizenship education in the EU, "for students of vocational education, it is often more difficult to participate in exchange and in projects than for students in universities" (Zygierewicz 2021: 47).

### 2.1.2. The school community: key actors and democratic governance

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

With that in mind, the **whole school approach** to citizenship education has the potential to strengthen the presence of EDC/HRE at school, by encouraging democratic practices in all aspects of the school community (M. Barrett 2020). Moreover, to foster a participatory and holistic EDC/HRE practice at school, a systemic change is needed so that democratic practices permeate school governance, culture, planning, teaching, learning, and monitoring (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). According to the feedback provided in the education and youth policy surveys, Finland, Montenegro, and Serbia have worked in this direction, helping schools to implement this approach to building a democratic school culture. In Germany, the ministries of education and local authorities of the Laender (German states) have supported EDC/HRE activities in co-operation with schools, NGOs, youth organisations, community groups, etc. Further examples from the focus group participants show that the RFCDC has helped to implement EDC/HRE in primary and secondary schools using a whole school approach (e.g. Georgia and Turkey). Finally, Amnesty International's Human Rights Friendly Schools[2] are a good example of how participating schools develop a whole school approach by integrating human rights values, principles, and knowledge across different areas such as school governance, school environment, and the school community at large.

*Students*
According to the latest Eurydice report on citizenship education at school, participation of all actors involved in the school community has been extensively recommended to improve school governance (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). For this review cycle, respondents to the education policy survey provided some examples of the measures undertaken to foster **student**

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

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

### *Parents*

With regard to **parents** as key actors of the school community, the data collected for this review paint a somewhat different picture in terms of participation. Though youth policy survey respondents indicated that legislation and policies promoting parental involvement in schools are in place (see Figure 3), when it comes to the existing co-operation between the government and parents' groups the perception tended to be rather negative for youth policy bodies (Figure 4). Indeed, co-operation between governmental agencies and civil society organisations, NGOs, and other community organisations was pointed out as a key challenge by the focus groups participants. This observation was made in particular with regard to co-operation with parents and other members of the school community such as school staff, teachers, and school leaders.



In your country, are there any legislation, policies, or strategies that promote democratic governance in educational institutions, particularly schools, concerning…

■ Yes  ■ No

- … decision making procedures (e.g. governing bodies / school boards)? — Yes 10, No 2
- … school culture / rules? — Yes 11, No 1
- … pupil / student participation (e.g. school / student councils)? — Yes 12, No 0
- … parental / family involvement in schools (e.g. governing bodies / school boards)? — Yes 11, No 1
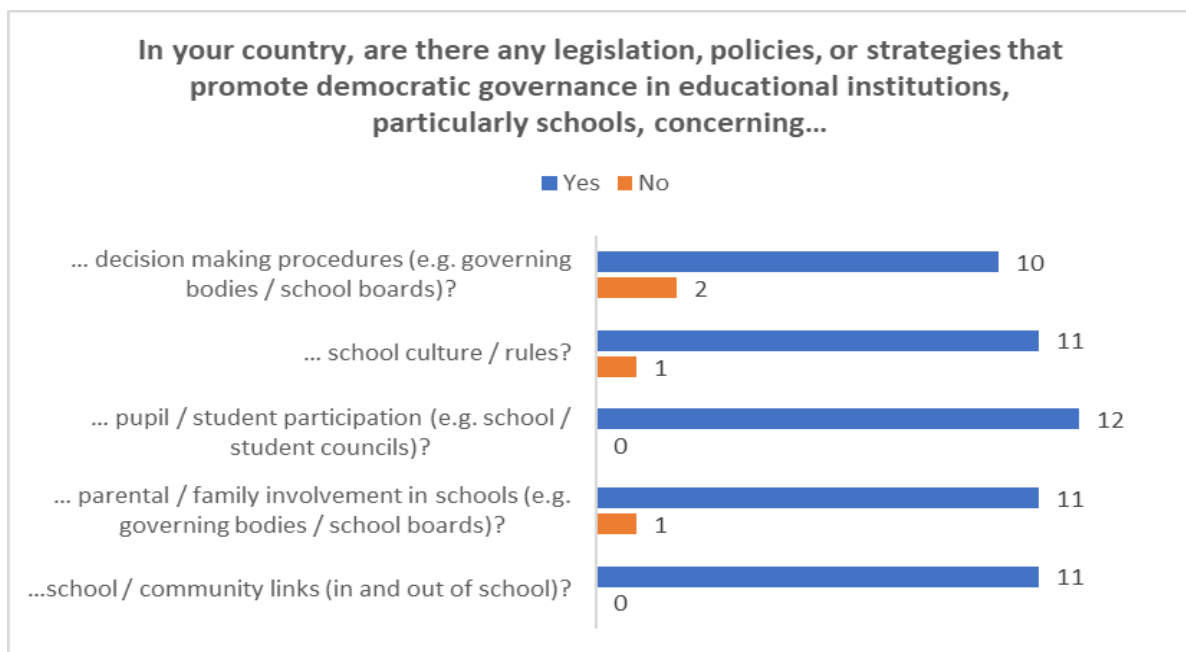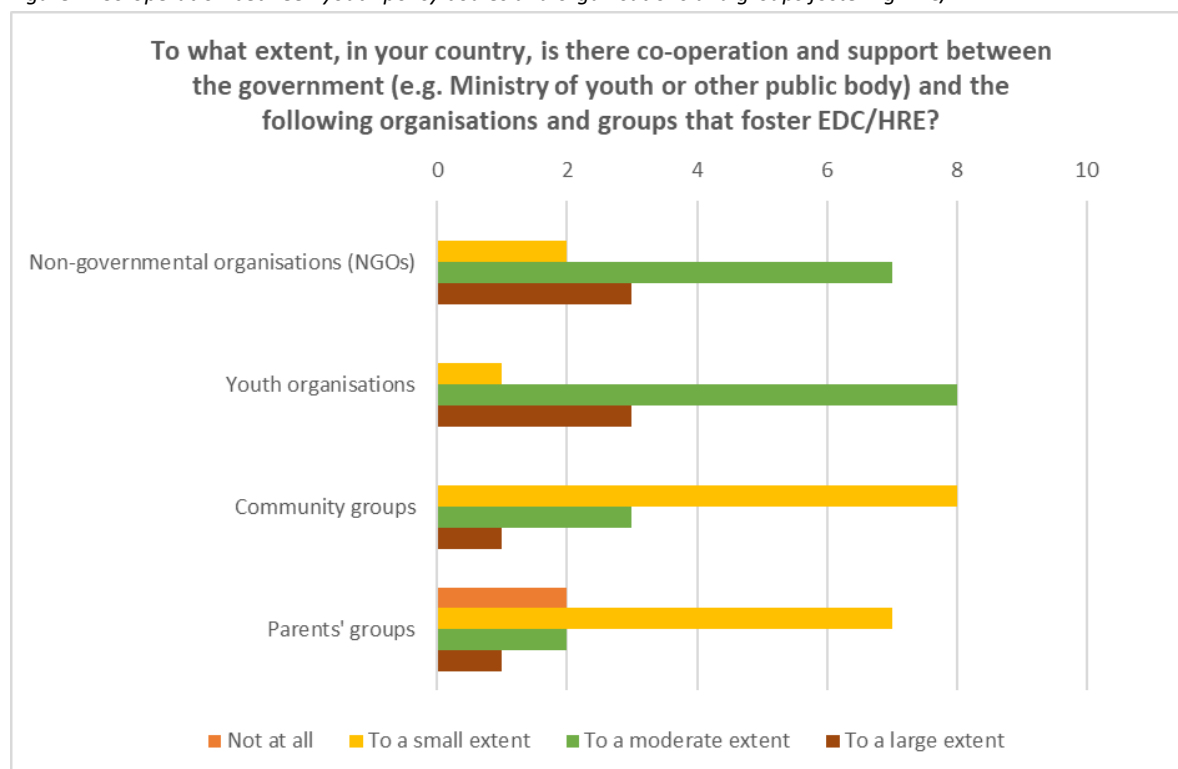- …school / community links (in and out of school)? — Yes 11, No 0

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



While in some European countries (e.g. Iceland and Norway) high parental involvement has been observed in relation to democratic governance at school (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017), in others the task of 'getting parents on board' might result more difficult due to the parents' lack of awareness about topics such as democratic governance or active citizenship (Civil Rights Defenders 2021).

Research has highlighted the importance of parental engagement as crucial for building a positive school environment; the lack of parental awareness might translate into parents holding discriminatory beliefs towards students from minority or vulnerable groups, which in turn affects the possibility of building a truly inclusive school environment (UNESCO 2020a). For participants in the focus groups, this became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic as some of them stated: *"schools realised that parents were important to engage…they organised themselves and came together"*. Moreover, some participants argued that parental motivation is as essential as teacher motivation, and a strong alliance is needed between them. In Romania, the national five-day programme A Different School promotes EDC/HRE by fostering alliances between teachers, students, and parents and allowing schools to replace regular courses with activities organised by the schools to develop students' social-emotional skills and based on the proposals submitted by the main stakeholders and other actors, such as authorities, companies, or local non-governmental organisations.

*School leaders*

As key actors of the school community, **school leaders** have a fundamental role in promoting EDC/HRE at school and in contributing to building a whole school approach. However, data about their involvement in EDC/HRE activities or training opportunities are scarce. According to the

Eurydice report on citizenship education at school (2017), only 14 European countries provide CPD opportunities to school leaders, which encompasses topics such as the promotion of EDC through the curriculum, democratic culture, and citizenship education as a cross-curricular subject (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). Among the country replies to the education policy survey, some countries (e.g. Slovenia, Montenegro) highlighted the training opportunities for school leaders and headmasters including topics such as ethical management, as a proxy for EDC/HRE topics. Nonetheless, participants in the focus groups stressed the importance of providing more learning opportunities for school leaders on EDC/HRE topics and involving them in the process of creating a more democratic environment at school; as one of the participants stated, *"the more democratic competences they have, the better for democracy at schools."*

### Teachers

**Teachers** play an important role in the provision of quality EDC/HRE in formal general education and VET, as they are at the forefront of the learning process during classroom hours (Santibanez 2019). In the last review cycle of the Charter, one of the key challenges identified was related to "finding the right balance" between avoiding a curriculum overload and having teachers and educators adequately prepared to take on EDC/HRE teaching (Council of Europe 2017). Yet research points to the persisting challenge of supporting teachers in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to address EDC/HRE in the classroom (Santibanez 2019). Indeed, the 2017 Eurydice report on citizenship education in Europe highlighted that, even though countries had declared steady progress With regard to teacher training, only six of them (United Kingdom-England, Belgium-French Community, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Denmark) had a citizenship education specialisation in ITE (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017).

A potential lack of knowledge about the objectives and principles of EDC/HRE as well as useful methods and pedagogical approaches can be addressed by providing appropriate initial teacher education (ITE) and through continuing professional development (CPD) (UNESCO 2020a). The importance of giving teachers access to learning opportunities, guidelines, and resources to fulfil their role has been widely acknowledged, in particular in relation to human rights and EDC/HRE (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020; UNESCO 2020a; OECD 2021a). Increasingly diverse classrooms have challenged the one-size-fits-all approach to learning, especially due to the intersectional nature of diversity that encompasses different genders and sexualities, abilities and disabilities, nationalities, socio-economic status, religions, ethnic background, etc. As noted by the OECD (2021b), there are four main trends in the classroom that give a sense of urgency to support and better prepare teachers: first, students from marginalised backgrounds represent an important percentage of those enrolled; second, most teachers are unlikely to have received training about teaching with multicultural groups; third, students from diverse backgrounds continue to have lower academic achievements than their classmates; and finally, research evidence confirms the positive impact of culturally responsive practices in the classroom (OECD 2021a).

With regard to the provision of relevant training on EDC/HRE for teachers, respondents to the education policy survey for this review had a positive outlook. Moreover, country respondents shared a series of examples of measures undertaken to support teacher training for EDC/HRE, as is further described in section 3.3. However, data collected from reports from the last five years, as well as qualitative data from our focus groups, present a mitigated view. Country reports from the

Erasmus+ project "Youth for Human Rights" (2018) highlight that in countries such as Austria, Croatia, and Germany, training opportunities provided are not explicitly addressing contents such as human rights, not to mention EDC/HRE. Further, the Eurydice report on citizenship education at school (2017) indicated that, in spite of the progress made, 17 European education systems haven't developed regulations to establish the acquisition of citizenship competences through ITE. This was the case even in countries where citizenship education is offered as a single subject in the school curriculum (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017). The issue of capacity building for schoolteachers and educators working in other contexts including opportunities for training and professional learning is addressed in section 3.3 in more detail.

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

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

### 2.1.3. Higher education and Research

Following the Charter recommendations for policy action, and strongly linked to the provision of EDC/HRE for future education professionals, the progress of EDC/HRE in **higher education** was highlighted as an area of particular importance in the recommendations from the last review cycle.

This said, higher education institutions (HEIs) are not only crucial to provide EDC/HRE training opportunities to future teachers; they are also the main stakeholders in the production of relevant, quality **research** about the provision of EDC/HRE in Europe (Asia-Europe Foundation 2020).

*EDC/HRE in Higher Education*

Higher education institutions are privileged actors at the forefront of research and innovation and can support education policy makers with up-to-date research on theoretical and empirical aspects of EDC/HRE. Data collected from the education policy survey shows that respondents have mixed perceptions about progress made in terms of provision of EDC/HRE in higher education. Out of 19 replies, 12 countries indicated that progress had been made to a moderate extent, whereas five respondents stated that it had been to a small extent. In comparison to the last review cycle, this is a relatively positive outlook; over a third of government respondents (14 out of 40) stated that there were scarce or non-existent references to EDC/HRE in laws, policies, and strategic objectives for higher education. One of the factors that could explain the mixed perceptions is that, given that HEIs enjoy high levels of autonomy in most European countries, governments have limited control over the provision of EDC/HRE in university-level curricula. Often HEIs include the commitment to human rights values in their mission statements, but it's difficult to assert whether these intentions translate into concrete actions to increase the provision of EDC/HRE within their academic programmes. Box 2 provides some examples of initiatives undertaken to promote EDC/HRE in higher education in and out of initial teacher education highlighted by the survey respondents.

*Box 2: Country examples of higher education initiatives in EDC/HRE*

> **Bulgaria:** EDC is a subject in the curriculum; at the university level, specialist teachers are prepared to become schoolteachers on citizenship education.
> **Malta:** At higher education levels the National Quality Assurance Framework is being revised and the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority is working on Guidelines for Ethics and Value at HEIs.
> **Slovenia:** The Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2030 is in the adoption process in the Parliament. It addresses the field of higher education comprehensively, in particular to raise the level of quality of higher education in Slovenia.

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

Data from the evaluation of the implementation of the Third Phase of the World Programme for HRE (OHCHR) provide further examples of good practice from European countries (e.g. Finland, Georgia, Germany, and Sweden). These countries reported that human rights are included in HEIs as part of

degree programmes in law, social sciences, or humanities (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020). Country reports from the Erasmus + project "Youth for Human Rights" (2018) also mapped existing trends on HRE in HEIs, and stressed the need to raise awareness about the importance of providing access to EDC/HRE for all learners, regardless of their disciplinary area (Gavrielides et al. 2018). In a study conducted in the Western Balkans (i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia), a survey of faculties showed that there are some opportunities to study human rights and HRE in the region. At the bachelor's level, a number of faculties offer at least one course on human rights, generally as an elective in the curriculum. At the master's level, it is possible to find human rights and related courses, often in the field of public law (Civil Rights Defenders 2021).

One of the flagship initiatives concerning collaboration between HEIs in Europe in the field of HRE is the European Master's in Human Rights and Democratisation (EMA).[3] Launched in 1997 with the support of the European Union, there are now over 100 partner universities and human rights centres across Europe, with campuses in four cities Venice (Italy), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Yerevan (Armenia).

### Research on EDC/HRE
HEIs have a responsibility not only to provide future professionals with access to EDC/HRE, but also to foster research to support relevant evidence-informed policy making. A study on the implementation of citizenship education conducted by the European Commissions (Zygierewicz 2021) highlights the need to "bridge the gap" between the abstract and concrete aspects of citizenship education – which echoes the gap between policy and practice in formal general education and training discussed before. Although there is growing support for this topic as seen in Member States' curricular reforms, projects, and programmes, research on the current gaps and avenues for improvement, in particular at the school level is insufficient. According to Zygierewicz (2021: 27), there are three pivotal issues that should be tackled through research on curriculum development, teacher practice, and professional development:

1) Controversial issues: in many countries the debate about the content of citizenship education generates strong tensions: in policy, in society, and in the classroom.
2) Democracy: learning about democracy and experiencing democracy should be at the heart of citizenship education.
3) National and international orientation: balancing the national and international orientation is the challenge for policy on citizenship education and teaching citizenship in the classroom.

These claims are supported by data collected through focus groups, which point to the need for more research at the national and regional level and the sharing of experiences about EDC/HRE at the policy level. Focus group participants were keen to highlight the importance of "fresh" research on the challenges to the implementation of EDC/HRE at the school level, as well as on the use of the RFCDC in formal education and teacher training. As examples of good practice, there are some recent studies that have mapped the presence of human rights and HRE in education and training: in France, a 2016 study conducted by the National Council for School System Evaluation (Cnesco)

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

provided an overview of citizenship education policies practices at school (Bozec 2016). Also, Boiarsky et al. (2020) reported on the research activities of the Eastern European Network for Citizenship Education (EENCE) in the Eastern Partnership region and in Russia, including topical research on citizenship education in the country members.

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

Available research confirms the growing number of references to citizenship education in national curricula worldwide (Russell & Suarez 2017; UNESCO 2018). At the same time, as various researchers point out, in some European countries these policies envisage only learning about political institutions and procedures in terms of one subject at school that is often optional for students (Missira 2019). The academic studies suggest that access to continuous, engaging, and transformative EDC/HRE is crucial for the inclusion of all in the political process (Daniels 2018; Hoskins & Janmaat 2019; Struthers 2021).

A large body of research deals with the issue of the translation of EDC/HRE policy norms into practice on several levels – from the international to European, European to national, and from the national level to the classroom. European policies often pave the way for the transformative and empowering EDC/HRE on the national or regional level (Abs 2021; Loobuyck 2021). European norms can serve as concrete quality criteria for citizenship education. The advocates of EDC/HRE refer to these criteria for the promotion of EDC/HRE on the national level (Albanesi 2018). Lack of international co-operation in the area of EDC/HRE may lead to citizenship education focused on formal knowledge and the purely national dimension of citizenship (Daniels 2018; Hoskins & Janmaat 2019; Missira 2019).

As for the translation from the national to the classroom level, teacher training both in terms of pre-service and in-service teacher education remains the biggest challenge (Missira 2019). Now and then the researchers report that countries use the good practices discovered in the curricula of other countries without taking into consideration the local context and the corresponding mechanisms of

policy implementation, such as educators' capacity building (Hartong & Nikolai 2017). The same is relevant for EDC/HRE policies. Even in the countries where EDC/HRE is integral to the curriculum, educators report that they lack understanding of various concepts used in the policy texts and skills to apply formally suggested methodologies (Husser 2017; Robinson 2017; Biseth & Lyden 2018; Santibanez 2019; Weinberg & Flinders 2018). Another important mechanism of EDC/HRE policies implementation concerns capacity building on the institutional level (Feu et al. 2017; Leek 2022).

Recent scholarship brings forward the idea of transformative EDC/HRE, based on critical thinking (Hyslop-Margison & Thayer 2009; Monaghan, Spreen & Hillary 2017; Zembylas & Keet 2019)**.** The transformative approach implies the reflective and participatory methodology that fosters the awareness about and the ability to act on EDC/HRE-related issues in the actual realities of the learners (Monaghan et al. 2017; Zembylas & Keet 2019). Among the new approaches are the decolonisation agenda (Zembylas 2018a; Stein 2021) and racial discrimination awareness (Bajaj, Katz & Jones 2021). The authors suggest looking at the non-Western paradigms of civic action and participation to see how citizenship education can be made relevant for non-Western communities (Kovalchuk & Rapoport 2018). These approaches are strongly intertwined with critical pedagogies and social justice discourse essential for transformative EDC/HRE (Zembylas 2018b). A key persisting issue is, however, the lack of data on the international or regional European level regarding the state of EDC/HRE in general and, in particular, concerning young people.

Teacher education has traditionally been one of the core areas of research in EDC/HRE. At the same time, the emergence of transformative HRE has led to the looming notion of agency (Bajaj 2019). The current tendency is to see the professional development of teachers not only as a formal capacity-building that enables them to convey EDC/HRE basics in the classroom but as developing their agency as actors of social change (Biseth & Lyden 2018; Jerome 2018; Kasa et al. 2021). Researchers pay attention not only to the formal knowledge of teachers, but to their general views on citizenship (Knowles 2018; Weinberg & Flinders 2018), their moral and civic competences (Kuusisto & Tirri 2019), and their perspectives on the EDC/HRE-related issues that they encounter in the classroom (Rinaldi 2017). These studies emphasize the necessity to train teachers to reflect on their values, attitudes, and teaching practices to empower them to respond to the emerging issues safely and professionally in the classroom, as well as to continuously develop democratic competences of their students.

While there is a paucity of studies on the involvement of parents at earlier stages of education, there is a well-established body of research on parental involvement at the school level (Duman, Aydin & Ozfidan 2018; Wei et al. 2019). The scholarship concludes that the involvement of parents matters for two main reasons. First of all, strengthening partnerships with parents at the school level supports students' academic success, as well as their well-being at school (Wilson & Gross 2018). The scholarship confirms that parental and community support is an essential input for successful EDC/HRE interventions at schools (Chiba et al. 2021). Secondly, safety and inclusiveness of the school environment are highly important factors for parents' understanding of the quality education for their children (Duman et al. 2018). Involving them in school life contributes to the quality of education as they see it. From the reports published by the international education organisations we now know that the increasing pressure on parents, as well as the issues of communication between teachers and parents, has been one of the biggest challenges in terms of the COVID-19 (UNESCO

2020b). Several studies have found that the value of parental involvement so far has not been sufficiently addressed.

There is also significant research interest in the opportunities that technological advances bring for the achievement of EDC/HRE goals. Researchers have emphasised that the use of digital tools  not only strengthens ICT-related competences, but also the fundamental civic competences that can be found in the curricula across Europe (Vaitsekhovska et al. 2020). The possibility to reach anyone in the world with  Internet access supports intercultural exchange and the achievement of certain GCED outcomes for learners in the online environment (O'Dowd 2020; Rapoport 2020; Celume & Maoulida 2022). Massive open online courses (MOOCs) serve their purpose of providing information on EDC/HRE issues to a large number of learners (Gómez-Zermeño 2020; Hajdukiewicz & Pera 2020). Due to a growing interest in the digital engagement of youth, the political influence of social media and digital human rights issues, such as surveillance, the subject of digital citizenship has gained traction in research (Fernández-Prados, Lozano-Díaz & Cuenca-Piqueras 2020; Richardson, Martin & Sauers 2021). Some researchers claim that effective democratic citizenship education with an emphasis on participation can only be conducted with the inclusion of the digital citizenship element (Choi & Cristol 2021). Digital citizenship education researchers have for years called for measures to overcome the digital gap that led to unequal access to digital citizenship among students and to inequalities in civic participation (Atif & Chou 2018). The relevance of digital citizenship education is also reflected in the scope of the published studies that cover all levels of education – policies (Krutka & Carpenter 2017), pre-primary (Lauricella, Herdzina & Robb 2020), primary (Walters, Gee & Mohammed 2019), secondary (Gleason & von Gillern 2018), and tertiary education (Al-Abdullatif & Gameil 2020; Campillo-Ferrer, Miralles-Martínez & Sánchez-Ibáñez 2020). Teaching about inequalities today and their role in democracy is irrelevant without taking into account digital inequalities (Swarts 2020; González-Betancor, López-Puig & Cardenal 2021).

### 2.1.4.  Assessment

Since the launch of the RFCDC, a series of guidance documents have been published to support its implementation in schools, including  **assessment** of learners' democratic competences – including EDC/HRE (Barrett 2020: 36). Learner assessment in EDC/HRE can help to obtain information about the individual progress of each learner (Barrett 2020: 34).

However, when it comes to assessing learners' competences in EDC/HRE there is a catch. Without clearly defined learning goals, the task of assessing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values can steer away from identifying learners' progress in these competence areas. It is essential to establish a clear assessment methodology related to the skills, attitudes, and more specifically, values (OECD 2021b). In this regard, the RFCDC establishes that "[The RFCDC] descriptors cover only those values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and understanding which are learnable, teachable and assessable" (Council of Europe 2018: 12), addressing right away two main issues related to the assessment of values-based education: first, the so-called "fuzziness" attributed to soft skills; and second, the reticence to the idea of grading democratic competences (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker: 2020: 13). Indeed, there is an underlying calling in the RFCDC for a holistic assessment, in which test formats such as

essays, projects, portfolios, etc. allow learners to show their understanding and ability to apply complex concepts (e.g. democratic citizenship). Also, learner assessment in EDC/HRE should support formative assessment methods. Teachers adjust their approaches according to the learner needs as identified through assessment (which may include classroom dialogue and questioning, performance on assignments, and so on). Student peer- and self-assessment is also an important component of the learning process.

In terms of the instruments and tools used for learner assessment in formal education, it is worth noting that national examinations for EDC/HRE are often subject to criticism. Several opportunities for assessment (using different methods) to collect data from the school and classroom level should be made available over time. As noted by Looney (2009) relying "on a single test score as a measure of school, teacher or student performance, no matter how well-designed the test" it's a risky way to evaluate quality and outcomes, given that "no single test can provide enough information to fully understand how instructional strategies are influencing student learning" (Looney 2009, p. 20). Hence, combining different sources of data can help schools and teachers how to respond more effectively to the identified gaps (Ibid). A focus group participant emphasized that countries should be "careful" in implementing national examinations to assess learners' attitudes; a preferred approach is to encourage young people to learn *"how to deal with others in a democratic way, rather than comparing their attitudes towards democracy."*

During the last review cycle, the findings revealed the need to further develop learner assessment in EDC/HRE so as to "reinforce the status of such education, and give it a solid position in the curricula" (Council of Europe 2017). Since then, some progress has been made as observed by the Eurydice report on citizenship education (2017). By the time the report was published, almost two thirds of the European education systems (26 countries) had developed central guidelines for teachers on recommended methods for classroom assessment applicable to citizenship education. Among the different assessment methods identified were multiple-choice tests, projects, learner portfolios, reflective diaries, etc.

Formative assessment methods such as self- and peer-assessment appear to be among the most used methods, which is also a trend in non-formal education as indicated by the replies to the surveys for NGOs and youth organisations for this review. Teacher observation of students' behaviour appears to be suitable for classroom assessment in primary education, whereas in secondary education other methods such as written assignments, oral presentations, and portfolios are often recommended to teachers; classroom dialogue and discussion, as well as teacher observation of student work, are approaches suitable at all school levels. The intention of formative assessment is to use the information gathered through these different methods to adjust teaching and close the gap between the student's current understanding and the learning aim/standard (Ibid).

Much as in the last review cycle, the findings of this review reveal that learner assessment in EDC/HRE remains an area for further improvement. While there has been progress as described in the last Eurydice report, very little information is made available by countries, in particular with regard to student assessment in initial VET. Undoubtedly, assessing learners on the development of democratic competences is a difficult task (Barrett 2020; OECD 2021c; Zygierewicz 2021), but recent

guidelines to support the implementation of the RFCDC as research on appropriate assessment methods for EDC/HRE (Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker 2020).

## 2.2. Key transversal challenges to the implementation of the EDC/HRE Charter

As part of the analysis conducted for this review, several challenges that may be considered as transversal to the policy implementation process in EDC/HRE were identified. These challenges reveal ongoing conceptual discrepancies, contextual factors, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, uneven access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups, collaboration between and within sectors, and funding. Such issues may sound relevant to different degrees for each country, and their impact on the implementation of the Charter may be more or less present across education policy systems.

### 2.2.1. Conceptual controversies

While leading the data collection for this review, a first challenge that emerged was related to the "controversial" nature of concepts related to democratic citizenship and human rights (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017; Hladschik, Lenz, Pirker 2020; UNESCO 2020a; Zygierewicz 2021). As noted by Gavrielides et al. (2018), it would seem that implementing activities in HRE is a straightforward and simple task especially for organisations working in non-formal education; however, the authors underline the difficulty of "convincing" education providers to introduce HRE training – more than is the case for any other topic – in formal general education, higher education institutions, and public offices (Ibid).

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

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

Undoubtedly, addressing these concepts in formal and non-formal education is a complex task that requires a degree of consciousness of diversity among teachers and educators (Rutigliano 2020). However, policy makers have an even more important task in supporting the implementation of

EDC/HRE in schools through the provision of resources and materials that integrate democratic citizenship and human rights as key concepts – for instance, in textbooks and guidelines (UNESCO 2020a). As noted by focus groups participants, using other concepts or topics as "entry points" to discussing human rights in the classroom – such as education for sustainable development, global citizenship education, critical youth citizenship, etc. – may also help teachers and educators in undertaking this task.

### 2.2.2. Contextual factors

A second challenge transversal to the implementation of EDC/HRE across European countries is related to contextual factors within the varied and complex multi-layered education systems and varied political landscapes across Europe. A significant body of literature explores the importance of country context for implementation in complex multi-layer education systems. Such factors will have a great influence on the development and implementation of education policies (e.g. the curriculum) and "need to be factored in the policy design" (Gouëdard et al. 2020: 42).

The political organisation of some member states (centralised/decentralised) may have an impact on the dissemination and sharing of good practices. During the focus groups, a participant from Germany underlined that, due to the federal structure of Germany, where education is under the responsibility of the Laender (states), there is a multitude of activities carried out by the ministries of education or local authorities/educational institutions in co-operation with NGOs, youth organisations, community groups etc., *"most of which are not reported back to the coordinating body (the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)."* Participants of the focus group also highlighted the importance of involving local authorities and the school community in the EDC/HRE policy making process through public consultations, to increase ownership at the local level. It's worth noting that among respondents to the youth policy survey, the perception is that the promotion of EDC/HRE at a regional/local level is not a priority for government authorities – seven respondents out of 11 indicated that this is a priority to a small extent.

For education and youth policy respondents one of the big challenges is the attention given by the media and the general public to EDC/HRE. As shown on Figure 5, for respondents from the youth policy sector the lack of media and public interest and support are two of the most important challenges to the promotion of EDC/HRE, followed by the reduction in funding and the lack of priority among decision-makers. Interestingly, for respondents from the education policy sector the key obstacle to the promotion of EDC/HRE was related to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; cuts in funding were not seen as a major obstacle to the promotion of EDC/HRE. Nevertheless, funding remains a crucial factor for the development of EDC/HRE in Europe as it will be discussed further in the upcoming pages.

*Figure 5: Key challenges to the promotion and development of EDC/HRE - Youth Policy survey*
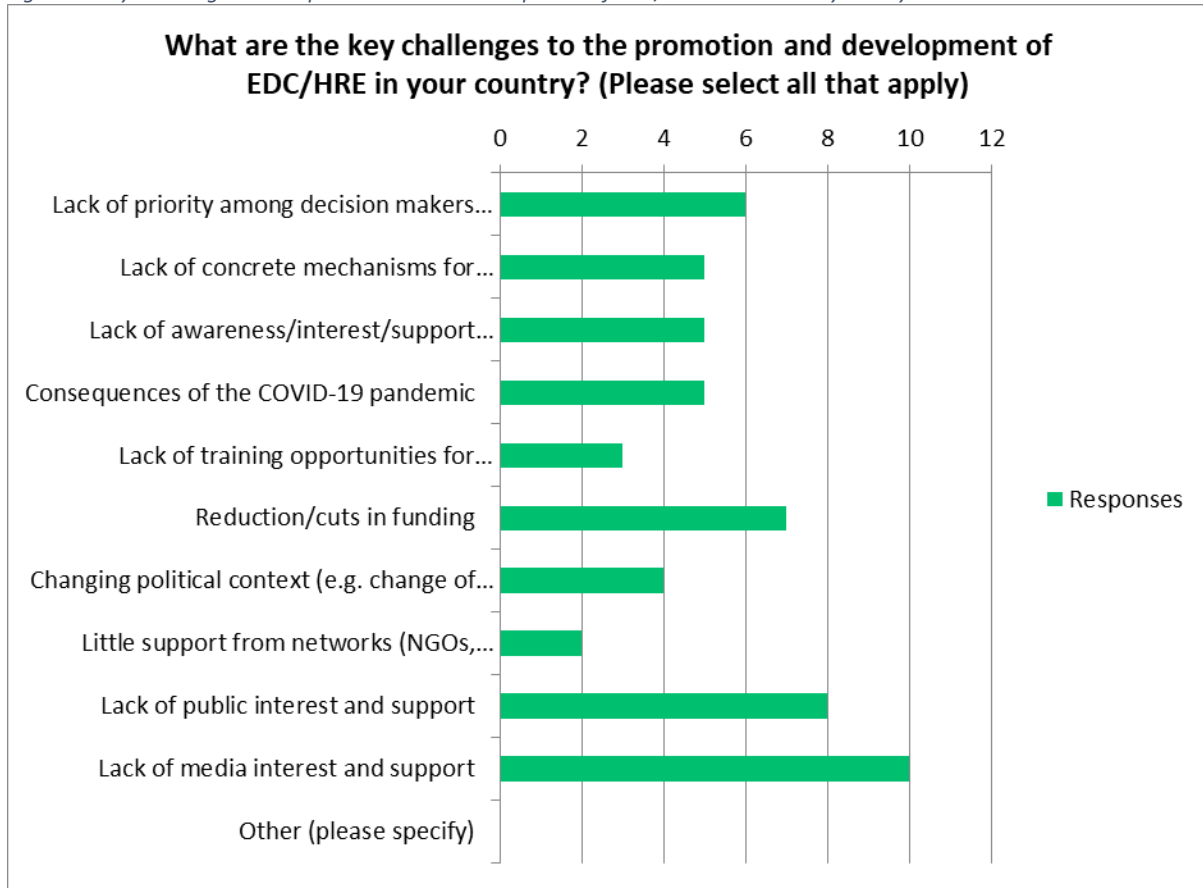
The issue of media attention is crucial to create a sense of ownership and shared priorities among policy makers and the society as a whole. As noted by UNESCO (2020), "the media are a powerful force, capable of perpetuating and dismantling stereotypes…coverage of vulnerable groups can be a bellwether, leading changes in attitudes." (Ibid: 185).

Another contextual issue no less important is the phenomenon of shrinking spaces for civil society organisations, that has widely affected the NGO sector in recent years. As noted by Amnesty International (2022), there has been "an increase in legal and policy restrictions on HRE such as banning HRE in schools, restricting access of NGOs to schools to conduct HRE, censorship of HRE (e.g., in sexuality education, LGBTI, gender, racism, etc)." (Amnesty International 2022: 1). This observation is shared by several organisations, including the Asia-Europe Foundation[4] and the Networking European Citizenship Education network.[5]

During the focus group discussions, some NGOs indicated that in their countries access to schools is limited due to the position of the government. When a conservative political agenda is dominant, the space for the EDC/HRE work of civil society organisations starts shrinking, and instead of a transformative EDC/HRE experience, countries put forward a more nationalist or patriotic perspective. Also, an increasing pressure is put on human rights advocates and NGOs working in this field due to potential legal issues; this fear translates into the non-formal education sector

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[4] https://asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ASEMHRS19-Key-Messages-1-1.pdf

[5] https://eence.eu/2020/06/14/citizenship-education-in-eastern-europe-status-and-future-trends/

restricting their contact with the media. This is another indicator of the value of the integration of EDC/HRE into the national norms through co-operation with NGOs. It helps to make certain that EDC/HRE implementation cannot be limited or eliminated due to a particular political agenda. As one of the focus group respondents remarked, non-formal education actors support schools in seeing young people as partners in the process of their own education. Several participants suggested that preventing schools from cooperating with civil society ultimately limits the development of the essential skills and attitudes related to the social and political engagement of students. A number of participants in the focus groups highlighted the impact of this phenomenon on their work, in particular in non-formal education:

> *"Actions from the government have scrubbed all things related to EDC/HRE from schools. They can't write it in the law, but they encourage schools not to have connections with NGOs. General political atmosphere is hostile towards human rights which also influences the way human rights are perceived. There are already students questioning the value of human rights because they've heard it in the public discourse."*

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

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

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

As it is discussed in the following point, cross-sectoral co-operation is vital for the progress in the promotion of EDC/HRE, in particular in difficult contexts where spaces for civil society action have been shrunk.

### 2.2.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation can provide useful insight on the effectiveness of policies and programmes on EDC/HRE, which is fundamental for their sustainability and to identify avenues for improvement. An important aspect of policy making is the **evaluation** of the strategies put in place, and the implementation of the Charter is no exception. Countries are encouraged to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of the EDC/HRE policies implemented so far in either education or youth policy. This could translate into targeted programme evaluation in formal and non-formal education and/or integrating a specific evaluation framework for EDC/HRE in the school evaluation system. If assessments inside the classrooms can provide important insights on how learners are progressing in the development of democratic competences, external and internal evaluations can inform policy makers about the quality of the EDC/HRE provided and the ways in which it can be improved. As noted by the Danish Institute of Human Rights on the Draft Action Plan for the Fourth Phase of the WPHRE, strong monitoring and evaluation systems in this area are a way to "contribute to a stronger commitment from the state and its educational institutions to fulfil HRE

obligations…[T]his will provide an evidence-base for improved planning and implementation of HRE initiatives and associated resource allocation".[6] The evaluation of the implementation of the WPHRE is an example of nationwide evaluations conducted specifically in the area of HRE. A further example of a framework for evaluating HRE at the national level is presented in Box 3.

*Box 3: Examples of evaluation frameworks for EDC/HRE*

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

Training in National Planning
- Domain 1: Development of a National Human Rights Education and Training Plan
- Domain 2: Contents of the Plan
- Domain 3: Implementation of the Plan

Formal education sector
- Domain 1: Human Rights Education in Legislation and Policy Documents
- Domain 2: Human Rights Education in the Curriculum
- Domain 3: Human Rights Education in Training Materials and Methodologies
- Domain 4: Learner Assessments and Program Evaluations in Human Rights Education
- Domain 5: Human Rights Education in Non-formal/Extracurricular School-Level Programming
- Domain 6: Human Rights Education in Teacher Training

Training for law enforcement and military personnel and training of professional groups
- Domain 1: Human Rights Education and Training in Legislation and Policy Documents
- Domain 2: Human Rights Education in the Curriculum
- Domain 3: Human Rights Education in Training Materials and Methodologies
- Domain 4: Learner Assessments and Program Evaluations in Human Rights Education
- Domain 5: Human Rights Education in Trainer Preparation

*Source: Human Rights Education Indicator Framework, 2015*

The last review of the Charter implementation (2016) showed that only over a half of the country respondents (55%) had evaluated strategies and policies in accordance with the aims and principles

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

of the Charter. In this regard, one of the key recommendations was to develop a more coherent and consistent approach to evaluate the progress made in the area of EDC/HRE, and to support the data collection process. An important challenge reported was that gathering information from various actors was difficult due to the lack of established channels of communication and the absence of planning with regard to data collection (Council of Europe 2017). Based on the findings from the surveys and focus groups, since 2017 the situation hasn't changed substantially. Research has underlined the lack of monitoring and empirical data on the quality of citizenship education (Bozec 2016; Pornschlegel and Zels: 2020). Participants to the focus groups also highlighted the need to have "non-official" monitoring and evaluation processes done by external organisations or NGOs to corroborate what governments are reporting on the access and quality to EDC/HRE. The idea behind these "non-official" processes would be to conduct a "shadow reporting" process, which allow NGOs "to supplement and / or present alternative information to reports governments are required to submit under human rights treaties." (Right to Education 2015).

Focus group participants provided some insight about the usefulness of evaluation for EDC/HRE. While some advocated for more research and evaluation results to contribute to the evidence base for policy making – in particular if EDC/HRE is competing with other areas in education that need to be monitored and evaluated, others suggested that school evaluation could be based on participatory methods involving the whole school community. Most participants agreed on the usefulness of having reliable and timely information, and some stressed on the importance of involving the whole school community in the process. Importantly, school evaluation in EDC/HRE should include both internal and external actors, with a shared focus on improvement (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Staring & Maxwell 2018).

According to the Eurydice report on citizenship education (2017), evaluations at the school level on this topic could be conducted in five main areas: 1) classroom teaching; 2) school/classroom climate; 3) student involvement in school life; 4) parental involvement in school life; and 5) relationships with the local community (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 123). The report's findings showed that in most countries that lead external school evaluations, at least four of these areas are covered; student involvement in school life is the most frequently measured, and relationships with the local community are the least. Among the methods countries use to evaluate the quality of citizenship education at school, the Eurydice report provides several examples: document analysis (e.g. integration of citizenship education in strategic documents such as the school programme, Germany); the involvement of school leaders, parents, and students in school initiatives related to citizenship education (France); and the monitoring of the school targets on school climate (Netherlands). Moreover, education authorities might commission an "ad hoc" inspection to evaluate specific aspects related to citizenship education at school (Czech Republic) (Ibid: 26).

Respondents to the education policy survey for this review provided some examples of recent initiatives that seek to redress the lack of monitoring and evaluation systems for EDC/HRE in their countries. Currently Latvia is developing an Education Quality Monitoring System, which will be based on "statistical information, the results of comparative research, indicators of state level students' achievements and other indicators of education institutions' work, centralized examinations, accreditation / licensing, teachers' work quality, considering mid-term and long-term strategical goals and results", as indicated in their replies to the education policy survey for this

review. In Slovenia, for example, more thorough monitoring and assessment of the progress in EDC/HRE will be based on the results of the upcoming International Civic and Citizenship Education Study - ICCS 2022. In Bulgaria, the quality criteria prepared by the National Inspectorate for Education Effectiveness of the interaction for personal development of children and students have been developed for the following areas: Developing social and civic competencies; Development of learning skills; and Development of skills in children and students for teamwork self-assessment, self-criticism, and self-improvement. School inspections evaluate their quality looking into aspects such as compliance with the topic, content, and duration of the training; resource provision (human and material); and training methods.

The results from the youth policy survey, however, paint a slightly different picture. When asked if any action has been taken or foreseen to monitor and evaluate strategies and policies on EDC/HRE, six respondents stated that they did not know whether this was the case, and five indicated that no actions have been taken or foreseen. The results from NGO and youth organisations surveys show a similar trend, where a majority of the respondents *don't know* whether the quality education criteria in their country include EDC/HRE (see Figures 6 and 7 below).

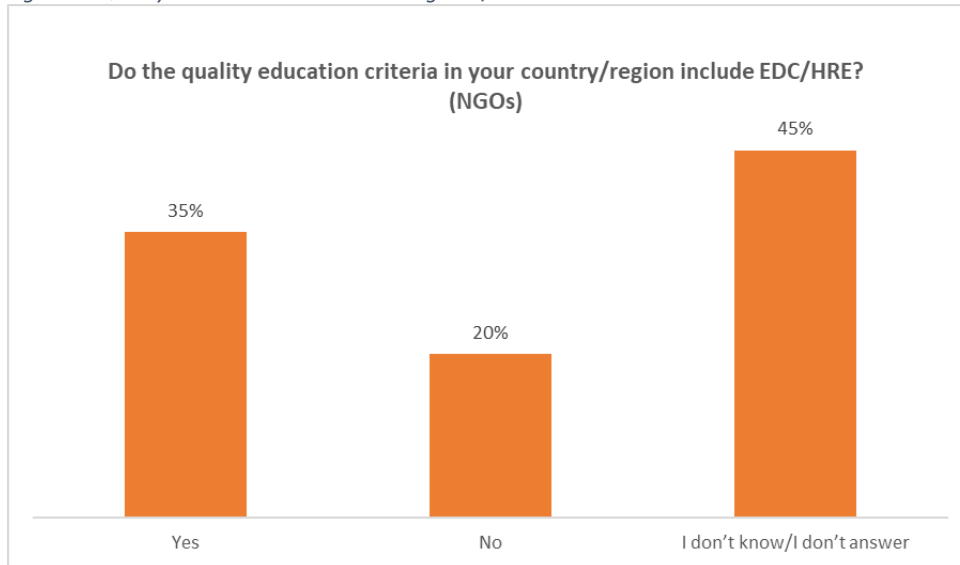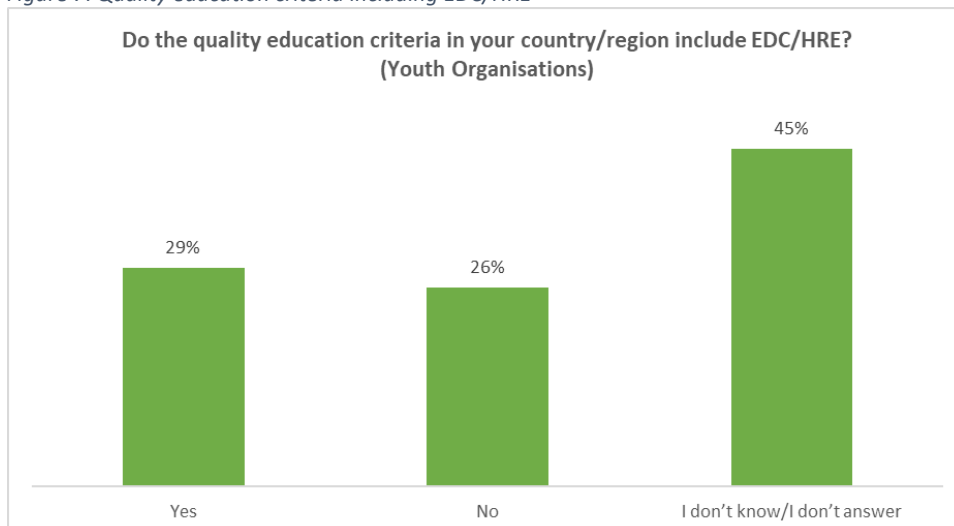*Figure 6: Quality education criteria including EDC/HRE*



**Do the quality education criteria in your country/region include EDC/HRE? (NGOs)**

- Yes: 35%
- No: 20%
- I don't know/I don't answer: 45%

*Figure 7: Quality education criteria including EDC/HRE*



**Do the quality education criteria in your country/region include EDC/HRE? (Youth Organisations)**

- Yes: 29%
- No: 26%
- I don't know/I don't answer: 45%

Another important aspect concerns NGOs' and youth organisations' internal evaluation of the quality of their initiatives. When asked whether they have clear procedures and criteria to evaluate the quality of EDC/HRE initiatives, the surveys yielded mixed results. While 43% of NGOs and about 1/3 of youth organisations stated they have procedures and criteria for evaluation, almost a third of the respondents from youth organisations do not know whether procedures and criteria for evaluation have been developed in their institutions. In terms of the methods and sources used for the internal evaluations, respondents highlighted the following in their comments: document analysis; questionnaires; quality criteria checklists; written and/or oral feedback; focus group with stakeholders; and ex-post impact assessments of the activities implemented. This is a potential area for further improvement in the upcoming review cycle, as part of the overall development of monitoring and evaluation systems for EDC/HRE.

### 2.2.4. Access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups

As part of the key action areas identified in the previous Charter implementation review, ensuring access to EDC/HRE "paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups" was included. In terms of this study, we defined vulnerable groups as all groups that are excluded or can be potentially excluded from the formal education system. Due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the respect of their right of access to quality education has been even more precarious. Most respondents to the survey for education policy representatives (21) and the youth policy bodies (12) stated that measures and activities put in place in the last five years have ensured that vulnerable groups have access to EDC/HRE. Box 4 presents some examples on legal and policy frameworks in formal education that explicitly include learners from vulnerable groups – e.g., students with special education needs, students from minority groups, etc.

*Box 4: Existing legal frameworks regulating access to education for all learners in Slovenia and Latvia*

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

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

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

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

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

opportunities to learn about their realities. In Serbia, for example, although the idea that some groups are more vulnerable to inequalities and/or discrimination is part of the curriculum, the actual problems faced by vulnerable groups are seldom addressed (Civil Rights Defenders 2021: 17).
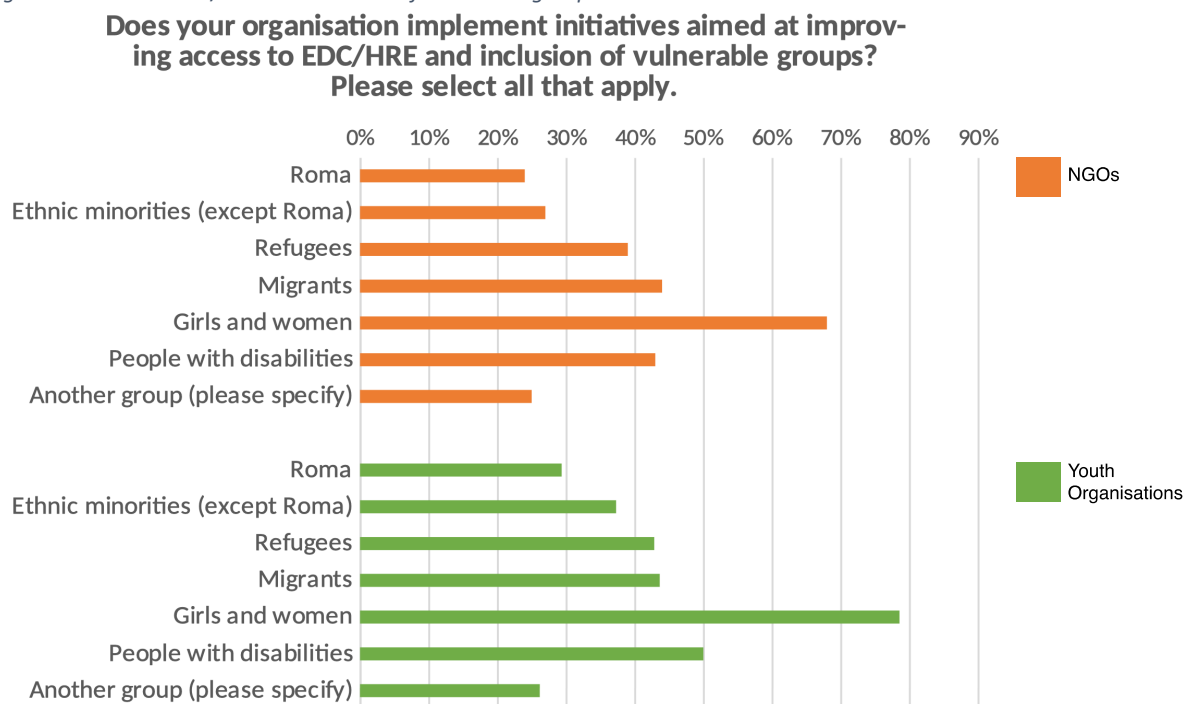
As noted by a focus group participant *"putting everything on the document is different from implementing".* She shared an example from the reality lived by the Roma community in her country:

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

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

Most of the organisations responding to the survey implement initiatives aimed at improving girls' and women's access to EDC/HRE (Figure 8). Gender equality is a critical issue to consider when working with all the vulnerable groups mentioned above. This explains the high percentage the organisations that work specifically on the inclusion of girls and women, and it correlates with the high relevance of gender equality as a topic for work with young people. It is probably due to the active work of NGOs with the vulnerable groups that their access to EDC/HRE was estimated by NGOs as moderate. Box 5 provides some examples of practice about combatting intolerance against Muslim minorities and gender inequality.

**Does your organisation implement initiatives aimed at improving access to EDC/HRE and inclusion of vulnerable groups? Please select all that apply.**



*Box 5: Combatting intolerance against Muslim minorities and gender inequality*

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**EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE**

The ref:EU project – "Muslim minorities and the refugee crisis in Europe" (2018-2019) provides teaching tools for counteracting and counterbalancing Islamophobia and any other "phobias" related to migrants/refugees/asylum seekers, and "distant others" in the EU member states. The project targeted over 1300 participants. More information can be found here: http://refeu.eu/en/

The"Center for Equality Advancement" in Lithuania works on the issues of intersectional discrimination – discrimination on several grounds that are closely connected. For example, they work with women from ethnic minorities and disabled women to define barriers that exist for their equal participation in the society and address these barriers through co-operation with policy makers, social and mental health professionals, as well as through raising awareness of the wider public. More information on the Centre's project can be found here: http://gap.lt/en/all-projects/2022-2/

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With regard to improving access to EDC/HRE for vulnerable groups, the availability of the Charter and RFCDC in minority languages might play a role in countries where these instruments have not been translated yet. The findings from the surveys among education and youth policy representatives present a mixed outlook. According to respondents to the youth policy survey, the Charter is not available in the minority language(s) of six out of 11 countries that replied. For the education policy survey, the Charter is not available in minority language(s) in 15 countries out of 20. As for the RFCDC, the instrument not available in the minority languages of 18 countries out of 20 according to the respondents to the education policy survey. It's worth noting that among youth policy respondents, a majority do not know whether the RFCDC is available in the minority

language(s) or if it's disseminated to the target audiences by other means. This finding, however, cannot be taken at face value as it doesn't include a majority of the Member States.

Nonetheless, some countries provided examples of the efforts that are being made to disseminate these resources as much as possible, in particular the RFCDC. In Romania, both the Charter and the RFCDC are available in Romanian. The Ministry of Education asks the Schools Inspectorate to be sure that schools and pre-university educational institutions are aware of the two documents, as often as necessary. In addition, the information is also disseminated to teachers and students through the eTwinning Romania network. As for the RFCDC, it is available in seven languages of the national minorities in Romania (i.e. Albanian, Greek, Italian, Serb, Slovak, Turkish, and Ukrainian). The RFCDC has been equally promoted to schools providing education to children belonging to national minorities, which have been informed of the translations available. And in Serbia, guidelines for the appropriate representation of national minorities in curricula and content textbooks were prepared in 2019. This document describes how to apply the Recommendations from reports on the representation of national minorities in curricula and educational standards of the Republic of Serbia and the Report on the Representation and Representation of National Minorities in Schools textbooks in the Republic of Serbia, created within the project Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

### 2.2.5. Co-operation across and within sectors

Co-operation across and within sectors, including governments, the third sector, as well as the main actors involved in the learning process is also important. In this regard, the Charter stresses the importance of co-operation both on the international and national levels among the authorities, non-governmental and youth organisations (art. 15).

Since the adoption of the Charter, EDC/HRE in Europe has been mainly implemented by non-governmental organisations, including youth organisations. This trend was independently demonstrated by the results of two previous Charter implementation review cycles, and it remains the case according to data obtained in this review. Many focus group respondents emphasized that awareness-raising, capacity-building, and advocacy activities on the regional, national, and local levels are predominantly conducted by NGOs. In the focus groups and surveys, we received many examples of innovative EDC/HRE projects organised and implemented by NGOs with the support of international funding. Often, it was the expertise of the non-governmental sector that served as a foundation for putting EDC/HRE instruments into practice on the national level. In some countries, the valuable role of NGOs was acknowledged in the legal state frameworks, following the spirit of the EDC/HRE Charter. For example, in Ukraine, the youth sector started its work with EDC/HRE before it was taken up on the national level. Currently, a variety of non-governmental actors are conducting projects that support the reform aimed at the educational system democratisation. The important role of these actors is recognized in the policy guidelines that frame the reform.

At the same time, certain issues that were identified in the previous review cycles emerge once again in this review. The surveys indicate that the level of recognition of the important role of NGOs and youth organisations in the provision of citizenship and human rights education is limited. The same results were obtained in terms of the previous Charter implementation review. In the

comments to the most recent survey, the respondents clarified some of the limitations: according to NGOs, while in many European countries the authorities recognise and officially support NGOs efforts in the EDC/HRE provision, they expect that NGOs will implement EDC/HRE "on their behalf."

According to the survey results, the NGOs representatives consider assuring the accessibility of EDC/HRE for all as their most important priority. Youth organisations place assuring the accessibility of EDC/HRE for all  along with the political will as their most important priorities. One of the focus group participants observed that the structures and content of formal education are rigid and change slowly, while non-formal education provides a small possibility for reflection on what has been learnt over a long period of time. Another participant pointed out that without an overall national or regional strategy, as required by the EDC/HRE Charter, a significant number of innovative projects do not lead to sustainable results. Considering their limited resources and access, NGOs can usually reach only a small number of education professionals for short periods of time. The change achieved in terms of the NGOs' projects usually takes place on an individual or an institutional level. It is only with the co-operation of the formal and non-formal sectors that the universal and sustainable implementation of EDC/HRE on the national and regional levels can be achieved.

An important observation on the role of the RFCDC was made by one of the focus group participants. This participant suggested that the RFCDC has the potential to provide a common EDC/HRE language for formal and non-formal actors, and thus to build bridges between the professionals from both sectors. Box 6 presents an example of this cross-sectoral collaboration in three countries.

*Box 6: Building bridges between formal and non-formal education through RFCDC*

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

**USEFUL RESOURCE**
DARE Network (Germany) and Zentrum Polis (Austria) developed a manual for the implementation of RFCDC in the areas of co-operation of formal and non-formal education:
https://dare-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021_DARE_BLUE-LINES_RFCDC.pdf
The manual demonstrates how RFCDC can be applied in non-formal education and youth work, as well as for the professional development of teachers and social workers. The authors point out how RFCDC can be used in correlation with other competence-based frameworks that are used within Europe.

As shown in Figure 9, both youth organisations and education NGOs indicate that co-operation among non-formal organisations and policy makers is limited.

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

**To which extent is there cooperation in EDC/HRE in your country/region...**
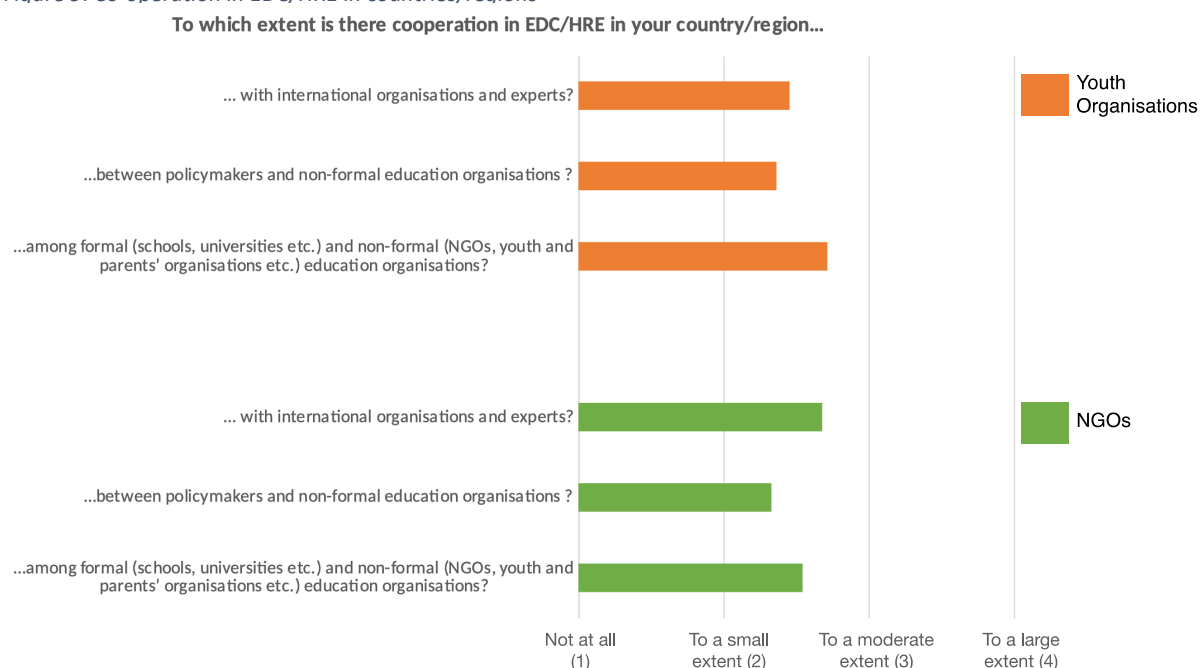


Findings from the previous review showed that co-operation between NGOs and governments was moderate. However, "governments" is quite a general term that can refer to a multitude of actors who play different roles in the education systems. As can be seen from the data collected in 2022, the co-operation of formal (e.g., schools, and higher education institutions) and non-formal educational organisations (NGOs and youth organisations) indeed remains at a moderate level, but when it comes to policy makers as such the level of co-operation is lower. Youth organisations consider that the participation of NGOs in EDC/HRE policymaking and policies implementation along with better funding is the action area that needs to be prioritised to better implement the Charter. When asked how often their own organisation cooperates with schools, higher and vocational education institutions, youth organisations indicated that they do so only rarely or sometimes. NGO and EPAN representatives' organisations cooperate with schools often, but only sometimes or rarely with other formal education institutions. Box 7 presents an example of a co-operation project conducted by the Multicultural Centre in Prague, Czech Republic, that gathered schools, universities, and NGOs to promote democratic competences at school.

*Box 7: Co-operation of schools, universities, and NGOs to promote democratic competences at school*

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

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

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

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

*Figure 10: Co-operation on EDC/HRE with international organisations*
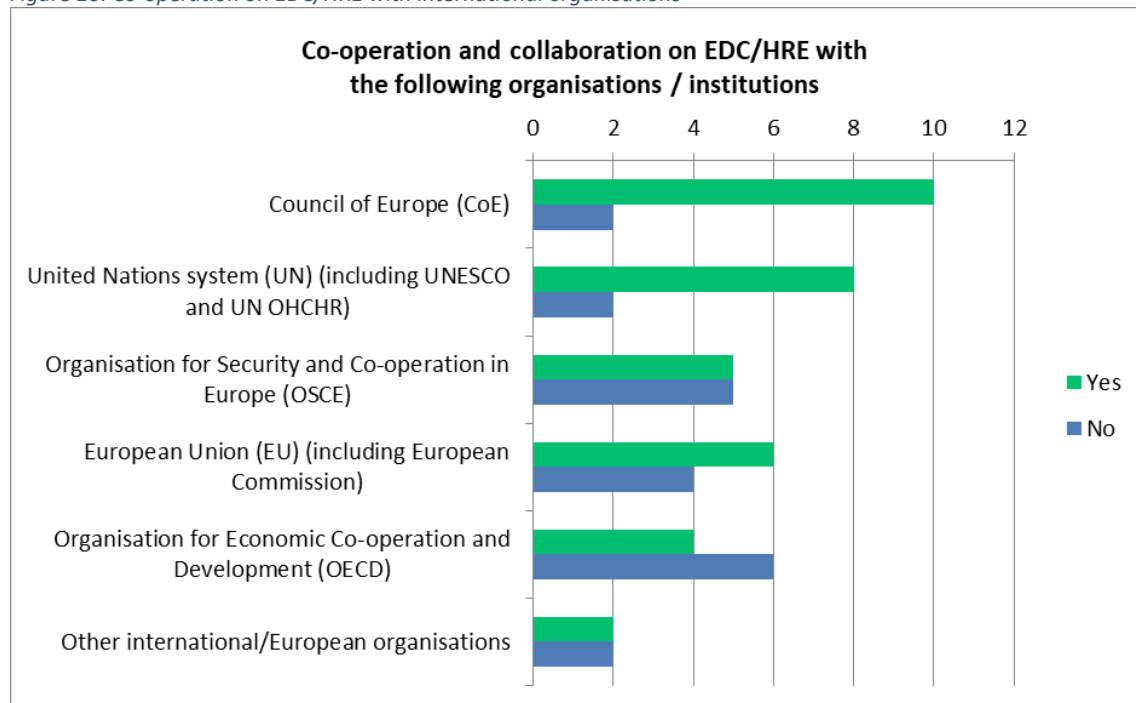
## 2.2.6. Funding

Data collected among NGOs and youth organisations demonstrate that the most common form of co-operation between NGOs, youth organisations, and policy makers is the implementation of EDC/HRE policies by non-governmental state actors. Also, even if EDC/HRE standards exist at the state level, their implementation largely depends on the initiatives of non-governmental actors. However, as illustrated in Figure 11 the provision of funding for EDC/HRE initiatives is the least common mode of co-operation between non-formal education actors and policy makers and is indeed limited.

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

**How does the cooperation happen among policymakers and youth organisations in the area of EDC/HRE in your country/region?**
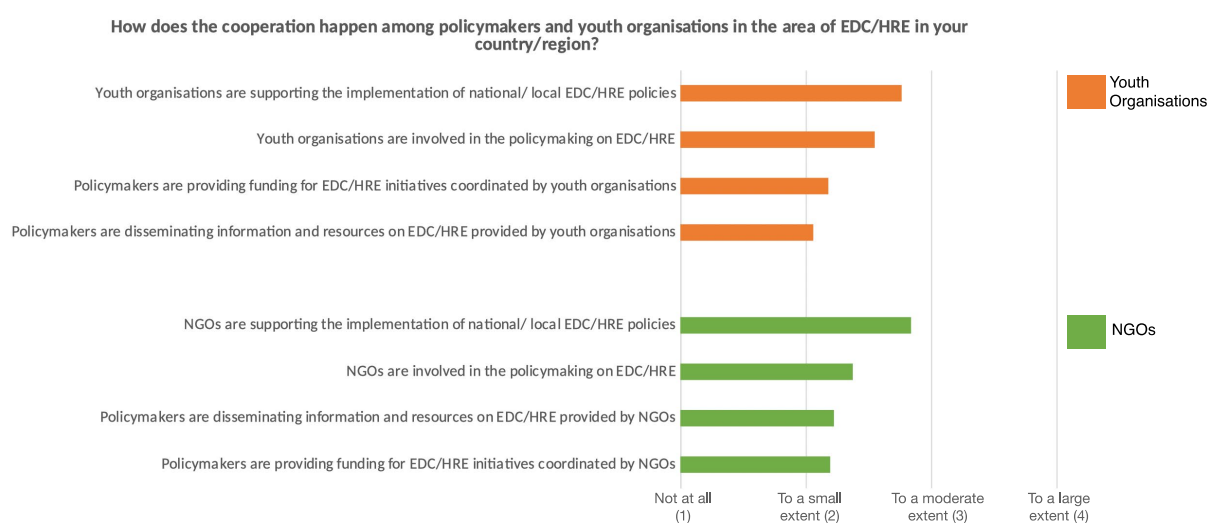


Reductions/cuts in funding are among the main challenges for EDC/HRE implementation according to the youth policy survey respondents, followed by low priority of EDC/HRE among decision makers (other areas are seen as having a higher priority) and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's likely that all three challenges are related since the lower priority given to EDC/HRE in education and youth policy could translate into less funding for further initiatives. The focus groups participants indicated that the availability of funding for EDC/HRE initiatives has an impact on both formal and non-formal education sectors. Capacity building opportunities for teachers and educators, filling the gaps in formal education to provide EDC/HRE, and issues of sustainability of EDC/HRE initiatives in the long run are some of the main recurrent issues in relation to funding. Dependence on external sources of funding, such as international donors and organisations, may limit the sustainability of projects led by civil society organisations, hence affecting the development of a comprehensive approach to EDC/HRE as a society (Gavrielides et al. 2018).

"Hunting for funding" is an important issue for all NGOs as mentioned by the focus groups participants. According to the quantitative data, financial support of EDC/HRE initiatives is a low priority. The level of financial support offered to non-governmental actors remains as low as in 2016. One of the key recommendations as a result of the previous review was to support the EDC/HRE policies implementation with sufficient resources. Various funding schemes are available on the European level, but not on national levels. The funding for EDC/HRE implementation in Europe is

mainly provided by the regional organisations for short-term projects. According to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the funding available for NGOs and youth organisations working in the area of EDC/HRE. During the pandemic, STEM subjects were seen as having higher priority than other areas. NGOs lost money because they had to adapt to new conditions. In some cases, there was no funding for online events foreseen, so they couldn't spend money on this like for hiring technical support.

The shortage of regular funding for the implementation of EDC/HRE policies can lead to issues of both provision and quality. For this reason, NGOs prioritise the need for funding to overcome the challenges of EDC/HRE implementation. Both education NGOs and youth organisations believe that governments need to allocate more resources to EDC/HRE projects. In the next chapters, we will discuss how the lack of funding affects the availability and provision of EDC/HRE capacity building.

## 2.3. Training and professional development

Article 9 of the EDC/HRE Charter emphasizes the importance of training educators to implement EDC/HRE successfully. For this reason, training and professional development of education professionals and other actors in formal and non-formal education are focal points of this review. EDC/HRE training is aimed at "thorough knowledge and understanding of the discipline's objectives and principles and of appropriate teaching and learning methods, as well as other key skills appropriate to their area of education". As found in the previous review, the issues of capacity-building continue to be highly important for all EDC/HRE stakeholders. According to the focus group participants, capacity-building in EDC/HRE is the most critical mechanism for EDC/HRE policy implementation. Both NGOs and youth organisations consider the lack of training opportunities for educators and youth workers to be a fundamental challenge for EDC/HRE implementation.
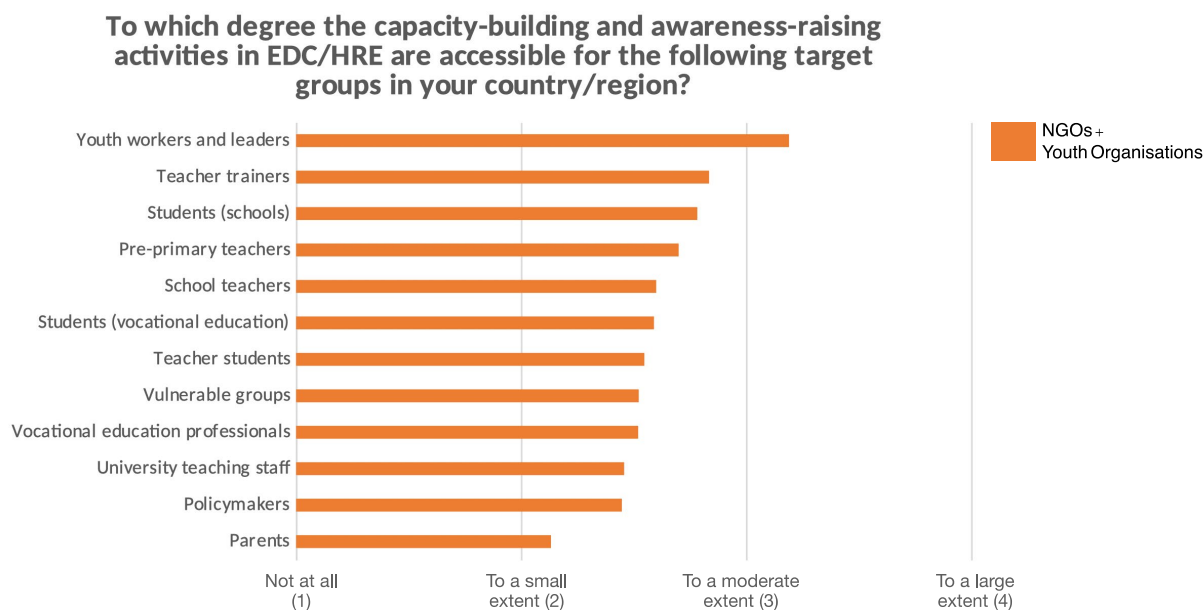
NGOs are still the leading providers of EDC/HRE capacity-building opportunities for young people and educators on the national level in Europe. Among the general challenges that the focus groups participants indicate for the provision of capacity building for all educators are the issues strongly related to the lack of political will and co-operation with the authorities. In the countries where the provision of EDC/HRE training is only limited to the initiatives of non-formal education actors, capacity building is unsystematic and unsustainable. The NGOs do not have the necessary resources to reach out to all educators at the state level and offer them additional trainings when required. The focus group participants mentioned other general challenges, such as a lack of financial and temporal resources for teachers' EDC/HRE training and no official accreditation for training provided by NGOs.

Key action 2 defined in the result of the previous Charter implementation review goes as follows: "Ensure quality, balanced provision of EDC/HRE in all areas and types of education, with specific attention paid to areas where EDC/HRE is less present such as pre-school education, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education". The data collected in 2017 showed that the availability of the EDC/HRE training opportunities was limited to youth workers and youth trainers, teacher trainers and teachers. As the focus groups participants added in 2022, it is often the

teachers of civics who are reached by EDC/HRE activities on the state level, while the teachers at other school subjects are left behind.

The survey data collected in 2022 show a similar trend to the results obtained in 2016 (Figure 12). Training opportunities are still primarily available to youth workers, teacher trainers, students at schools, and teachers.

*Figure 12: Accessibility of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in EDC/HRE*

**To which degree the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in EDC/HRE are accessible for the following target groups in your country/region?**



According to policy makers responding to the survey, countries have made moderate progress in EDC/HRE provision in all levels of education. Box 8 provides some examples of provision of EDC/HRE training for teachers at national levels, as reported by respondents to the education policy survey.

*Box 8: Examples of teacher training initiatives in European countries*

**Montenegro**: The course «Teaching Methodology» includes RFCDC competences to be developed through achieving the learning outcomes. A manual was created for primary and secondary schools for the integration of key competences into teaching and learning at the International Standard Classification of Education levels 1,2,3.
**Albania**:  National teacher training has been provided on the topic of Education against violent extremism and media literacy.
**Georgia**: In 2018, the State Programme "Democratic Culture and Human Rights Education in Schools" was established in the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development, with a state budget and independent human resources.
**Finland**: For the last five years, the projects related to the integration of democracy and human rights into the initial teacher education were conducted in Finland by teacher training institutions, universities, governmental bodies and NGOs.
**Latvia**: EDC/HRE topics are included both in teachers' initial training and continuous professional development.

**Slovenia**: In the school year 2021-22, as many as 98 of 551 continuing education and training programmes focusing on sustainable development and active citizenship were made available to education professionals. The Ministry has identified this area as a priority for continuing professional development.

**Spain**: The new education law includes a provision that education for sustainable development and global citizenship should be considered in the teacher training process and in the examination to access the teaching profession. Furthermore, by 2025 all teachers in compulsory education should be qualified for the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

The recommendations made in the previous review mentioned specifically three areas of education where EDC/HRE training was less available - pre-school, VET and higher education. According to the NGO survey respondents, the availability of the training for pre-school teachers on the national level is approximately the same as for the schoolteachers who have been at the centre of EDC/HRE capacity-building initiatives for a long time. However, when NGOs are asked how often their own organisations work with the same target groups, pre-primary teachers appear to be at the bottom of the list. Since the EDC/HRE training is mostly conducted by NGOs, it might be that the general availability of capacity-building for pre-primary teachers was overestimated. As the focus groups participants pointed out, pre-primary education is not compulsory in many countries and often there are no specific national standards. However, research in this field confirms that EDC/HRE should begin in early childhood. The researchers emphasise the adaptability of EDC/HRE approaches for young children and the value of these approaches for developing social and emotional skills at pre-primary level (Kemple 2017; Casey, DiCarlo & Sheldon 2019; Farini 2019; Phillips et al. 2019).

When it comes to higher education and VET, according to NGOs and youth organisations, the EDC/HRE training is moderately accessible both to VET students and student-teachers. The existing research confirms that young people educated in vocational programmes are significantly less politically engaged than those who studied at universities (van de Werfhorst 2017). Considering that in some European countries up to one-third of students are in tertiary education and are on a vocational education track (Eurostat 2020), this can have significant negative effects on civic and political participation of these groups. Therefore, data on equal involvement of both higher education and VET students is highly important.

### 2.3.1. Teacher professional development

The Charter emphasises the importance of both continuing professional development and initial teacher training (art. 40). The fact that student-teachers have access to EDC/HRE training is aessential for the universal provision of EDC/HRE. Initial teacher education and continuing professional development prepare new and established teachers for many challenges they will encounter at school (ter Avest & Stedenburg 2019; Jasper & Abs 2019; Kasa et al. 2021).

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

with the involvement of the teaching and academic staff; Box 9 shows an example of practice in the Western Balkans involving HEIs and teaching staff.

*Box 9: Example of the EDC/HRE initiative that involves academic and teaching staff*

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

"Preparing Future Teachers in the Western Balkans" project provided support for 12 higher education institutions and universities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, that were interested in modernising their teacher education modules with a focus on practice-oriented teaching promoting citizenship, democracy and human rights. University lecturers and school mentors were trained to support the capacity building of teacher students in the area of human rights and democratic citizenship education. With the trainers' support, they developed and implemented EDC/HRE session plans for teacher students in various subjects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they introduced mock teaching and assured that even without access to schools teacher students can get practical experience. A strong regional network of EDC/HRE higher education professionals was established. More information on the European Wergeland Centre website: https://theewc.org/projects/preparing-future-teachers-in-the-western-balkans/

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To take the necessary steps forward to provide EDC/HRE capacity building through all levels of education, suitable materials and guidelines are needed. At the same time, in the survey, the NGOs indicate that the Council of Europe materials are scarcely useful for VET, higher education, and pre-primary education. The RFCDC "Guidance document for higher education" can be seen as the first step towards closing this gap. It provides the necessary theoretical ground for implementing EDC/HRE on the institutional level in higher education. However, as the data demonstrate, this RFCDC volume was published in 2020, but appears to be not well-known by the stakeholders. Just like in 2012-2017, Compass and Compasito remain central to EDC/HRE training activities. "Living in Democracy" and RFCDC are also often mentioned by the participants in the survey comments.

Another tendency that remains to be relevant compared to the previous review is the very limited involvement of parents and policy makers in EDC/HRE training. The implementation of the whole school approach (WSA) promoted by RFCDC is not possible without the participation of these two target groups. The scholarship points out that educational institutions need to be places where children and young people obtain lived experiences of democracy and human rights (Robinson 2017; Lieberkind 2020). This goal requires the participation of all education stakeholders, policy makers, school leaders, teachers, students, parents and community representatives, and policy implementation strategies ought to take all these groups into account (Larsen 2021). The collected quantitative data demonstrate that at the moment educators are poorly supported to work with the whole school approach (Figure 13).

**To which extent are educators equipped to address these topics and use these approaches in your country/region?**



*Figure 13: Extent to which educators are equipped to address these approaches*
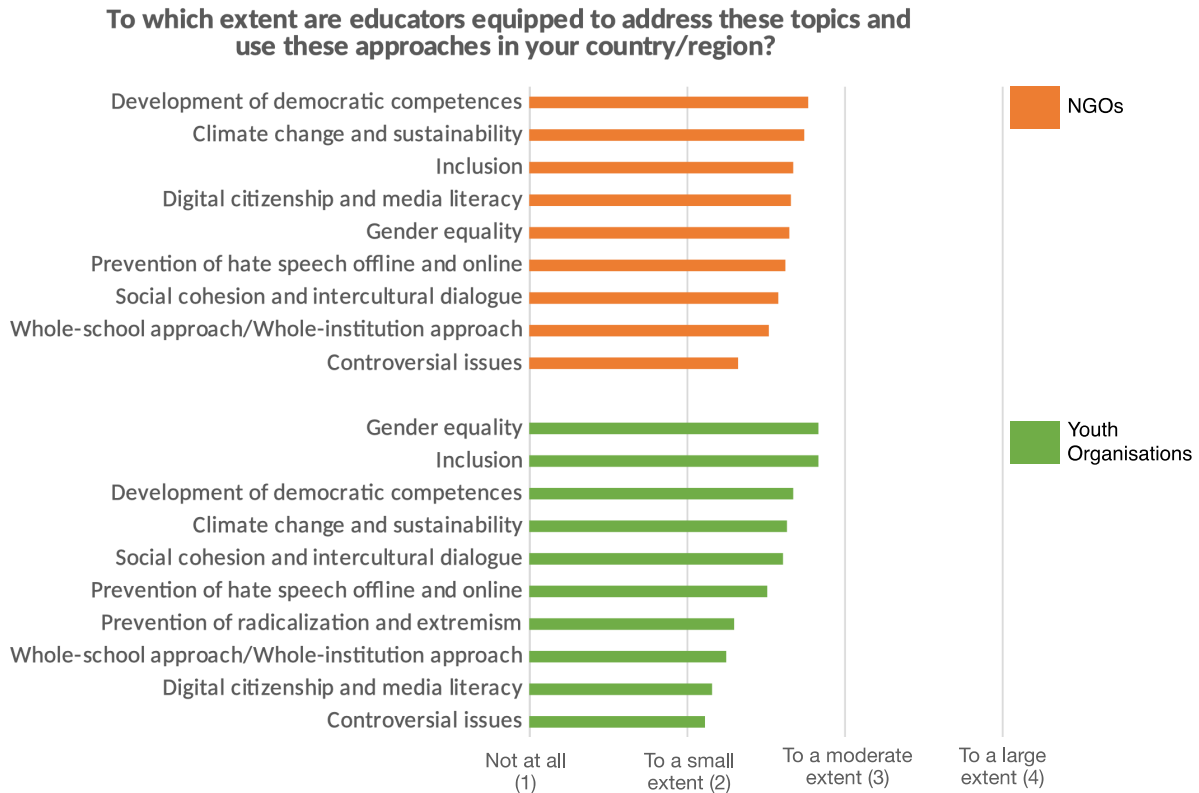
According to NGOs and youth organisations who responded the survey, educators are equipped to a fair extent to address such traditional EDC/HRE topics as gender equality and inclusion, as well as the development of democratic competences. The latter can be related to the long-term focus on the competences approach in education in general and to the role of RFCDC in the promotion of the concept of competences for democratic culture. Nevertheless, digital citizenship and media literacy that the youth organisations name as highly relevant for young people today, are among the topics that the educators are the least prepared to work with. Box 10 provides some examples of approaches and resources for digital citizenship education.

*Box 10: Approaches and resources for digital citizenship education*

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**Variety of approaches to digital citizenship education**

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

**Council of Europe materials on Digital Citizenship Education**

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

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

Another important issue was brought up regarding the quality of the training provided. One of the focus group participants emphasized the importance of the ownership of the EDC/HRE materials developed by the Council of Europe. Assuring the application and adaptation of the EDC/HRE Charter and materials in the local context is possible through the multiplier effect of the training events conducted on the European level. The quantitative data supports this idea: a majority of the respondents to the surveys see the most important role of the Council of Europe in the provision of capacity-building opportunities. One of the focus group participants pointed out the value of international and national networks of EDC/HRE professionals to assure the projects quality. In many cases, several EDC/HRE projects take place in the same country. The coordination of EDC/HRE projects can create possibilities for a wider and better provision on the national level.

## 2.4. COVID-19

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

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

Policy makers, youth organisations and NGOs see the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as an important challenge for EDC/HRE implementation. The focus groups' participants indicate three main types of developments regarding EDC/HRE provision during the pandemic. The first was that the provision stopped completely. Usually, in this case, EDC/HRE was taught only in terms of one subject – civics. Some respondents mentioned that civics was the first subject to be dropped during the crisis and that the emphasis was mainly on STEM and other subjects seen as basic in the curriculum. The second option was the continuation of the EDC/HRE provision in terms of civics. The third was the implementation of EDC/HRE through a cross-curricular approach if it was introduced at

schools before the pandemic. Many of the focus groups' participants pointed out that the EDC/HRE was left behind in terms of the online lessons provided by formal education institutions. The crisis evoked by the pandemic demonstrated that it is only the third option of EDC/HRE integration into formal education that allows for the systematic and sustainable provision of EDC/HRE.

According to the quantitative data from the surveys, most policy makers believe that there was no difference in RFCDC and Charter implementation before and after the pandemic. The most popular response among the non-formal education actors was that while there may have been less attention to EDC/HRE at the national level, it was not excluded from the policy agenda. In the comments, the respondents clarify that this impression of continuity is related to the provision of EDC/HRE in the new formats.

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

*Box 11: Example of online platform for HRE used during the COVID-19 pandemic*

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**Online platform on European Human Rights Law for all**

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

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While the provision of online EDC/HRE is on the rise in non-formal education, the surveys show that generally educators are minimally equipped to teach with the EDC/HRE online format. The focus groups data explain that this fact is not only related to the low level of digital literacy of many teachers in Europe, but also to the lack of understanding as to whether and how certain topics can be addressed in the online format. For example, one of the focus groups participants was aware of cases where teachers tried to work with controversial issues online because they could do it successfully before the pandemic in the classroom. Nevertheless, some teachers couldn't manage some discussions on sensitive topics online, which led to conflicts among the students. This example, as well as currently available research support arguments for the inclusion of EDC/HRE provision in online and blended formats in both in initial teacher education and continuing professional development (Ata & Yıldırım 2019; Dedebali & Dasdemir 2019; Choi & Cristol 2021).

Despite the rapid rise of the quantity of the EDC/HRE online courses and events, the face-to-face format remains the most common for the promotion of RFCDC and the Charter. The comments to the surveys clarify that many participants would not be able to take part in the events due to their lack of digital literacy or simply the lack of access to necessary equipment. Furthermore, not all donors were flexible enough to reimburse the NGOs for the organisation of online events – many funding schemes considered only face-to-face events. Focus groups participants added that many learning outcomes especially when working with young people cannot be achieved in a purely online format. One could presume that the blended format would be a suitable alternative for the EDC/HRE

implementation in post-pandemic conditions. The existing studies confirm that the combination of face-to-face and digital learning encourages students' collaboration (Serrano et al. 2019; Austin & Turner 2020), critical thinking (Keržič et al. 2018; McDougall 2019), and social responsibility (Şentürk 2021). Educators who had blended learning experiences during their initial professional training are more likely to use this format in the classroom and to continue learning when they work at school (Üniversitesi, Dergisi & Karataş 2016; Parisi et al. 2019; Şentürk 2021).

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

*Box 11: Blended learning course on EDC/HRE for pre-schools in Ukraine*

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**Blended learning course on EDC/HRE for pre-schools**

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

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

In addition to the emergence of new formats for democracy and human rights education, the pandemic induced other developments that are strongly related to the EDC/HRE objectives. These developments demonstrate the effectiveness of EDC/HRE for addressing various challenges generated by the pandemic. Surveys' respondents claim that EDC/HRE is an essential means to address such consequences of the pandemic as disruption in continuous education, further exclusion of vulnerable groups, as well as transition to new formats of teaching and learning (Figure 14).

*Figure 14: Perception of EDC/HRE as a means to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic*
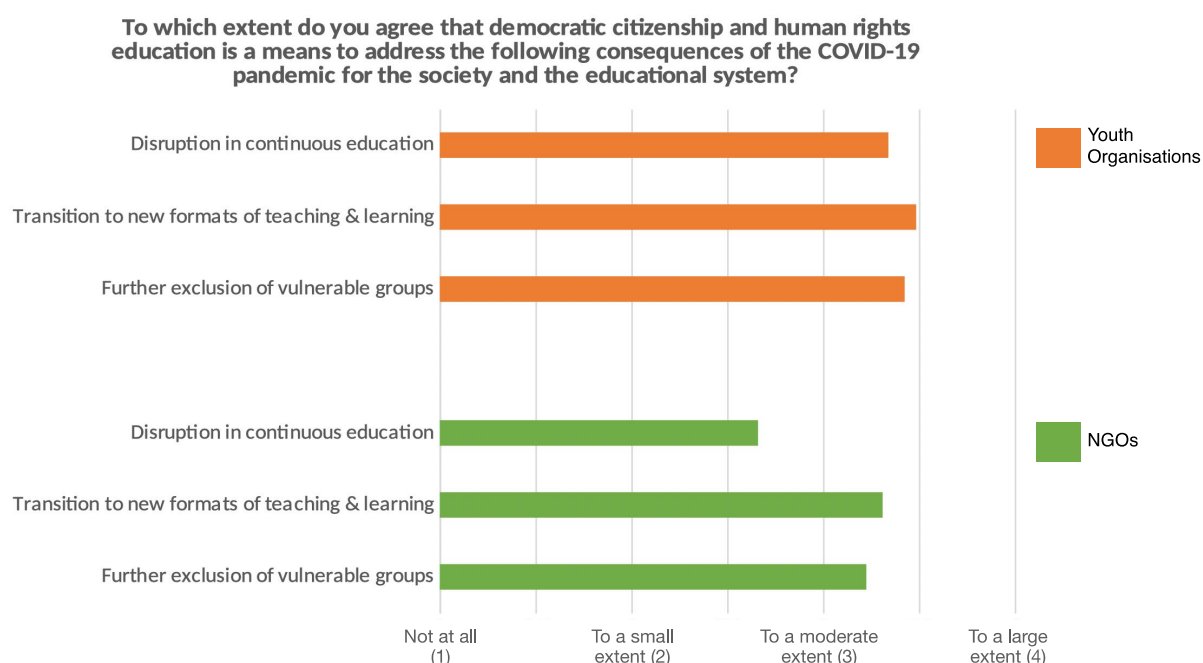


These data are reinforced by evidence from the field. Several focus groups participants mentioned that the schools that developed civic competences of their students through the whole school approach before the pandemic continued to do so in the online format without significant disruption. These schools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

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

sustain their interest and address the needs of young people through EDC/HRE to ensure that their engagement is based on the values of human rights and democracy (Gabriel et al. 2021).

Other emerging issues were related to the well-being of young people and their mental health. The data from all over the world confirm that COVID-19 has had a horrific effect on young people's mental health (Courtney et al. 2020; Liang et al. 2020; Power et al. 2020). Consequently, the authors emphasise that whatever education looks like in the future, it will need to address mental health. Furthermore, health professionals are calling for inclusion of young people in decision-making processes related to their well-being (Efuribe et al. 2020). In this sense, the value of EDC/HRE as a way to develop social and emotional competences and making the voices of the young people heard was emphasised by the focus group respondents.

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

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

## 3. Emerging Issues and Recommendations

During the data collection and analysis conducted for this review, a number of emerging issues for further research were identified. Some of these issues were partially addressed in Chapter 2, but there are key questions remaining for the next five years. Below we have listed some of the most pressing questions emerging from this study for further reflection, according to different angles of analysis. The second section of this chapter sets out the recommendations, which take into consideration the feedback from working groups collected at the Forum on the present and future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe held in Turin in April 2022.

## 3.1. Emerging issues
### 3.1.1. Conceptual definitions

- The variety of concepts somewhat related to EDC/HRE, including Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is reflected in the education policies of many European countries. How do we promote EDC/HRE as such, while emphasizsng the complementary nature of EDC/HRE with other international concepts?

- In many countries, HRE is taught as part of a single subject (e.g. civics, ethics, social sciences, philosophy, etc.). How to ensure a strong presence of HRE in teaching and learning about citizenship and democratic competences? What is the place of HRE in competence-based learning?

- Educators, teachers, and other educational actors might not know that they are already *doing* EDC/HRE, which means there is explicit and implicit EDC/HRE implementation in the classroom. How to help educational actors to become aware of their practice as part of EDC/HRE?

### 3.1.2. Policy and practice gaps

- Education professionals working at pre-school and vocational education and training (VET) institutions still lack access to EDC/HRE training. They are rarely involved in the EDC/HRE initiatives coordinated by non-formal education actors, as well as in the training provided by state authorities. How to improve access to capacity-building opportunities for these professional groups?

- Parents and policy makers are still the two groups with the lowest level of participation in EDC/HRE training opportunities. The development of the whole school approach is impossible without the inclusion of these two groups. Sustainable EDC/HRE implementation on the institutional level is closely related to the cross-curricular approach, for which the role of both policy makers and parents is fundamental. How to improve the involvement of parents and policy makers in EDC/HRE capacity-building opportunities?

- Co-operation between formal and non-formal education is still limited. This leads to issues of access for all learners to EDC/HRE. However, the RFCDC has the potential to serve as a bridge between formal and non-formal education. How can the RFCDC be better promoted to address this issue? What are other steps that can be taken to improve intersectoral co-operation?

- Monitoring and evaluation are important to ensure quality EDC/HRE provision. However, monitoring and evaluation initiatives in the formal and non-formal education sectors are still scarce. How to incentivise the design and implementation of strong monitoring and evaluation practices in EDC/HRE? How to secure a regular exchange of lessons learnt between policy makers and non-formal education actors?

- Online and blended formats are key to the implementation of EDC/HRE in the post-pandemic realities. Educators will need to learn about new methods and formats to provide EDC/HRE, as well as about the implications for digital citizenship. Topics such as prevention of online hate speech, digital inequalities, and data protection are increasingly relevant for EDC/HRE in formal and non-formal learning. How to ensure quality provision of EDC/HRE through online and blended learning? How to integrate digital citizenship education into teacher training in Europe?

### 3.1.3. The role of EDC/HRE in crisis contexts

- COVID-19 has been a great challenge for ongoing EDC/HRE implementation, but also an opportunity to bring forward the value of EDC/HRE. Issues such as civic responsibility, democratic participation, students' well-being, inclusion, co-operation of schools with communities, and critical thinking are now in the spotlight. How to use this momentum to promote the role of EDC/HRE in relation to these issues in the aftermath of the pandemic?

- Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, millions of people were forced to leave their homes, and many fled the country. Russia's invasion suspended the implementation of reforms aimed at the democratisation of the education system on the national level. How can EDC/HRE contribute to addressing the consequences of this event? What about the role of EDC/HRE in helping the integration of refugee children and youth in hosting countries?

## 3.2. Recommendations

As part of this review cycle, we developed a series of recommendations based on our research findings, as well as on the recommendations from the working groups convened during the Forum on EDC/HRE held in Turin, Italy, in April 2022. Below we present these recommendations according to the key areas of action identified in this report.

### 3.2.1. Policies and practices

*Policy frameworks for EDC/HRE*
- Emphasis should be given to the relevance of EDC/HRE at the national and local levels of policy action, without losing sight of the universality of human rights values
- Countries should strive to harmonise the conceptual definitions and methodologies for implementing EDC/HRE at the national, regional, and local level
- EDC/HRE should be present across all levels of education, but particular attention should be paid to vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.
- Countries should provide guidelines to schools on how to embed EDC/HRE either through clear policies or through the national curriculum. Schools should have enough room to embed EDC/HRE in the curriculum to reflect the local context in which they operate.
- Countries should put in place mechanisms to identify, reward, and share good practices on EDC/HRE at school.
- Countries should involve key educational stakeholders in decision making regarding EDC/HRE. Stakeholder consultations are a means to ensure that there is a consensus on how to implement EDC/HRE at school.

*The school community*
- Countries should encourage schools to adopt a whole school approach to embedding a culture of democratic citizenship and that is respectful of rights.
- Countries should promote the involvement of youth workers and other EDC/HRE practitioners, particularly those who work with marginalised groups.
- Countries should encourage schools to move away from the "tokenistic" approach to EDC/HRE in favour of long-term strategies and programmes.
- Teachers should take part in the decision-making at the school level, particularly in relation to EDC/HRE implementation.
- Parents are one of the hardest groups to reach according to NGOs and youth organisations. Strategies and tools to help parents and the broader community to understand the value of EDC/HRE need to be developed.

*Research*
- Countries should gather data on RFCDC implementation across sectors to reveal its successes and shortcomings and then address these systematically.
- Digital citizenship approaches are essential for preparing students of all ages to use technology ethically and responsibly. To achieve these goals, educators should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

- Countries should strengthen the recognition of teachers by developing a framework for teacher appraisal in EDC/HRE under a professional development certification. The Council of Europe can play a role in supporting the development of this framework and providing certification.

## 3.2.2. Transversal challenges

These should be taken into consideration along with the main findings of this review in order to think of the ways in which countries can learn from each other and share good practices with a view to developing strategic goals and actions for the next five years.

*Co-operation*
- Suitable policy frameworks for ensuring co-operation are paramount for EDC/HRE. Governments should foster sustainable and long-term partnerships with other sectors (e.g. civil society, labour market, academia, etc.) with the aim of ensuring the provision of EDC/HRE through formal and non-formal learning. Co-operation is key to identify needs, exchange good practices, and design relevant EDC/HRE programmes.
- Non-governmental actors play a key role in filling gaps regarding EDC/HRE, but they also should challenge the quality of the education service provided by national governments.
- European and international organisations in co-operation with national bodies should focus on the local dimension of EDC/HRE through partnerships with local authorities and organisations. Partnerships should be developed in a democratic and cohesive way encouraging mutual learning.
- Accurate and timely media coverage of EDC/HRE policies is needed to reach all stakeholders involved in the learning process, as well as the society at large.
- Political actors and civil society should actively and publicly show their solidarity and support to any educational institution that is facing the challenges of shrinking spaces.

*Funding*
- Increasing funding for the non-formal education sector is vital to ensure EDC/HRE provision in the long-term.
- The funding from national and international bodies should be raised and adapted to the different realities and rising costs.

*Monitoring and evaluation*
- Countries should be held accountable for allocating resources, including the human resources available to support EDC/HRE. They should also be required to share information-sharing about EDC/HRE.
- The criteria from the Council of Europe should be used.
- Better monitoring and reporting on EDC/HRE is crucial for improved planning and implementation of EDC/HRE initiatives. Existing frameworks on HRE provide a starting point for countries to develop their own criteria for evaluation with relevant indicators.

- Non-formal education providers should add monitoring and evaluation to the training for educators and facilitators and share further information on EDC/HRE activities and their impact.
- EDC/HRE providers, authorities, and academia should urgently recommit to their co-operation, including through reflection, research, and monitoring of the impact of EDC/HRE.

### 3.2.3. Training and professional development

- EDC/HRE trainers should reach out to all audiences including marginalised groups. EDC/HRE training needs to be accessible for all young people with different abilities and backgrounds.
- EDC/HRE should be a mandatory component of initial teacher education in all subjects. Also, evaluating student-teachers; competences for implementing EDC/HRE in the classroom is vital to improve the offer of professional development opportunities.
- Teachers need access to resources and opportunities to practice EDC/HRE in the classroom. It's key to give teachers time to practice, space to show their progression, and receive mentoring and feedback when needed.
- Teacher trainers should also be considered in capacity-building opportunities, including university lecturers, teacher trainers, etc.
- Teachers' networks for exchanging experiences and peer-learning on EDC/HRE are an important aspect of their professional development.
- A European network of trainers under the auspices of the Council of Europe is needed. This network's structure and functioning should enable a stable mechanism for supporting the dissemination and the adaptation of the materials to the local level and then collecting the lessons learnt to update the approaches on the European level.

### 3.2.4. Recommendations specific to the Council of Europe

- An intersectional approach to the design and implementation of educational programmes for youth is key to ensure that these initiatives are truly inclusive and sensitive to the realities of systematically marginalised groups.
- Continue dissemination of the Charter among all relevant education stakeholders and translate it into more languages.
- Increase use of online spaces (e.g. social media platforms) for the promotion of the Charter among young people.
- Develop a workshop module on the content and concrete implementation of the Charter. This module should present good practices and show how the Charter can be used to achieve better conditions for EDC/HRE.
- Considering the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Council of Europe should focus on ensuring support to young people and youth movements in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. This could translate into direct support to civil society organisations in the region or indirectly through the involvement of participants from the affected countries.

### 3.2.5. Recommendations for the next review cycle

- Use a more empowering language to talk about "vulnerable" groups – e.g. systematically marginalised groups, systematically excluded groups, etc.
- Include in the analysis a comparison between access to EDC/HRE in urban/rural areas.

- Look into the implicit EDC/HRE implementation: Charter is perceived as formal language; therefore, it is hard to measure its development and progress if not all teachers and educators know the terminology of EDC/HRE.
- Include children's perspective into the evaluation of the Charter
- Conduct a mid-term formative evaluation meeting of the Charter in 2.5 to see whether there have been any changes in its implementation.
- Set a long-term monitoring and evaluation plan that includes more frequent reviews of the Charter; punctual external evaluations to observe and measure progress of each country; and shadow reporting and field trips.
- Add a country-specific analysis in the next review cycle.
- Use visual illustrations on each European country to clearly see how are countries progressing in the implementation of the Charter.

## 4. Epilogue

During ongoing data collection for this review, on 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation started a full-scale war in Ukraine. The Council of Europe strongly condemned the invasion and, in March 2022, completed the procedure of expulsion of the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe. As of May 2022, when this review was being finalised, thousands of civilians in Ukraine have lost their lives. Millions of refugees were forced to leave their homes and had to move either inside Ukraine or cross the borders into neighbouring countries to find safety.

The last focus groups within this study took place after the beginning of Russia's invasion. In the subsequent discussions, many policy makers and NGOs brought up the significance of EDC/HRE at wartime. This issue was particularly important for EDC/HRE actors in Ukraine, as well as for the countries that host Ukrainian refugees. The participants emphasized that the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine was unfathomable and that it has led to a "human rights crisis of unimaginable proportions". This has clearly evoked a feeling of helplessness among the many educators who work in EDC/HRE. Nevertheless, some of them mentioned that there is a deeper understanding of the importance of EDC/HRE in Europe now, compared to before the war. The focus group participants confirmed that important progress was made in Ukraine in the last five years regarding the integration of EDC/HRE in the country's policies and practices.

While the effects of the war have been undoubtedly grave for Ukraine's continued democratic development, strong citizen networks that were built before the invasion have contributed to the co-operation and resilience of Ukrainians in this crucial time. For instance, the massive volunteer networks, which formed in February, have seen unprecedented growth and activity levels, becoming a significant civic engagement phenomenon. EDC/HRE also offers a variety of ways forward for the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in education institutions of their host countries. One of the organisations that contributed to the review called for the development of HRE approaches in hostile and conflict environments.

Data gathered in the course of the review showed the essential role that the respondents attribute to EDC/HRE at this time. However, since this study was designed in 2021, and most data were gathered before 24 February 2022, there was no systematic data collection aimed at researching EDC/HRE implementation during the war. At the same time, in the next five years, EDC/HRE actors in Europe will undoubtedly have to face the challenges of the war and its aftermath. Recommendations are needed on the European level, both for practitioners and for policy makers, to address these challenges through EDC/HRE. This is imperative to ensure the quality of education in new formats, new conditions, and for the new target group.

Due to the current lack of data, such recommendations cannot be formulated within this review. The review team is calling on the Council of Europe, Member States, as well as other governmental and non-governmental partners, to develop relevant recommendations and strategies of applying EDC/HRE as a long-term response to the consequences of the violent events that have affected the whole of Europe.

## 5. Annexes

**List of countries represented by data collection method**

| Council of Europe Member States | Education Policy Survey | Youth Policy Survey | NGOs Survey | Youth Organisations' Survey | Focus Groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | x | | X | x | |
| Andorra | x | x | | | |
| Armenia | x | | | x | |
| Austria | x | | X | x | x |
| Azerbaijan | | | X | x | x |
| Belgium | | | X | x | x |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | | x | | x | x |
| Bulgaria | | x | X | x | x |
| Croatia | x | | X | x | x |
| Cyprus | x | | X | x | |
| Czech Republic | | | X | x | x |
| Denmark | | | | | |
| Estonia | x | | X | | |
| Finland | x | x | | x | x |
| France | | | X | x | x |
| Georgia | x | | X | x | x |
| Germany | x | | X | x | x |
| Greece | | | X | x | x |
| Hungary | x | | X | | x |
| Iceland | x | | X | | x |
| Ireland | | | | x | x |
| Italy | x | | X | x | x |
| Latvia | x | | | x | |
| Liechtenstein | | | | | |
| Lithuania | | | X | x | x |
| Luxembourg | | x | X | | |
| Malta | x | | | x | x |
| Monaco | | x | | | |
| Montenegro | x | x | | x | x |
| Netherlands | | | X | x | |
| North Macedonia | x | x | X | x | x |
| Norway | x | | X | x | x |
| Poland | | | X | x | x |
| Portugal | | x | x | x | x |
| Republic of Moldova | | | | x | x |
| Romania | x | | | x | x |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| San Marino | | | | | x |
| Serbia | | x | x | x | x |
| Slovak Republic | x | | x | | x |
| Slovenia | x | x | x | x | x |
| Spain | x | | | x | x |
| Sweden | | | x | x | |
| Switzerland | | x | x | x | x |
| Turkey | | x | x | x | x |
| Ukraine | | | x | x | x |
| United Kingdom | | | x | x | x |
| **Other Countries** | | | | | |
| Belarus | | | | | x |
| Holy See | | | | | x |
| Kazakhstan | | | | x | |
| Kyrgyz Republic | | | | x | |
| Kosovo | | | | x | x |
| Russian Federation | | | x | x | x |
| Uzbekistan | | | | x | |

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