



Human Rights and Democracy in Action

Pilot Projects on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

CONCEPT

Introduction

While human rights and democracy have always been at the heart of Europe political life, important developments have taken place in recent years, which emphasize the renewed interest for the importance of human rights and democracy as a factor of citizenship and governance and as a key component for the sound political operation of the European states and of their economic potential for renewed growth and prosperity. This is both reflected, *inter alia*, in the Council of Europe's *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7) adopted by the 47 member states in 2010 and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* as well as the Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 establishing a *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (ET2020) in the perspective of the EU2020 Strategy, stating that its "primary goal ...is to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens, as well as sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue". Education is also of crucial importance in respect of the promotion of child-friendly services and systems; elimination of all forms of violence against children; guaranteeing the rights of children and young people in vulnerable situations; and the promotion of child and youth participation, which are the current priorities of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) and the 2012-2013 Programme of the Council of Europe's Youth Sector. Corresponding priorities are also identified under the EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child (COM(2011) 60 final).

In this context, it is opportune to signal a number of important frameworks and instruments which have been recently developed at the international level: the second phase (2010-2014) of the *World Programme for Human Rights Education* (which started in 2005) focuses on human rights education in higher education and human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels. The UN General Assembly adopted on 19 December 2011 a *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*.

Civic/citizenship competences are, for the European institutions, a priority area reflected in the EU2020 Strategy and, as regards education, in the Communication *Rethinking Education*. Moreover, important surveys and reports on these issues have been recently released: *Eurydice*, the European Commission's education information network, made available in May 2012 a report on "*Citizenship education at schools in Europe*", presenting updated data from 31 countries. Also from the European Commission, CRELL – the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (Ispra, Italy) published in January 2012 a report on "active citizenship competence composite indicator". A report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Citizenship and Human Rights Education was prepared in 2012.

All these policy documents and reports converge in emphasizing the decisive role of education in fostering the values inherent to democratic citizenship, to which human rights provide the main inspiration. In this context, the Council of Europe and the European Commission have decided to intensify their collaboration¹. In 2011, both organisations joined an International Contact Group on citizenship and human rights education¹, which was set up

¹ The International contact group on citizenship and human rights education was set up following the initiative of the Council of Europe in 2011, and a letter of cooperation was signed by the OHCHR, UNESCO, European Commission, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OSCE/ODIHR, ALECSO, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Council of Europe.

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Implemented
by the Council of Europe

with a view to ensure close co-operation among regional and international initiatives in this field. In November 2012, a Conference on “Human Rights and Democracy in Action” was organised in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre. It was at this conference that a report on the implementation of the Charter was presented and discussed. Consequently, both institutions have agreed in principle to set up a Pilot Project Scheme on “Human Rights and Democracy in Action”, as described below.

This Pilot Project Scheme will draw lessons learned from a prior experimentation. In 2011-2012, two study visits for decision makers and education professionals were organised in cooperation with Swiss and Ukrainian authorities to report on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. A publication will be available in 2013.

Scope of the Pilot Project Scheme jointly organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission – Aims and Objectives

The guiding inspiration of this Pilot Project Scheme is provided by both the Council of Europe’s *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*² and in the European *ET2020 Strategy*.

The ultimate goal of the Pilot Projects will be to contribute to the development of sustainable mechanisms promoting citizenship and human rights education in the participating countries. The most desirable format for such projects will articulate in three successive phases:

1. Reporting and collecting data and evidence regarding Citizenship and Human Rights Education in the countries participating in the pilot project;
2. Peer exchange and learning on the basis of the information collected;
3. Formulation of recommendations to inspire further action in Citizenship and Human Rights Education in countries participating in the project.

Each pilot project will have a common objective of collecting and sharing information on all existing forms of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, which are in operation in the State who so decides to participate. Given the very diverse forms of governance, political operation and schools systems, participating States may find it opportune to invite education and training national, regional or local authorities as well as non-governmental organisations (national or possibly international) to assist them in the inventory of practices and definitions of priorities and challenges in the domain of the pilot project scheme.

As there already exist powerful instruments at state level for the implementation of the EU2020 and ET2020 strategies, there may be mutual benefit in the pilot projects bringing together EU and non-EU countries to learn from each other, in taking stock of existing practices in the field of Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Other EU policies (especially in the field of discriminations) which EU Member States are implementing may provide similar inspiration, as the case may be, in interacting with non EU-States, which are states party to the European Cultural Convention.

Detailed description of the operation of the Pilot Project Scheme

The Pilot Project scheme is a funding programme for cooperation projects involving at least two States party to the European Cultural Convention, with at least one being a Member State of the European Union. Jointly funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, it will operate by means of a competitive call for proposals to be published in the first half of 2013.

The framework for action for this Pilot Project Scheme is the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE. In particular, its Article 15 which lists “Co-operation in follow-up activities”, invites Member States “to co-operate with each other and through the Council of Europe in pursuing the aims and principles of the ...Charter”, to foster “multilateral and trans-frontier activities, including the existing network of co-ordinators on EDC/HRE” (Art. 15a/b). The same Article 15 also calls for “exchanging, developing, codifying and assuring the dissemination of good practices; informing all stakeholders, including the public, about the aims and implementation of the Charter; supporting European networks of non-governmental organisations, youth and children’s organisations and education professionals and co-operation among them” (Art. 15 c/d/e).

² In the remainder of the text we will use the combined acronym of EDC/HRE to refer to “Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education”.

The Pilot Project Scheme will therefore involve the network of national co-ordinators which is already in operation in this field, to prompt proposals from two or more States party to the European Cultural Convention, while ensuring that awareness-raising activities for the general public regarding the significance of the Charter are included in the proposal and that European networks of NGOs, youth and children's organisations and educational networks are being considered for participation in the said proposals for pilot projects.

The first results of the various pilot projects that may be proposed will be then combined so as to provide evidence for recommendations for future programmes in the field of EDC/HRE, thus contributing to the development of sustainable mechanisms for the implementation of the Charter.

In this Pilot Project Scheme, Human Rights, combined with fundamental freedoms, are those enumerated by the respective major policy documents of the Council of Europe – The *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) – and of the European Union – The *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (7 December 2000). They include, therefore, the six grounds of discriminations which are recognised by the European Union and are the underlying motives of the major EU Strategies: gender (EU Gender Strategy³), disability (EU Disability Strategy⁴), race, religious conviction, sexual orientation and age, as well as transversal policy issues, such as the intercultural dialogue. For EU Member States, Pilot Projects proposals will reflect these important aspects of Human Rights policies in terms of education and awareness-raising practices and possible future activities.

Expected outcomes

At the policy level:

- Strengthening EDC/HRE based on the Charter through a better understanding of effective and pragmatic ways of addressing such issues in the existing forms of compulsory education;
- Increased visibility of the role of EDC/HRE for the future of democratic societies and of the work of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission in this field;
- Increased awareness of the ways to protect and promote children rights by means of developing child-friendly services and systems; to eliminate all forms of violence against children; to guarantee the rights of children in vulnerable situations; and to promote child participation - through citizenship and human rights education;
- Strengthening cooperation of key partners – national, regional, local authorities and non-governmental entities – to encourage synergies and ensure that sustainable mechanisms may continue awareness-raising activities past the end of the pilot project.

Specific outcomes:

- Human rights education and education for democratic citizenship are undertakings which are consistent with the *Education and Training 2020* strategic framework of the European Commission: "Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people and children to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds⁵". In this light, the outcomes of the pilot project should include information covering the following topics and/or answering the following questions:
 - How civic/citizenship competences are taught in the national school curricula, in the primary, secondary (lower and higher) and initial vocational education and training levels, i.e. in the existing forms of compulsory education?
 - How are teachers and other educational staff trained to support the development of relevant competences?
 - How are the civic/citizenship competences evaluated? What are the existing blended approaches (drawing from formal, non-formal and informal education)?

³ *European Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015* (COM(2010)491 – 21.9.2010).

⁴ *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 – A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe* (COM(2010) 636 final) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁵ See Strategic objective nr.3 *Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship* – Council Conclusions on a *Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* ("ET 2020"), 12 May 2009.

- Which are the topics and issues addressed?
 - Which are the best practices in the participating States, which could provide the inspiration for setting up civic/citizenship competence curricula in similar settings in other countries?
 - How are the outcomes from such civic/citizenship competences defined, in terms of learning results?
 - To what extent the role of non-governmental organisations and youth organisations is fostered in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education?
 - What are the recommendations and/or advices that may be inspired by the above findings on EDC/HRE as regards the countries participating in the pilot project?
- A publication of the outcomes and conclusions of the pilot projects with consolidated assessment under the patronage of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission;
 - A webpage on the CoE EDC/HRE website, listing all available, national and international resources in the field of EDC/HRE.

Practical Details – Application Procedure

Further to a call for proposals released via the network of co-ordinators on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education of the Council of Europe, proposals for pilot projects will be collected, involving at least two (and maximum five) states party to the European Cultural Convention (in English or French), including at least one Member State to the European Union.

Each Pilot Project will have a maximum duration of five months. The budget made available to the project will not cover operating costs of national administration personnel assigned to the project, but only direct, eligible costs such as travel, hotel, special costs associated to meetings (venue, interpretation, stationery, secretariat, etc.). Exception may be made inasmuch as non-governmental entities (national or international) are called in to participate in the Pilot Project, for expertise and research, with standard fees being accepted as part of the budget.

The budget range for the CoE/EC contribution will be from 40.000 Euros to 100.000 Euros per project. The number of pilot projects to be selected and funded could therefore be from 2 to 5 projects, depending on the size and ambition of the project as well as of the number of partners.

The selection of pilot projects will be made by an Advisory Group composed of ten members as follows:

- 2 members of the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE) of the Council of Europe,
- 2 members the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe,
- 1 representative of the European Wergeland Centre,
- 1 representative of civil society organisations proposed by the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and the European Commission,
- 1 representative of civil society organisations proposed by Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice of the Council of Europe,
- 1 representative of the programme “Building Europe for and with Children” (Council of Europe),
- 1 representative of the European Commission (from Directorate-General Education and Culture),
- 1 representative of the Fundamental Rights Agency (F.R.A.).

Representatives from the International contact group on citizenship and human rights education, including representatives from OHCHR, UNESCO, OSCE/ODIHR, ALECSO and the Organisation of American States (OAS), will also be invited to participate in the meetings of the Advisory Group with observer status.

As the case may be, mail and videoconferences will be favoured as a measure to contain expenditures.

Reference documents

- Council of Europe *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*, adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7;
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on ensuring quality education;
- Council of Europe *Strategy for the Rights of the Child* (2012-2015);
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10, Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence;
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18;The Action Plan for the Second Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education,
- The United Nations Declaration on human rights education and training;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- The EU *Charter of Fundamental Rights* (EU JO 2000/C 364/01);
- Council Conclusions on a *strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* ("ET 2020") 12 May 2009;
- The EU *European Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015* (COM(2010)491 – 21.9.2010) and the EU *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 – A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe* (COM(2010) 636 final);
- The EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child (COM(2011) 60 final);
- *Eurydice* Report on "*Citizenship education at schools in Europe*" (May 2012) and the publications on the CRELL (Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning, at the EU Joint Research Centre) in the field of "Equity, Social Cohesion and Active Citizenship".