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For the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education

Report

Committee on Culture, Science and Education
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Summary

After having placed emphasis in earlier recommendations on education for human rights and democracy, attention is now drawn to the key area of teacher education. A set of specific competences should be identified. These should form part of a Council of Europe framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights.



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A. Draft recommendation

1. The Council of Europe places special importance on the learning of democracy. Consistent with its organisational mission and to the fundamental values it promotes, it considers education, culture and science to be pillars of European society, in a period of new challenges and situations, which require co-operation and common efforts.
2. Member states have long acknowledged that democracy and human rights need to be learned and that teachers play a fundamental role in this respect.
3. The Action Plan of the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, May 2005), as well as the recommendations of the 23rd Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Istanbul, May 2007), call on the Council of Europe to step up its work in the field of teacher education. More recently, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendations 1682 (2004) on education for Europe and 1791 (2007) on the state of human rights and democracy in Europe, which call on the Council of Europe to adopt a framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights. Such a framework document will have to address, *inter alia*, the issue of teacher education.
4. The Assembly strongly supports the activities organised by the Council of Europe as follow up to these recommendations. It notes also with great interest the initiative of the Norwegian authorities to launch a European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship, one of the main objectives of which will be the training of teachers and educators in these fields.
5. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers call on governments and the appropriate authorities of member states to turn to good account the experience and the expertise of the Council of Europe in this field, and in particular:
 - 5.1. preparing children for life in a democratic society should be recognised as an overall aim of all primary and secondary education policies;
 - 5.2. the competences required for promoting the culture of democracy and human rights in the classroom should be introduced in the curriculum for the education of teachers of all subjects;
 - 5.3. a lifelong learning perspective in respect of teacher education should be promoted to help teachers adapt to the needs of rapidly changing democratic societies;
 - 5.4. grassroots initiatives on teacher education in the field of democracy learning should be supported and promoted.
6. The Assembly further recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 6.1. recognises the role of teachers and other educational staff as important actors in promoting the culture of human rights and democracy;
 - 6.2. expresses its renewed support to the Council of Europe Pestalozzi Programme for education professionals;
 - 6.3. encourages broad dissemination of practical tools on teacher education developed in the framework of the Council of Europe in the areas of education for democratic citizenship and human rights;
 - 6.4. supports the development of an appropriate Council of Europe framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

B. Explanatory memorandum, by Mr Glăvan

1. Introduction

1. Democracy is a type of society which operates through participation, ownership and the exercise of rights and responsibilities by each citizen. As a historic project, democracy is the first form of governance which is not imposed, it is assumed. For this, the democratic state needs to form a minimum level of civic culture for all citizens.

2. Educational institutions and professional trainers have an essential role in this process. School is the place where systemic transmission of knowledge takes place, where pupils have the occasion to practise participative democracy directly and to learn how to live in a diverse environment. At school age, young people learn how to organise themselves in self-governing bodies, to negotiate and communicate, to solve conflicts in a non-violent way, to observe differences and to exercise their rights and responsibilities.

3. These competences do not appear automatically. There has to be a set of learning situations, created and oriented by teachers.

4. In this perspective, the present document is centred on teacher education and the formation of the necessary competences for educational staff in order that they may be in a position to contribute to education for democratic citizenship and human rights and to cope with sociocultural diversity in a democratic manner. In this way, we wish to draw attention to the importance of the teachers in the democracy learning processes and to turn to good account the experience and expertise of the Council of Europe in this field.

2. Teacher education in the Council of Europe context

5. Teachers and other categories of educational staff have been the main beneficiaries of the projects of the Council of Europe in the field of education. The “Pestalozzi” programme is well known for its influence and the expertise it brought about in continuing teacher training in fields of common interest, such as education for democratic citizenship (EDC), human rights education (HRE), intercultural and inclusive education, history teaching, plurilinguism and education for Europe.

6. Moreover, each project of the Council of Europe in the field of education contains at least one explicit component meant for teachers which is usually finalised through methodological guides, tool kits, working instruments or even curricula for teacher training. The 4th Prague Forum (2005) was dedicated to teacher education, to the new roles and teachers’ competences in the new European context. On this occasion, as well as on the occasion of other events concerning European policies on teacher education, it has been found that, on the one hand, it is necessary to diversify the educational profession (as exercised not only by the traditional teacher, who transmits knowledge, but also by experts in social relations and human development, as mediators, tutors, counsellors and learning facilitators). On the other hand, it has been underlined that democracy learning needs a permanent updating of teachers’ competences, so that the programmes of teacher education (both pre-service and in-service) take into account citizenship needs and human rights education as well as diversity education requirements.

3. Teacher education and democracy learning

7. There is a great variety of experiences and institutional settings for teacher education throughout Europe. As shown by a survey undertaken by the Council of Europe in 2006-2007, the teacher education programmes offer a great diversity of solutions, contents and training situations. In general, the programmes of initial or preservice training try to take into account the needs in the field of democracy learning, within the limits of each specialisation. More and more, the suppliers of teacher training are realising that EDC/HRE promote experiential learning and the direct practice of living together to a greater extent than knowledge-centred courses. These courses, either delivered as modules included in other programmes or being the object of specific programmes as such, are directly linked to real life problems, which they try to solve with the help of human rights and citizenship practices. Such programmes are based on projects and learning by doing, on social learning and problem solving. Among others, these programmes prepare teachers to organise non-formal learning and to participate in democratic school governance, in order to develop partnerships with the parents, local authorities and civil society.

8. In a very pragmatic manner, as demonstrated by the “Pestalozzi” programme of the Council of Europe, in service teacher education is complementary to initial training and permits the development or the deepening of competences which initial training could not tackle other than in an incipient manner.

4. Key competences for teacher education

9. The teachers are the key factor in educational processes: they must transform objectives into effective teaching practices and these practices should be materialised in appropriate learning outcomes. In other words, the teachers must have the necessary competences to carry out this set of educational and managerial transformations.

10. According to the definition promoted in the Council of Europe projects, competence is a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which permit a person to solve the specific problems of a given social, cultural and political context. What is generically understood through “citizenship competence” or “civic literacy” is the totality of knowledge, skills and attitudes which permit the exercise of rights and responsibilities in a specific “polity” (public sphere).

11. As for teachers’ professional competences, they are in fact a set of specific competences enabling them to carry out certain educational activities in the field of citizenship, human rights and diversity education.

They comprise:

- pedagogical competence;
- subject-based competence;
- social and civic competence.

Civic competence can include, in its turn, certain skills and attitudes, such as:

- the capacity to incorporate EDC/HRE principles into teaching practice and subjects;
- knowing how to implement rights and responsibilities in specific contexts;
- respect for the rights of learners and sensitivity to their needs and interests;
- the ability to promote a positive classroom climate;
- co-operative learning skills;
- team work;
- taking shared responsibilities;
- coping with conflicts;
- intercultural mediation;
- emphatic communication;
- participation in collective decision making;
- the capacity to develop projects and create non-formal learning opportunities;
- the capacity to manage situations arising from discrimination, injustice, racism, sexism and marginalisation;
- the ability to bring up and discuss openly the problems imposed by a hidden curriculum;
- the ability to adjust teaching styles to a variety of learners;
- the capacity to stimulate active participation within the school community;
- the capacity to take part in public debates;
- the ability to encourage exchanges, openness and interaction.

12. In the framework of the Council of Europe a tool on democratic citizenship and human rights education competences for teachers is currently being developed. The tool is aimed at assisting the member states in introducing and developing citizenship competences in the curriculum for initial and in-service teacher training for teachers of all subjects.

5. European co-operation on teacher education for democracy learning

13. Teacher education is a complex activity, which calls for particular attention from policy makers. While education is extended to all sectors of social life and the school is considered as a lever of public policies, the teachers' role has increased considerably. With the large acceptance of citizenship principles and democratic governance, the teachers are more and more involved in solving certain proximity problems which require the exercise of rights and responsibilities.

14. School is not only a place of knowledge sharing and knowledge transmission, but also an institution which prepares for active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

15. This perspective is common to all educational systems in Europe. It is a new mission, a complex one, for which teachers must prepare themselves. This presupposes that teacher education should include not only general pedagogical preparation or subject-centred training, but also the formation of competences in the fields of citizenship and human rights education.

16. European co-operation has an immense potential in this respect. The Council of Europe has always given importance to teachers and other categories of educational staff as the main actors of education policies in Europe. The Council of Europe has not only the expertise and the necessary experience in building partnerships and operational networks, but also the prestige of an organisation which has always promoted values-oriented education and the teachers' priority engagement in democracy learning.

17. In this perspective, it is desirable that political decision-making bodies, first of all the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, should give a clear message of support to the teachers' contribution to European co-operation and urge member states to undertake concrete measures so that teacher education should give priority to education for democratic citizenship and human rights. This could be done in particular by introducing citizenship competences in the curriculum for initial and in-service teacher training for teachers of all subjects.

Reporting committee: Committee on Culture, Science and Education.

References to committee: Doc. 10998 and Reference No.

3269 of 2 October 2006.

Draft recommendation unanimously adopted by the committee on 21 May 2008.

Members of the committee: Mrs Anne **Brasseur** (Chairperson), Baroness Hooper, Mr Detlef **Dzembitzki**, Mr Mehmet Tekelioğlu (Vice-Chairpersons), Mr Remigijus Ačas, Mr Kornél Almássy, Mrs Aneliya **Atanasova**, Mr Lokman Ayva, Mr Rony Bargetze, Mr Walter **Bartoš**, Mr Radu Mircea Berceanu, Mr Levan Berdzenishvili, Mrs Oksana Bilozir, Mrs Guðfinna Bjarnadóttir, Mr Jaime Blanco García, Mrs Ana Blatnik, Mrs Maria Luisia Boccia, Mrs Margherita Boniver, Mr Ivan Brajović, Mr Vlad Cubreacov, Mrs Lena DabkowskaCichocka, Mr Ivica Dačić, Mr Joseph Debono Grech, Mr Ferdinand Devinsky, Mr Daniel **Ducarme**, Mrs Åse Gunhild Woie **Duesund**, Mrs Anke Eymer, Mr Relu Fenechiu, Mrs Blanca Fernández-Capel, Mrs Maria Emelina FernándezSoriano, Mr Axel Fischer, Mr Gvozden **Flego**, Mr José **Freire Antunes**, Mrs Ruth Genner, Mr Ioannis GiannellisTheodosiadis, Mr Stefan Glăvan, Mr Raffi **Hovannisian**, Mr Rafael **Huseynov**, Mr Fazail Ibrahimli, Mr Mogens Jensen, Mr Morgan Johansson, Mrs Liana Kanelli, Mr Jan **Kaźmierczak**, Miss Cecilia **Keaveney**, Mr Ali Rashid Khalil, Mrs Svetlana **Khorkina**, Mr Serhii Kivalov, Mr Anatoliy Korobeynikov (alternate: Mr Oleg **Lebedev**), Mrs Elvira **Kovács**, Mr József Kozma, Mr Jean-Pierre **Kucheida**, Mr Ertuğrul Kumcuoğlu, Mr Markku **Laukkanen**, Mr Jacques **Legendre**, Mr van der Linden, Mrs Milica Marković, Mrs Muriel Marland-Militello, Mr Andrew McIntosh, Mrs Maria Manuela **de Melo**, Mrs Assunta Meloni, Mr Paskal Milo, Mrs Christine **Muttonen**, Mrs Miroslava **Němcová**, Mr Edward **O'Hara**, Mr Kent **Olsson**, Mr Andrey Pantev, Mrs Antigoni Papadopoulou, Mr Azis **Pollozhani**, Mrs Majda Potrata, Mrs Anta Rugâte, Lord Russell-Johnston (alternate: Mr Robert **Walter**), Mr Indrek Saar, Mr André **Schneider**, Mrs Albertina Soliani, Mr Yury Solonin, Mr Christophe Steiner, Mrs Doris Stump, Mr Valeriy Sudarenkov, Mr Petro Symonenko, Mr Hugo Vandenberghe, Mr Klaas de Vries, Mr Piotr Wach, Mr Wolfgang Wodarg.

NB: The names of the members present at the meeting are printed in bold.

This text will be discussed at a later sitting.