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Cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1884 (2009)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) on “Cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education”. It has forwarded it to the different competent committees for information and possible comments.²
2. The right to education and freedom of expression are fundamental rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. The Committee of Ministers attaches the utmost attention to the protection of these rights. It acknowledges the importance of education for building a society based on knowledge, the principles of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, as well as tolerance and mutual respect.
3. Moreover, it points out that culture is one of the first sectors in which intergovernmental co-operation agreements were drawn up at the Council of Europe and that it has, in this respect, made a significant contribution to bringing about a closer unity between its members. The Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which presents diversity as a resource and advocates an intercultural and intersectoral approach, is a further major milestone in this field.
4. The Committee of Ministers notes with interest the Assembly’s analysis of the objectives and possible future approaches for cultural and artistic education and cultural literacy. It brings to the Assembly’s attention the observations made by the committees asked to comment, which show that these committees have undertaken in the past, or are currently doing so in the course of their current activity programmes, work covering many of the aspects referred to in the Assembly’s recommendation, in particular paragraph 15.2. It also notes all the measures which the Assembly puts forward for the consideration of the Ministers of Education, Culture and Media in Council of Europe member and observer states. In this connection, it draws the Assembly’s attention to the comments made by the CDED and the CDESR with regard to these proposals (see Appendices 2 and 3 to this reply).
5. With regard to the measures put forward in paragraph 15.3 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers draws attention to the provisions of its Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education, in which it sought to “promote and encourage measures aimed specifically at implementing gender mainstreaming at all levels of the education system and in teacher education with a view to achieving de facto gender equality and improve the quality of education”. This recommendation also calls on member states to “monitor and evaluate progress arising from the adoption of gender mainstreaming at school, and inform the competent steering committees of the measures undertaken and the progress achieved in this field.” The CDED foresees assessing implementation of this recommendation in 2011, but points out that its programme priorities do not allow for it to undertake more major research along the lines suggested by the Assembly.

1. adopted at the 1083rd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (21 April 2010)

2. See the appended comments from the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT), Steering Committee for Education (CDED), Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) and the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC).



6. With regard to the questions raised in paragraph 15.4 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers refers in particular to its Recommendations CM/Rec(2008)4 on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background and CM/Rec(2009)4 on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe, which aim to ensure equal rights and equal access in practice to educational opportunities for the populations concerned. It calls on member states to fully apply the measures and principles set out in these recommendations in order to make progress with integration and cohesion through education.

7. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers emphasises the strong potential of the media, including the public service media and online social media, as means of transmitting educational content, promoting cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding, and of promoting human rights and democracy in general. It notes the importance of media literacy which is inextricably linked with the effective transmission of such knowledge. In this connection, it refers to its Recommendations CM/Rec(2007)16 on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet and CM/Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment. On these questions, it invites the Assembly to refer to the comments made by the CDMC (see Appendix 5 to this reply).

8. Lastly, the Committee of Ministers informs the Assembly that it has asked the Secretary General to include [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) and this reply in the file of the 23rd Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education to be held in Brdo (Slovenia) in June 2010.

Appendix 1 to the reply

Comments by the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT)

1. The CDCULT welcomes and confirms its support for Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#), adopted on 29 September 2009, and reaffirms the fundamental importance of education for every individual and society as a whole. The CDCULT is very pleased to see that the relation between education and culture and also cultural education is emphasised in the document, and that cultural education is understood in a wide sense: not only as learning and practising the arts, but recognising their contribution to cultural and social objectives – as paragraph three of the recommendation states.
2. The CDCULT could not but underline the key role played by culture “as the soul of democracy” in our increasingly global societies. This role is prominently related to the management of cultural diversity and to access and participation in society, and thus leads to an active and fulfilled citizenship. Culture and the arts are premium tools in transmitting competences required in this regard, such as communication, respect, tolerance, curiosity, openness, creativity, teamwork, etc.
3. The CDCULT further acknowledges and appreciates the reference to the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and believes that its “Artists for Dialogue” initiative generated in the follow-up to the White Paper and the Baku Ministerial Conference of 2008 replies perfectly to such challenges. The Committee’s Intercultural Cities project responds equally well by generating models and good practice on the management of cultural diversity at local level, acknowledging diversity as a resource rather than as a threat and follows an intercultural and intersectoral approach, where the arts and culture, heritage, social policy and media all work together for optimal impact. The CDCULT also recognises, as invited by the White Paper, that the promotion of culture, creativity and intercultural understanding through education also necessitates consideration of religious facts.
4. The CDCULT values the recommendation’s references to “the access of young people from disadvantaged, minority and migrant backgrounds as well as from culturally disadvantaged regions to cultural education”, to the “platforms of dialogue and learning for people of all ages and backgrounds, also for people distant from the arts, in order to promote integration and cohesion through cultural education” and to the “right to cultural education”. It agrees that a successful education implies the building of a cultural memory and cultural and artistic literacy.
5. The CDCULT appreciates the explicit reference made in the recommendation on member states’ duty to guarantee the freedom and diversity of artistic and cultural expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The widest range possible of artistic and cultural practice should be open to Europeans to allow for diverse cultural experiences and to promote diversity of expressions. The Council of Europe Art Exhibitions and Cultural Events are a practical contribution in this respect. Furthermore, the CDCULT’s CultureWatchEurope initiative offers an information and dialogue platform on cultural, heritage and media trends open to governments and civil society bodies, pinpointing developments, difficulties and good practices. This initiative can also be useful in the follow-up given to [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) (and other recommendations) through targeted follow-up on standards, policies and practices.
6. The CDCULT finally underlines that educational and cultural strategies, though focused at times on specific groups, ought to reflect the needs of each individual.

Appendix 2 to the reply

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

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

Having taken note with great interest of [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly on “Cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education”;

2. Points out that culture is one of the first sectors in which intergovernmental co-operation agreements were drawn up at the Council of Europe and that it has, in this respect, made a significant contribution to a closer unity between its members;

3. Wishes to mention that the CDED’s programme of activities is in keeping with the recommendation in question, particularly with regard to the development of civic and social skills, the teaching of history, the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, cultural rights and languages. The new programme of activities for the period 2010-2014 which the CDED submitted to the Committee of Ministers is designed to contribute to the development and preservation of the civic culture which Europe will need to create sustainable societies characterised by a diversity of social origins, lifestyles, experiences, languages, beliefs and convictions, in which citizens undertake to live together as equals in dignity;

4. Refers to paragraph 9 and informs the Committee of Ministers that the development of teachers competences on foreign languages is one of the CDED’s key concerns and will be discussed at the 23rd session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (Brdo, Slovenia, 4-5 June 2010);

5. Takes this opportunity to inform the Committee of Ministers that the Conference “Diversity and inclusion: challenges for teacher education”, which marked the end of the “Policies and practices for teaching socio-cultural diversity” project (2006–2009), provided the opportunity to highlight the importance of language learning in building a more inclusive society and facilitating integration and intercultural dialogue;

6. Endorses the recommendation set out in paragraph 14.3 concerning the cultural education of young people from disadvantaged, minority and migrant backgrounds, and will pay particular attention to this issue when preparing the project on “Protecting and promoting the right to quality education in European education systems”;

7. Wishes to mention that special attention will be given to children from immigrant backgrounds and to disadvantaged groups in the “Language policies and the right to education and social inclusion” project, which is part of the programme of CDED for 2010-2014. This project will focus on the language and intercultural skills required to enable young people to exercise their right to education and to take an active part in the life of democratic multicultural societies;

8. Refers to paragraph 14.5 and points out that the CDED’s programme of activities for 2010-2014 will include a new “Intercultural education and exchanges” project, the purpose of which will be to promote best practices in intercultural education by introducing a Council of Europe “intercultural education” label;

9. Refers to paragraphs 12, 14.7 and 15.2 and points out that the main aim of its Pestalozzi Training Programme for Education Professionals is to develop teachers’ social, civic and intercultural skills and that pupils’ cultural skills are targeted in its “Education for Roma Children in Europe” project (2002-2009) and will be targeted again in the “Intercultural education and exchanges” project;

10. Supports the Assembly’s request, set out in paragraph 13, concerning the need for member states to develop and maintain cultural education projects and to share information on best practices and proposes its assistance with regard to the dissemination and sharing of information;

11. Refers to paragraph 14.8 and confirms its willingness to co-operate with UNESCO, which is also represented on the CDED;

12. Refers to paragraph 15.1 and mentions that the representative of the Assembly might draw the attention of the Ministers of Education to the subject of the instant recommendation at its next ministerial conference;

13. Refers to the recommendation set out in paragraph 15.3 and points out that the priorities of the programme do not allow for the involvement of the CDED in such major research, but confirms that it takes account of gender mainstreaming in the field of education, as stipulated in Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13, whose implementation will be evaluated in 2011;
14. Refers to paragraph 14.4 and wishes to point out that schools, universities and other educational establishments are appropriate places for cultural learning and the society's attention should be drawn to this fact, pursuant to the guidelines set out in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue adopted in May 2008;
15. Joins the Assembly in welcoming the European Union's 2009 "European Year of Creativity and Innovation" initiative.

Appendix 3 to the reply

Comments by the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESР)

1. The CDESР welcomes Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) on “Cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education”.
2. The CDESР agrees with the Parliamentary Assembly that cultural education plays a crucial role as a tool to promote mutual respect, understanding and tolerance vis-à-vis others as well as appreciation of diversity, team work and other social skills. In particular, cultural education strongly contributes to developing creativity, personal development and the ability to innovate. The CDESР would like to draw the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly to the discrepancy between the title of the recommendation, which interprets cultural education in a broader sense and to which CDESР adheres, and paragraph 3 of the recommendation which significantly narrows this definition.
3. The CDESР considers that cultural education is an important factor in developing generic competences as well as competences meeting all main purposes of higher education, as outlined in Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the public responsibility for higher education and research: preparation for sustainable employment, preparation for democratic citizenship, personal development and the development and maintenance of a broad and advanced knowledge base.
4. The CDESР supports the Assembly’s invitation to the Ministers of Education, Culture and Media in Council of Europe member and observer states to facilitate access of young people from disadvantaged, minority and migrant backgrounds, as well as from culturally disadvantaged regions, to cultural education, thus counteracting tendencies to isolate or create parallel societies (paragraph 14.3). In this respect, it recalls that Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 states that public authorities “have the leading responsibility for ensuring effective equal opportunities to higher education for all citizens”.
5. The CDESР also draws the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly to the structural reform of higher education carried out in the framework of the Bologna Process, which includes the social dimension of higher education as one of its important topics. At the Bologna Process Ministerial Conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve on 28 and 29 April 2009, Ministers stated that “the student body within higher education should reflect the diversity of Europe’s populations. We therefore emphasise the social characteristics of higher education and aim to provide equal opportunities to quality education. Access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies. This involves improving the learning environment, removing all barriers to study, and creating the appropriate economic conditions for students to be able to benefit from the study opportunities at all levels”.
6. With regard to paragraph 14.5 of the recommendation on “promoting diversity in culture, as well as respect vis-à-vis other cultures”, the CDESР would like to draw the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly to its project “Promoting intercultural dialogue and democratic culture in higher education”, which is targeted to bringing the core values of the Council of Europe to the European higher education agenda, as well as, more broadly, the work of the Council of Europe within the Bologna Process to link issues of structural reform to a broader consideration of the multiple purposes of higher education.

Appendix 4 to the reply

Comments of the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP)

1. The CDPATEP has noted with great interest [Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly and agrees fully with its underlying philosophy in terms of the objectives, methods and resources of cultural education. It notes first that since the late 1980s the committee responsible for cultural heritage has played a pioneering role in developing the principles of and a methodology for heritage education, as embodied in Committee of Ministers' Recommendation No. R (98) 5 concerning heritage education. Pilot projects in the field with the support of a group of international experts have applied these principles in such initiatives as "European heritage classes", "the city beneath the city" and "schools adopt monuments". The 2004 project "Europe: from one street to another" extended this approach by making young people of school age more aware of the multicultural nature of towns and cities by investigating their urban environment. These projects, which are still highly relevant today, have been described in "Heritage education for Europe" published in English and Italian in 2007 (other versions to follow). They have had a multiplier effect in the countries concerned and have often led to informal co-operation networks between institutions and schools. It is a process that should be encouraged and developed still further.
2. The second European Heritage Days Forum, in Ljubljana in September 2009, on the theme "Heritage, innovation and creativity" offered an updated range of instruments and techniques for use in educational activities designed to make heritage culture still more easily and widely accessible.
3. At the same time as these activities, there has been a growing awareness that failure to understand that heritage has sometimes been a source of tension or even destruction. Article 7 c. of the Faro Convention therefore stresses the need to "develop knowledge of cultural heritage as a resource to facilitate peaceful co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding with a view to resolution and prevention of conflicts". In pursuit of this objective, recent efforts by experts to identify and interpret the heritage should be continued in the context of the monitoring of Council of Europe cultural conventions, leading from 2010 to a series of case studies and exchanges of information between countries that take account of developments in educational and awareness raising methods. These activities are matched in the education sector by the work on multiperspectivity in history teaching.
4. Similarly, the "European Manifesto on Multiple Cultural Affiliation", which emerged from the post-summit project on "Identity, shared values and citizenship" (2006-2007), emphasises the need to develop "heritage education and interpretation highlighting past exchanges and mutual influences which illustrate Europe's multicultural reality and its relations with other regions of the world". The manifesto also makes a link between the fundamental values promoted by the Council of Europe and "giving everyone access to a culture which enables them to exercise their basic rights and freedoms effectively, but also makes them aware of their responsibilities as citizens". The same project has also given rise to the "Handbook on values for life in a democracy", which provides a practical and novel working tool for those involved in cultural education in the broadest sense, in a Europe of pluralism and dialogue.

Appendix 5 to the reply

Comments by the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC)

1. The Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC) welcomes and supports Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1884 (2009) on “Cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education”. First and foremost, the CDMC considers that cultural expression is an integral part of everyone’s right to freedom of expression and information in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

2. Media and media-like mass communication services, including public service media and online social media, in all their forms are excellent tools for transmitting educational content, for the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding as well as for the promotion of human rights and democracy in general.

3. The CDMC considers that the Internet is an important platform to promote diversity in cultural education regardless of frontiers. Recalling Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet, the CDMC underlines the commitment of member states to “(...) ensure that Internet and ICT content is contributed by all regions, countries and communities so as to ensure over time representation of all peoples, nations, cultures and languages, in particular by:

- encouraging and promoting the growth of national or local cultural industries, especially in the field of digital content production, including that undertaken by public service media, where necessary crossing linguistic and cultural barriers (including all potential content creators and other stakeholders), in order to encourage linguistic diversity and artistic expression on the Internet and other new communication services. This should apply also to educational, cultural, scientific, scholarly and other content which may not be commercially viable in accordance with the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- developing strategies and policies and creating appropriate legal and institutional frameworks to preserve the digital heritage of lasting cultural, scientific, or other values, in co-operation with holders of copyright and neighbouring rights, and other legitimate stakeholders in order to, where appropriate, set common standards and ensure compatibility and share resources. In this regard, access to legally deposited digital heritage materials, within reasonable restrictions, should also be assured;
- developing a culture of participation and involvement, *inter alia*, by providing for the creation, modification and remixing of interactive content and the transformation of consumers into active communicators and creators of content;
- promoting mechanisms for the production and distribution of user- and community-generated content (thereby facilitating online communities), *inter alia*, by encouraging public service media to use such content and co-operate with such communities;
- encouraging the creation and processing of and access to educational, cultural and scientific content in digital form, so as to ensure that all cultures can express themselves and have access to the Internet in all languages, including indigenous ones;
- encouraging capacity building for the production of local and indigenous content on the Internet;
- encouraging the multilingualisation of the Internet so that everyone can use it in their own language.”

4. In this connection, media literacy is inextricably linked with the effective transmission of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education. Media literacy includes comprehension, creativity, active and critical use of media and media-like services, and is consequently an essential element in promoting democratic education and participation and, thus, should be an intrinsic part of any policies aimed at promoting cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding through education.

5. Media literacy is referred to in Recommendation CM/Rec(2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment, and has been developed in a classroom-learning Handbook on Internet literacy.

6. The interdependence of cultural expression, knowledge, creativity and understanding through the media and the Internet should not be overlooked, especially as more and more Europeans increasingly rely on the Internet as an essential tool for their everyday activities.