

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 April 2003
at the 838th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the objectives of the Council of Europe in the youth field and in the field of education;

Having regard to the Final Declaration adopted by the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Bucharest (27-29 April 1998), in particular the reference to non-formal education, and to the Final Declaration of the 6th Conference (Thessaloniki, 7-9 November 2002);

Having regard to Recommendation 1437 (2000) of the Parliamentary Assembly on non-formal education;

Having regard to the experience and achievements of the youth sector of the Council of Europe regarding non-formal education/learning, in particular the work of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Symposium on Non-Formal Education held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 12 to 15 October 2000;

Having regard to Recommendation Rec(2002)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on higher education policies in lifelong learning;

Having regard to the activities undertaken since 1999 by the Council of Europe in the field of education for democratic citizenship, and Recommendation Rec(2002)12 on this issue, adopted by the Committee of Ministers;

Considering the important role attached to non-formal learning in the Lisbon process and the present debate on lifelong learning in the European Union as well as in the White Paper of the European Commission "A new impetus for European youth"; taking into consideration the ongoing co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in this field;

Convinced that lifelong learning has an important role to play in reducing social inequality and social exclusion, and in promoting active participation in democratic life; and that non-formal education/learning can contribute to secure all the knowledge and capacities which young people need to succeed in contemporary societies;

Convinced of the necessity to mobilise the full learning potential within children and young people, in view of the social and cultural transformations resulting from the emergence of knowledge-based economies and societies in Europe and the world as a whole,

1. Recommends that the governments of member states:

a. reaffirm that non-formal education/learning nowadays constitutes a fundamental dimension of the lifelong learning process, and therefore work towards the development of effective standards of

recognition of non-formal education/learning as an essential part of general education and vocational training, and this with regard to:

– the qualification of professional and voluntary staff in charge of offers of non-formal education/learning;

– the quality of the education/learning offer itself;

– the monitoring of learning progress made by participants within non-formal education/learning programmes, both individually and as part of a group;

b. support the creation and the use of a European portfolio as a description tool aiming to record experiences, skills and knowledge (learning outcomes) acquired through non-formal education/learning, bearing in mind the example of the *European Language Portfolio*;

c. promote equal opportunities for all young people, in particular for the socially-disadvantaged groups, by creating equitable conditions of access to non-formal education/learning in order to fully develop its potential with regard to reducing social inequality and social exclusion;

d. actively encourage innovative non-formal education/learning experiences by supporting the effective dissemination of relevant documentation about good practice, training methods and achievements of non-formal education/learning;

e. introduce support measures for non-formal education/learning initiatives aiming to encourage young people's commitment and contribution to the promotion of values such as active citizenship, human rights, tolerance, social justice, inter-generational dialogue, peace and intercultural understanding;

f. actively engage the non-formal education/learning sector, alongside the formal educational and vocational training systems, in the development of a common European area for lifelong learning;

g. actively use the potential of non-formal education/learning as a complementary means of facilitating the integration of young people in society, by supporting their increased participation, in particular those from transition countries, in relevant European exchange programmes;

h. promote dialogue between actors of formal and non-formal education/learning and encourage better understanding of different approaches concerning non-formal education/learning in the different European countries;

i. support and further develop existing research work in the field of non-formal education/learning, as well as the use of its results; encourage the gathering and diffusion of examples of good practice in the field of non-formal education/learning, at national and European levels; and further support existing co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in this respect;

j. make non-formal education/learning a significant element of national youth policies, and of European co-operation in this field;

k. secure sufficient human and financial resources for the implementation and the recognition of non-formal education/learning programmes and their outcomes, with a view to enabling non-formal education/learning to have an adequate space within the learning community;

2. Invites the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to transmit this recommendation to the governments of those states parties to the European Cultural Convention which are not members of the Council of Europe.