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

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 1849 (2008)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1849 (2008) – "For the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education" and welcomes the Assembly's support for the Council of Europe's activities in this field. The recommendation has been transmitted to the governments of member states and to the relevant committees.[2]

2. Since the adoption in May 1999 of the "Budapest Declaration: for a Greater Europe without dividing lines", and the subsequent Recommendation Rec(2002)12 on education for democratic citizenship, adopted on 16 October 2002, the Committee of Ministers has given priority to promoting a culture of democracy and human rights through education. In this respect, it recognises the crucial role of teachers and other educators and, in line with the Warsaw Action Plan which advocated that the Organisation "will enhance all opportunities for the training of educators, in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history and intercultural education", the Committee of Ministers remains committed to pursuing this objective. It also reasserted these principles and the central role of education in the Madrid Declaration adopted at the 119th Ministerial Session in May 2009.

3. The Programme of Activities in the field of education, and consequently the work of the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) and of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), are inspired by the principles outlined in the above-mentioned texts. In this respect, the Assembly's attention is drawn to the appended observations of the CDED and CDESR. It will note that the past and present work outlined by these committees contributes to a large extent to advancing the issues raised and responds concretely to a good number of the Assembly's recommendations. In this context, the CDED's Pestalozzi Programme for the training of education professionals will continue to contribute significantly to the promotion of a culture of human rights and democracy through in-service training of teachers.

4. The Committee of Ministers would draw attention to the fact that preparations are underway for a draft European Charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights. This Charter, which will be legally non-binding, aims at providing a policy framework of reference for democracy and human rights learning in Europe and will target many issues, including teacher education. Once finalised by the CDED, in early 2010, the Committee of Ministers will consider this draft instrument with a view to its adoption.

5. A number of events have also been organised in this field, demonstrating the continued momentum which has been given to the issue of promoting a culture of democracy and human rights through education. Particular mention should be made of the recent "Forum on human rights education" which took place in Budapest from 15 to 17 October 2009 as well as of the 2009 Lisbon Forum on "Creating a culture of human rights through education" organised by the North South Centre on 13 and 14 November 2009. The Committee of Ministers also highlights the joint initiative of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the

1. adopted at the 1074th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (12-13 January 2010)
2. The Steering Committee for Education (CDED), the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ).

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), the Council of Europe, the Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which resulted in the preparation of the Compendium of good practice – Human rights education in the school systems of Europe, North America and Central Asia. This document makes explicit reference to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1849 (2008).

6. Finally, the Committee of Ministers, like the Assembly, welcomes the first activities that are being put in place by the European Wergeland Centre (European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship) set up through an initiative of the Norwegian authorities and co-operating closely with the Council of Europe. The Centre shall, *inter alia,* provide in-service training and support for the professional development of teachers and teacher training professionals in education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship and disseminate information and serve as a network and meeting place for relevant actors. It should therefore contribute to the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education, in close co-operation and co-ordination with the Council of Europe Pestalozzi programme for the training of education professionals.

Appendix 1 to the reply

Comments by the Bureau of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR)

The CDESR Bureau supports the Parliamentary Assembly's assertion of the importance of promoting a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education.

For many years the CDESR has been involved in promoting democracy and human rights education. Starting from the project "Universities as sites of democratic citizenship", the CDESR has been consistently involved in projects supporting human rights education and democratic citizenship. In 2008, it launched a new project "Promoting democratic culture and intercultural dialogue in Higher Education".

At the October 2008 Forum on "Converging competences: Diversity, Higher Education and sustainable democracy", organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the US Steering Committee of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy, over 100 higher education leaders and representatives of public authorities participants underlined the important role of higher education in developing and maintaining societies based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The CDESR strongly supports the initiative of the Norwegian authorities to establish a European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship and is pleased that the European Wergeland Centre is now organising its first activities.

It also took part in the development of the Council of Europe framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights. At its 2007 plenary session, the CDESR welcomed the idea of a framework policy document on EDC and HRE and expressed its support for a framework policy document of a non-binding nature in order to respect the underlying principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

The CDESR Bureau recognises that teachers and other educational staff are important actors in promoting the culture of human rights and democracy. It is important that 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. However, with due respect to the principle of institutional autonomy, it would be more appropriate to speak about public authorities encouraging higher education institutions to introduce the above-mentioned elements. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are among the founding principles of European higher education, and these principles should be observed even when there are strong reasons for public authorities to encourage higher education institutions to take up a particular challenge.

It is also important to have a holistic approach. As was recommended at the October Forum, higher education institutions should strive to reflect the principles and practice of democracy, diversity and human rights in their approaches to teaching and learning and in their structures and decision-making procedures, as well as in all aspects of the institution's daily life. At the same time, public authorities should provide support and incentives for programmes and initiatives on issues of democracy, diversity, human rights and social cohesion, as well as integrate social and civil competences in the development of frameworks for qualifications.

Appendix 2 to the reply

Comments of the Bureau of the Steering Committee for Education (CDED)

The Bureau of the Steering Committee for Education (CDED):

Having taken note with great interest of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1849 (2008) – "For the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education";

Welcomes the support shown by the Parliamentary Assembly for the work being carried out in the field of teacher education, which has been one of the priorities of the CDED's intergovernmental activities for some years now;

Points out that the Wergeland European Centre in Oslo was inaugurated on 29 May 2009. The centre, which was established in co-operation with the Norwegian Government, is open to all Council of Europe member states and the main target groups are teachers, teacher trainers and those responsible for devising policies in the field of education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. Refers to paragraph 5.2 and informs the Committee of Ministers that the CDED has introduced several activities closely linked to the recommendation, including a new publication, which makes explicit reference to Recommendation 1849 (2008) in its introduction. The publication[3] "How all teachers can support citizenship

and human rights education: a framework for the development of competences" sets out the core competences needed by teachers to put democratic citizenship and human rights into practice in the classroom, throughout the school and in the wider community. It is intended for all teachers and teacher trainers working in education institutions, both in pre- and in-service training.

Refers to paragraph 6.2 and informs the Committee of Ministers that, in the context of its Pestalozzi programme for education professionals, the above-mentioned handbook will continue to be developed in 2009 through training modules on the core competences in education for democratic citizenship. It has been translated into Albanian, Serb and Georgian and is currently being translated into French and Russian and other languages.

Underlines, in respect of the recommendations set out in paragraph 6.3, the fact that, at the initiative of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), four partner organisations – the Council of Europe (CoE), the Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) – decided to devise a practical tool for providing examples and advice for all those involved in human rights education in the European school system. The outcome – a compendium of 101 good practices in Europe, North America and Central Asia – is not only a resource document for practitioners and policy-makers but also a platform for exchange between institutions and individuals. The compendium was officially launched at the OSCE/ODIHR meeting on the implementation of the Human Dimension in Warsaw on 2 October 2009. This document makes explicit reference to Recommendation 1849 (2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Welcomes the support given by the Parliamentary Assembly to paragraph 6.4 and informs the Committee of Ministers that good progress has been made in 2009 in the preparations for the drafting of a European Charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights and that the CDED will be in a position to approve it in February 2010.

Appendix 3 to the reply

Comments by the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)

The CDEJ and CCJ fully support the Parliamentary Assembly's Recommendation 1849 (2008) – "For the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education" and would like to underline that, in parallel to formal education, the Council of Europe is also using non-formal education as a powerful tool for human rights and democratic citizenship education of young people, particularly by the means of the European Youth centres and European Youth Foundation (EYF).

3. ISBN 978-92-871-6555-8.