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Culture and education through national parliaments: European policies

Report¹

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media

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Summary

National parliaments have a key role to play and an important responsibility to enhance policies for education and culture. These policies should not only encourage the development of employment-oriented competences, but also promote the ethical and political values which are related to the main aims of the Council of Europe.

Significant progress was made in setting legislative frameworks aimed at fighting exclusion and discrimination in access to culture and education. Today, the main challenge lies in the effective application of the relevant legislation. National parliaments should also intensify their work to promote intercultural dialogue and to encourage cultural and educational exchanges across borders, removing administrative barriers to such exchanges.

Bearing this in mind, the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media calls upon national parliaments to review policies for culture and education putting more emphasis on the long-term perspective, to take measures to implement policy guidelines agreed upon at Council of Europe level and to regularly assess the impact of government action in the fields of culture and education. The report also highlights the importance of advancing towards a European framework of competences for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural dialogue, and asks that this framework be part of the Council of Europe Programme of Activities in the next biennium.

1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 12228](#), Reference 3678 of 21 May 2010.



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A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly reaffirms the importance of culture and education as essential pillars of our democratic systems and of a cohesive society. National parliaments have the responsibility to deliver in these fields policies which effectively uphold our common core values – human rights, democracy and the rule of law –, ensure adequate access to education and support participation in cultural life, creativity and innovation.
2. Enhanced policies for culture and education should encourage the development of employment-oriented competencies, but also promote the ethical and political values which are related to the main aims of the Council of Europe, bearing in mind the importance of the humanities and the right of everyone to take part in cultural life.
3. National parliaments should build their policies for culture and education on the texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly. They should also take greater advantage of policy instruments and tools developed by the Council of Europe (such as the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe and the Intercultural Cities Index) and by the European Union (such as the recently launched “Rethinking Education” strategy).
4. The Assembly therefore calls on national parliaments to:
 - 4.1. review policy making in the fields of culture and education with a view to putting more emphasis on the long-term perspective and at delivering a coherent strategy, paying attention to the interconnections between culture, education and other policy areas such as youth and social cohesion policies, employment, health and environment protection;
 - 4.2. re-engage in a broad debate on policies for culture and education, encouraging citizen participation in the debate and the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in policy reforms;
 - 4.3. ensure that legislation in these fields deals in a holistic manner with key challenges, including:
 - 4.3.1. promoting social cohesion and a culture of inclusion;
 - 4.3.2. supporting sustainable socio-economic development within a globalised market economy and an endangered environment;
 - 4.4. implement the policy guidelines agreed upon at the level of the Council of Europe and establish proper monitoring and reporting arrangements to regularly assess the impact of measures adopted by the competent governmental authorities;
 - 4.5. adopt concrete measures to enhance intercultural dialogue and encourage cultural and educational exchanges across borders, removing administrative barriers to such exchanges;
 - 4.6. introduce intercultural learning and practice in the initial and in-service training of teachers and educators.
5. National delegations to the Assembly are encouraged to set up, in their respective parliaments, the arrangements necessary to provide adequate information about the relevant activities of the Council of Europe – and if appropriate of the European Union – especially activities in the field of culture and education.
6. The Assembly invites national parliaments to reinforce inter-parliamentary co-operation in the fields of culture and education at regional and European levels, including co-operation with the European Parliament and with the Assembly.
7. Finally, the Assembly supports the recent proposal by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to initiate work on a European framework of competences for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding, and suggests including it in the Organisation’s Programme of Activities for the next biennium, insisting on the importance of intercultural dialogue.

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 18 December 2012.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Brasseur, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. On 28 April 2010, 34 colleagues and I tabled a motion for a resolution on “European cultural and educational policies through national parliaments”, which was referred to the committee for report on 22 June 2010. The committee appointed me rapporteur on this subject at its meeting in Strasbourg on 22 June 2010.
2. The committee held a hearing on education policies in Paris on 5 March 2012, with the participation of Ambassador Arif Mammadov, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers’ Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment and a number of experts.³ The hearing was organised in co-operation with UNESCO. After considering a preliminary draft report at its meeting on 4 October 2012, the committee decided to change the title of the report to the current one.
3. This report follows – and is intended to further – the Parliamentary Assembly’s work towards the implementation of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as equals in dignity” (2008),⁴ launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial Session, and of Assembly Recommendation 1975 (2011) “Living together in 21st-century Europe: follow-up to the report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe”.
4. Culture⁵ and education are enabling factors for personal development and for full and active participation in society. It is through cultural experiences and education that people shape their personality and build up the ability to enter into constructive relationships with others. The capacity of European citizens to accept differences and to value every human being is enhanced through education and culture. Therefore, educational and cultural policies are at the heart of a stronger and more cohesive Europe.
5. The report will examine parliaments’ role in setting a strategic vision for European cultural and educational policies. Within the challenging context of globalisation, economic downturn, increasing societal divides and major environmental concerns, national parliaments should stand for the critical review of cultural and educational policies and take a lead in developing a forward-looking strategic vision. They should reconsider policy design in these fields to ensure a more comprehensive approach and launch the policies needed to respond to the present major societal challenges.

2. The role of national parliaments in reshaping national cultural and educational policies – Lines of action

6. Parliaments are expected to identify major challenges and to find the best way to deal with these challenges. They have a key role in determining a vision for the future, defining comprehensive strategies and ensuring these are properly implemented. In order to provide guidance for the systemic reforms needed, monitor their implementation and assess their impact, parliaments need to be effective in defining the strategic vision and setting the goals for such reforms in the first place. Are parliaments effective in doing that, and if not, why not? Here are some areas that could require further consideration.
7. *Short-term v. long-term* – Parliaments find themselves caught, like fire-fighters, in their daily work on short-term “burning” issues, which prevents them from devoting time to discussing (and delivering) a long-term vision for the future of their countries and of Europe as a whole. Parliamentary debates are, therefore, rarely held with a long-term perspective and are mostly subject to electoral *rationale*.
8. *Being reactive v. being proactive* – Parliaments often take action under pressure from public opinion to respond to a given event or to a societal issue which becomes “hot” and prominent in the political agenda. In this sense, parliaments could be seen to be more reactive than proactive. Lack of vision and strategy could be a consequence.

3. Professor Pavel Zgaga, Director of the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Ljubljana; Professor Germain Dondelinger, co-ordinator for Higher Education, Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research, Luxembourg; Ms Annette Pieper de Avila, Senior consultant to UNESCO, Section for Higher Education, UNESCO; Ms Anna Glass, Secretary General, Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna; Ms Ligia Deca, Co-ordinator, Romanian Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat, Bucharest; Mr Frank Petrikowski, Higher Education Unit, DG for Education and Culture, European Commission, Brussels.

4. www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf.

5. The term “culture” is used in different meanings: in a more restricted sense as music, arts, literature, etc. and in a more comprehensive, anthropological sense as a set of norms, convictions, belief systems and behaviour (as in democratic culture). The former are usually the means of expressing the latter.

9. *Comprehensiveness v. fragmentation of proposed legislation* – Parliaments are often invited to enact legislation which only covers narrow areas. Such focused interventions can sometimes be necessary. However, the risk is that this can eventually deliver patchwork legislation, with no clear picture of the whole system and emerging trends that are requiring integrated interventions. We must ask ourselves how parliaments could make policies and legislation taking a more comprehensive approach.

10. *Lack of research facilities and advisory services* – Members of parliaments have scarce research facilities, whilst governments have the support of specialised administrative services and experts to carry out any research they need. This may stifle the debate between the executive and parliament when it comes to strategic decision-making and weaken parliaments' role in policy design.

11. Parliaments can initiate changes and reshape national cultural and educational policies. This requires a series of actions to be taken, starting with the recognition of the need for a deeper reflection on cultural and educational policies. Based on such a reflection, parliaments should engage in a constructive debate on cultural and educational policies, set new goals, rethink funding and resource allocation, guide the reforms and assess their impact, whilst ensuring the participation of major stakeholders, involving, in particular, young people.

2.1. Engaging in a constructive debate on cultural and educational policies

12. Culture and education are – and should be seen as – essential for personal development and for full and active participation in society. Culture and education sustain and develop our values and our democratic systems, and the overall democratic culture without which democratic institutions cannot function in practice.⁶ Decision-makers should, therefore, engage in a constructive debate on the related policies.

13. First, culture and education are intertwined; therefore cultural and education policies should be discussed and eventually devised so as to reinforce each other's impact. Culture and education are also interconnected with – and influential on – a number of other policy areas. For example, they can drive progress in youth and social cohesion⁷ policies, are the backbone for research and (sustainable) development, and can have an important impact in the spheres of health, social care and environment protection.

14. Because of these interconnections, there is a need to assess to what extent cultural and educational policies are contributing to a cohesive society and achieve empowerment of the weakest or whether they are inducing new divides and increasing the gap between the privileged part of the society and marginalised groups.⁸

15. The models of governance in education and culture are changing rapidly. In culture, in particular, the changes imply a growing involvement of non-public actors,⁹ including private sector and civil society organisations. This has to be taken into account when education and cultural policies are reviewed. Parliaments must therefore be able to engage in a constructive dialogue with all stakeholders. Moreover, the ruling majorities in parliaments must be capable of entering positive debates and deciding which policies may be developed in a longer term perspective and be enriched by taking in views from outside the majority party or coalition.

16. Last but not least, it is necessary to ensure that cultural and educational policies are adjusted to the new reality of our multicultural societies and to the emergence of mixed cultures. Culture and education can federate people and lead them towards common goals. At the same time, however, we should also be aware of tensions between cultures and counteract them. Greater attention should be paid to the fact that many young people consider themselves as belonging to multiple cultural backgrounds. This probably requires new approaches in teaching and training for teachers, who must be prepared to support the development of multiple facets of identity in a context of mixed cultures.

6. Warsaw Summit Action Plan, item 3, CM(2005)80 final, 17 May 2005.

7. Social cohesion, in this context, should be understood as the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation.

8. People with a low level of skills often drop out of education. This is particularly the case for young people from working class families; this decreases even further their chances of getting employment.

9. See the article on "New Challenges to the Landscape of Cultural Policies in Europe" by Robert Palmer, former Director for Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity, Council of Europe: www.culturalpolicies.net/web/compendium-topics.php?aid=213.

2.2. Setting the goals of cultural and educational policies

17. Sound goal setting requires that parliaments look at the culture and education systems in their entirety. Concerning education, in particular, it is necessary that strategic priorities be set taking account of issues at stake at all levels of studies from primary and secondary to vocational training and higher education as well as lifelong learning.¹⁰ Coherence should be sought not only within the programmes of each level of study, but also, of course, between the full range of knowledge, know-how and skills that students are expected to acquire through the entire education cycle. This was underscored in the European Union's "Rethinking Education" Strategy launched on 20 November 2012,¹¹ which our Assembly should welcome. The Strategy calls for a fundamental shift in education, with more focus on "learning outcomes" – the knowledge, skills and competences¹² that students acquire. It refers, *inter alia*, to the investment needed to build world-class vocational education and training systems and increase levels of work-based learning.

18. This being said, we need to create learning opportunities that give more than just employment-related skills. Martha Nussbaum, in her book "Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities", pleads for the teaching of humanities, humanities being the basis of democracy. Educational policy based essentially on the idea of utility will not meet the needs of modern European societies: "Citizens cannot relate well to the complex world around them by factual knowledge and logic alone." The design of educational policies – and the curriculum – must, therefore, ensure balance in developing scientific and humanist knowledge and skills. It should also seek to empower learners as main actors in the process of realising their full potential.

19. Similarly, the design of cultural policies should also be carried out in a holistic manner. As an example, when examining the issue of access to culture and participation in cultural life, there is a need to analyse and understand participation (who, why and how) and non-participation (who and why not), factors which hamper and marginalise and those which encourage and empower, quantitative participation and qualitative participation and, all in all, not only consider figures but the impact at the level of the individual as well as the societal impact.

20. I would pinpoint the following as key challenges to consider when developing a strategic vision of national cultural and educational policies:

- countering inequalities and marginalisation;
- fighting divisions which lead to intolerance and extremism;
- supporting sustainable socio-economic growth within a globalised market economy and endangered environment.

21. I believe that these challenges cannot be faced effectively without a comprehensive policy strategy, including:

- empowering people and removing barriers in access to education and culture;
- reconciling identity and diversity in European societies;
- strengthening the ability to compete in a globalised market economy through creativity and innovation;
- developing a participatory societal culture, active citizenship and vibrant democracy.

2.3. Rethinking funding and resource allocation

22. Cultural and educational policies require adequate funding. Parliaments lay the foundations of sound policy implementation by approving national budgets and reviewing budget allocations. They should therefore explore ways and means of making better use of available resources.

10. As an example, the most advanced higher education system cannot deliver all the expected results if learning outcomes of secondary education are not properly defined and achieved.

11. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1233_en.htm.

12. Eight key competences considered necessary for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment have been defined at European Union level (Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and the Council): communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression. See the 2011/2012 Eurydice report "Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy", p. 7.

23. In this respect, the understanding of interconnections between culture, education and other policy areas points to a first direction; consideration should be given to strengthening synergies between different sectors and to operating in a more collaborative way, avoiding unnecessary competition between relevant public service institutions (for example ministries).

24. Moreover, public authorities set the framework within which funding is provided, also from non-public sources. Parliaments should take note of this when considering other policies, such as, for example, tax or sponsorship policies, or policies on private funding of higher education institutions, where compliance with national qualifications frameworks is an important criterion.¹³ Parliaments should also consider whether public funding should go in large part to areas that are of value but attract little non-public funding or whether it should complement private funding – or both. Finally, parliaments should aim for sufficient public funding to be devoted to ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination in both access to cultural events as spectator and full participation as an artist/performer.

25. Policies as regards large-scale infrastructure should also be reviewed. The question should be what new infrastructure we need and where we most need it. But infrastructure is not only roads, hospitals, energy plants, airports, etc. Infrastructure is also cultural and educational institutions. How these institutions could contribute to reducing regional disparities, helping development, enhancing social cohesion and improving the quality of life, is dependent on national circumstances.

26. The use of existing infrastructure should be reconsidered in the light of the role it plays in giving people access to culture and in fostering cultural expression, creativity and innovation. As an example, today, about 90% of public budgets allocated to culture¹⁴ are spent maintaining large-scale infrastructure (operas, theatres, museums) which is used by not more than 10% of the population. This is of course a finding that should urge us to consider further how to encourage access to cultural infrastructure for a greater number of people, to rethink the relevance of these institutions for our populations and to engage in a cultural democracy-driven policy approach. Similarly, it might be useful to assess to what extent higher education policies could strike a better balance between the need to support centres of excellence (for example renowned universities) and the need to avoid geographical polarisation in education.

27. The availability of well-educated professionals in education and culture is a further very important issue. Lifelong learning opportunities must be created and professional training enhanced, to ensure that all those working in the field of education and culture are well equipped to apply modern, innovative approaches. E-education and e-culture are evolving areas and require attention and support in order to take full advantage of new information and communication technologies.

2.4. Guiding systemic reforms and assessing their impact

28. To bridge the gap between policy design and practice, parliaments must guide systemic reforms and assess their impact, as part of their scrutiny function. To enhance their capacity to do this in the spheres of education and culture, parliaments could call for the establishment of a parliamentary commissioner or an ombudsman to support access to – and effective enjoyment of – cultural and educational rights.¹⁵ As a first step, the competencies of the national ombudsman should be extended, ensuring that he or she is also in charge of cultural and educational rights.

29. Parliaments could also set up specific procedures to see what follow-up was given to “soft law” instruments, including the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommendations to member States and the Parliamentary Assembly resolutions and recommendations in the fields of culture and education. Indeed, it is not enough to adopt recommendations and resolutions. Proper follow-up should be given to these texts not only by the Committee of Ministers, but also by our national authorities, including parliaments.

13. Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 of the Committee of Ministers on the public responsibility for higher education and research.

14. This does not refer to sports (see the Nordic concept of a broad definition of culture), where sports events are heavily funded by non-public actors.

15. See: “A guide to parliamentary practice”, Handbook developed jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNESCO, 2003, p. 9. This official, who should be responsible to parliament, would investigate any complaints by citizens who may deem themselves the victims of discrimination in the exercise of their cultural (including education) rights.

30. The Council of Europe has developed excellent policy instruments, but not all of them are fully implemented. This is certainly a challenging task, but it is exactly the reason why national parliaments should be called upon to do that. Each parliament could establish a checklist and set up a road map for the implementation of policy instruments agreed upon at the level of the Council of Europe. Parliaments could in this way analyse governments' policies to see whether they are in line with the Council of Europe instruments.

2.5. Being proactive and seeking to ensure a participatory reform process

31. Parliamentarians' advocacy and mobilisation role should not be overlooked when major reforms in education and culture are at stake. They should maintain close contacts with society at large, but also with people in their constituencies. They should be responsive to their electorate and pay attention to citizens' needs and be proactive in campaigning for the reforms envisaged: convey proper information to local communities about the issues at stake, raise their awareness about why reforms are needed, trigger citizens' involvement in public debate, relay their expectations to national and European assemblies, and mobilise community support when it comes to reform implementation.

32. The involvement of young people in the reform processes at national level should be appreciated and encouraged. As the Assembly stressed in its [Recommendation 1978 \(2011\)](#) "Towards a European framework convention on youth rights", "national parliaments of member States have an essential responsibility" in this regard. The Assembly called on them, in particular, to "promote the participation of young people in democratic processes and in real decision making, especially by offering opportunities for dialogue between the national representatives of youth associations and the relevant parliamentary committees, and by encouraging the establishment of youth parliaments" (paragraph 8.2).

3. The European dimension of cultural and educational policies

33. The parliamentary mechanisms that are in place in the European Union and at the Council of Europe can help ensure progress in the spheres of cultural and educational policies.

3.1. European Union competence in the fields of culture and education – the legal basis

34. This section refers to the main provisions on European Union action in the fields of culture and education which appear in the consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) which follow the Lisbon Treaty (2009).¹⁶ The Maastricht Treaty (1992) had already established the legal basis for the actions of the European Community in the policy areas of education and culture.¹⁷ However, the Lisbon Treaty better clarifies the extent and nature of European Union competence in these two fields, which is subsidiary to the competences of member States.

35. Article 2.5 of the TFEU provides that: "In certain areas ..., the Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, without thereby superseding their competence in these areas." Article 6 of the TFEU lists these areas including, among others, culture (6.c) and education (6.e, which also mentions vocational training, youth and sport). Article 165.1 of the TFEU spells out the scope of European Union intervention in the field of education as follows: "The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. ..."

36. Article 165.2 of the TFEU contains a list of concrete objectives aimed, *inter alia*, at "developing the European dimension in education ... developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States ... encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe, ...".

16. All European Union legal texts are published on the Eur-Lex web site.

17. Article 3.p of the Maastricht Treaty included within the activity of the Community "a contribution to education and training of quality and to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States". The competences in the field of education were detailed in Article 126 (then, following the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997, Article 149 of the consolidated version of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC)); the competences in the field of culture were detailed in Article 128 (then in Article 151 of the TEC). The content of these provisions has now been taken up by Articles 165 and 167 of the TFEU.

37. Similarly, in the field of culture, Article 167.1 of the TFEU provides that: “The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.” And Article 167.2 specifies that: “Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action” in targeted areas.¹⁸ In addition, Article 167.4 states that: “The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.”

38. The wording of the above-mentioned provisions of the TFEU – and namely the use of terms such as “if necessary”, “support”, “co-ordinate”, “supplement”, “encourage” or “contribute” – does not leave any doubt about the subsidiary nature of European Union competence in the policy areas of education and culture.

39. These provisions should also be seen in conjunction with the general provision concerning the principle of “subsidiarity” that the Lisbon Treaty incorporated into Article 5.3, first sentence, of the TEU: “Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States ..., but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level ...” Article 5.4 introduces a further limit to EU action: “Under the principle of proportionality, the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.”

40. In simple words, these provisions seek to exclude European Union intervention when an issue can be regulated effectively by member States (namely by public authorities at central, regional or local level) and to empower the European Union when member States (alone) appear unable to achieve adequately the objectives of the Treaties. It is clear, therefore, that EU action in the spheres of culture and education is not to replace but to accompany and sustain national cultural and educational policies, fostering synergies and upholding the European dimension of these policies, insofar as this is required to reach Treaty objectives.

3.2. The role of national parliaments in the European Union legal framework

41. The Lisbon Treaty highlights the role that national parliaments (may) play within the EU framework. Article 12 of the TEU explicitly acknowledges that “[n]ational Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union” in different ways. I would mention three of them listed in the same article:

“a) through being informed by the institutions of the Union and having draft legislative acts of the Union forwarded to them in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union; b) by seeing to it that the principle of subsidiarity is respected in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; ... f) by taking part in the inter-parliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and with the European Parliament, in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union.”

42. These general provisions are most relevant to the two policy areas subject of the present report (culture and education) and probably more relevant for these areas than others, as the Lisbon Treaty, by formally limiting the competence of the European Union in the fields of culture and education to actions designed to encourage, support and supplement its member States’ actions, recognises the main role of national parliaments as policy and legislation makers in these two fields. National parliaments are well armed to safeguard the national competence in the fields of culture and education: they are entitled – and they have the responsibility – to do so.

43. But the question is not only for each national parliament to protect the national interests of its own country and its own sphere of competence; it is also – and, I would suggest, should mainly be – how to make proper use of this competence in a synergic way, how to work within the EU framework in order to guide cultural and educational policy at national and European level. This is why I value the reference in Article 12.f of the TEU to inter-parliamentary co-operation and believe that a lot more could be done to improve such co-operation in the fields of culture and education.

18. These are: improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples; conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance; non-commercial cultural exchanges; artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.

3.3. Promotion of cultural and educational policies by national parliaments in the Council of Europe framework

44. Cultural and educational policies within the Council of Europe are based on a series of shared foundations: the promotion of human rights, democratic citizenship and positive attitudes towards dialogue and inclusive societies.

45. For European societies to evolve, people should be able to build respectful relationships with each other. Instead, certain components of our societies show a tendency to reject those that are seen as “different” and as a result of this, we are not taking full advantage of the richness of diversity because of mistrust between those belonging to different cultures.

46. Educational and cultural policies can help change this and have a positive influence on the process of building a more cohesive society. We need to intensify our joint efforts within the Council of Europe framework and develop further, together, the programmes which are aimed at providing our peoples with what they need to enter into constructive “intercultural dialogue” – namely an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.¹⁹ National parliaments should be more supportive in encouraging such development.

47. Dialogue can only exist and be effective when there is a real desire and the capability to engage in it. Sharing the universal values upheld by the Council of Europe is a precondition for this. “No true dialogue can take place when recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings and respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles are lacking”.²⁰

48. However, one should also attempt to reach out to those who do not share our values – or, to say the least – do not share our political views. The power of dialogue for bridging differences should not be underestimated. International conferences bringing together Council of Europe member States and countries that are not members of the Organisation including, in particular, Muslim countries should be held on a regular basis (for example the 2008 conference of Ministers of Culture held in Baku (Azerbaijan)).

49. Education for democratic citizenship helps develop competences for engaging actively in social and political life; but this does not necessarily exclude an engagement which only aims at promoting one’s own point of view. Human rights education can bring an understanding of fundamental rights; but this does not necessarily imply that they are recognised in practice. The right environment for living together in dignity is there only when people “want to respect” the rights of others, and this can only be achieved if the respect of dignity and human rights of others is linked to personal values and convictions.

50. Acceptance of diversity does not happen by itself. It requires active engagement, which can only happen if there is a will to engage. Looking with indifference at one’s own life, as a passive witness of one’s own destiny and that of other people, prevents dialogue. As Václav Havel wrote, “[t]he tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life, but that it bothers him less and less”.²¹ The first step towards ensuring that people start to care about – and engage with – others is through an early development of emphatic skills in individuals. Developing abilities such as empathy will help “forge bonds of solidarity ... so that society can cohere as a whole”.²²

51. Education and culture must play an important role in developing positive attitudes and abilities such as empathy. Our societies need open-minded people with a strong attachment to democratic values and human rights, ready to interact in a constructive manner and to accept the challenge of different opinions, able to perform critical judgment and to value what can bring people together instead of insisting on what may engender divisions. These basic skills, which are transmitted through education and culture, will help face the social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

3.3.1. Educational policies aimed at living together in dignity

52. The Council of Europe “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – Living together as equals in dignity” insists on the crucial importance of intercultural competences for democratic culture and social cohesion. Diversity of cultures should be considered when designing education policies. On the one hand, education

19. See item 1.4 of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as equals in dignity” (2008).

20. See item 3.4, *ibid.*

21. Letters to Olga: June 1979-September 1982 (1988), p. 237

22. “Empathic education: the transformation of learning in an interconnected world”, Jeremy Rifkin, <http://chronicle.com/article/Empathic-Education-The/65695/>.

should respond to the needs of members of different communities to see their culture acknowledged and respected in education processes. On the other hand, education should help people from various cultural backgrounds express their views and participate as responsible citizens in the life of society.

53. Intercultural dialogue must be practised for it to become part of everyday life. Our education policies should reinforce existing opportunities for intercultural dialogue and help develop new ones to ensure such practice: from school and family-based exchanges to the workplace, where teams are composed of people from various cultural backgrounds, or sport, where playing together becomes an intercultural experience.

54. “The competences necessary for intercultural dialogue are not automatically acquired: they need to be learned, practised and maintained throughout life”,²³ the White Paper therefore recommends that they be a part of citizenship and human rights education and of teacher training.

55. The learning and practice of intercultural dialogue should be part of the Council of Europe’s Pestalozzi Programme,²⁴ which is a training and capacity-building programme for education professionals. The programme aims to support member States in the move from education policy to education practice in line with Council of Europe values. The Pestalozzi Programme can help education professionals acquire competences for engaging in intercultural dialogue and for facilitating the development of such competences in their students.

56. Progress in acquiring specific competences for intercultural dialogue should be monitored; this requires the development of specific competence descriptors: “Competent public authorities and education institutions should make full use of descriptors of key competences for intercultural communication in designing and implementing curricula and study programmes at all levels of education, including teacher training and adult education programmes.”²⁵

57. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe proposed that the Organisation begin working on a European framework of competences for education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding,²⁶ building on, and developing, the work already done in the Organisation in this field. This proposal should be welcomed. The European framework would assist educators in their assessment of competences and in structuring educational activities to ensure greater progress in learning. Based on this framework, member States could review the content of national curricula and consider devising a common European curriculum for primary and secondary education in this area.

3.3.2. Cultural policies aimed at living together in dignity

58. In the report on “The right of everyone to take part in cultural life”,²⁷ we stated that “the dignity and intimacy of all individual human beings in their freedom of expression and freedom to develop their identities are expressed via cultural constructions” and that “the cultural field provides meaning for the prevailing social and political fabric but also determines man’s place in the world” (paragraph 35). Culture is therefore the essence of what we are as individuals and as societies.

59. Culture makes us different from one another,²⁸ but it is also what binds us, a vehicle of values that bring people closer together. It is most often through culture that we engage in a dialogue in the first place. Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to mutual understanding and respect.²⁹ Creative citizens, engaged in cultural activity, produce new spaces and potential for dialogue. Music, art and dance can also be powerful tools for intercultural education and enjoyment of different expressions of creativity should be incorporated into learning about one another.

23. See item 4.3 of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, op. cit.

24. The Pestalozzi Programme (www.coe.int/pestalozzi) is governed by the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Educational Policies and Practices relying on a network of National Liaison Officers in the 50 signatory States of the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18). The Programme organises around 30-40 training events annually either in Strasbourg or in member States, reaching a total of about 1 000 education professionals directly every year. A series of teacher training seminars on education for democratic citizenship have been held in partnership with the European Wergeland Centre based in Oslo, Norway (www.theewc.org/).

25. See item 5.3 of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, op. cit.

26. Discussion document SG/Inf(2012)17 presented at the Committee of Ministers’ Thematic debate on “Living together implies having a level of common competences as regards intercultural and democratic dialogue, as well as a system of attitudes, behaviour and common values based on human rights. Can these be taught?”

27. Doc. 12815. Report by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education (Rapporteur: Ms Muriel Marland-Militello, France, EPP/CD).

28. See Conference Reader “Cultural Governance: from challenges to changes”, Bled (Slovenia), 11-12 November 2011, Council of Europe Publishing, p. 11.

60. The Council of Europe CultureWatchEurope conference 2011 on “Cultural Governance: from challenges to changes”, organised in co-operation with the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, endorsed six fundamental principles that must govern cultural policy design and implementation. Four of these are of particular relevance to the debate on intercultural dialogue: culture defending fundamental human rights and democracy; support to creative and imaginative work; freedom of cultural expression and circulation of works of art; and support to artists and cultural actors.³⁰

61. The exchange of good practices and review of policies in Council of Europe member States provides an excellent basis for progress in these areas. A powerful tool is the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends. It addresses issues of priority and current challenges to policy concerning: cultural rights and ethics; cultural diversity; intercultural dialogue; the role of different partners in a changing system of governance; support for creativity; participation in cultural life; economic, legal and educational dimensions of cultural policies; and international cultural co-operation.³¹

62. The Compendium is a web-based permanently updated information and monitoring system on cultural policies in Europe. New data and indicators are constantly introduced to monitor policy developments, standards and trends. Country profiles are researched and written by national experts, including chapters on general objectives and principles of cultural policy, on decision-making and administration, on current issues in cultural policy development and debate, on main legal provisions in the cultural field, on financing of culture, on public institutions and cultural infrastructures, and on specific policies promoting creativity and participation.

63. The Council of Europe’s Intercultural Cities Index³² is an additional tool that can assist members of national parliaments in making informed choices as regards educational and cultural policies. The Intercultural Cities Index is a benchmark for diversity policies at local level, which can be adapted to evaluate the diversity policies at national level.

64. National parliaments should take advantage of the tools available at European level, such as the Council of Europe Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe and the Intercultural Cities Index in their policy work in the field of culture. This Compendium may give ideas for actions that can be taken to develop cultural policies aimed at living together in dignity. It can also highlight areas where more needs to be done. For example, the analysis of policy priorities shows that only a few countries reported intercultural dialogue being a national policy priority in culture.³³ Specific actions by national parliaments can help review policy priorities to bring intercultural dialogue to the fore.

65. Interreligious dialogue is a constituent part of intercultural dialogue: our policies should also take account of the need to encourage religious communities to engage actively in promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in a multicultural Europe.³⁴ In my report on “The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue” (Doc. 12553), which led to the adoption by the Assembly of [Recommendation 1962 \(2011\)](#), I stressed that it is indispensable that people of all beliefs and world views, religious or otherwise, accept to intensify dialogue based on the common assertion of equal dignity for all and a wholehearted commitment to democratic principles and human rights. These are two crucial conditions for developing a new culture of living together.

66. The Assembly called for a series of specific actions. It recommended, for instance, that “the public authorities at local and national levels facilitate encounters organised in the framework of inter-religious dialogue and encourage and support projects jointly conducted by several communities, including humanist and non-religious associations, that seek to consolidate social bonds ...”³⁵ In addition, the Assembly recommended that “States and religious communities review together, on the basis of the guidelines provided by the Council of Europe, the questions regarding teaching on religions, denominational education, and training of teachers and of religious ministers or those with religious responsibilities, according to a holistic

29. See item 4.4 of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, op. cit.

30. See Conference Reader “Cultural Governance: from challenges to changes”, op. cit.

31. The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe is a unique reference work on European cultural policies and an online information and monitoring system, www.culturalpolicies.net/.

32. The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. See the main project web site: www.coe.int/interculturalcities, and the methodology: www.culturalpolicies.net/web/files/178/en/methodological_overview.pdf.

33. Austria, Azerbaijan, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, www.culturalpolicies.net/web/files/93/en/2011_MON_Policy_Priorities.pdf.

34. See item 3.5 of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, op. cit.

35. [Recommendation 1962 \(2011\)](#) on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, paragraph 12.

approach".³⁶ The Assembly invited States "to commit the resources required so that statements lead to achievements on the ground".³⁷ We should follow this up in national parliaments, starting by drawing up a checklist to get an overview of the actions taken to enhance intercultural dialogue and to plan future action.

67. Parliaments should create an institutional and legal framework that offers all necessary conditions for cultural democracy and intercultural dialogue. This includes, of course, fully fledged non-discrimination legislation and the establishment of independent bodies entrusted to scrutinise its effective implementation, but should also comprise a well-established democratic culture within the whole range of public authorities and administrations (in particular, but not only, those acting in the fields of culture and education). These should respect neutrality when cultural and religious matters are at stake, and at the same time should be sensitive and responsive to the expectations of a culturally diverse population.

68. To conclude, I would like to stress that national parliaments must play an essential role in shaping future cultural and educational policies and in ensuring acceptance of political decisions in these areas.

3.4. The specific role of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

69. The Parliamentary Assembly plays a key role both in promoting cultural and educational policies that reflect the values the Council of Europe stands for and by delivering policy guidance on how to deal with burning issues in these fields through enhanced national legislation.

70. As members of the Parliamentary Assembly, we have a duty to raise awareness in our respective national parliaments of the importance of education and culture, including by disseminating information on Council of Europe activities. We have to ensure visibility in our countries of our joint work as a pan-European parliamentary body. In addition, there is a range of actions that our Assembly could implement to support the development of cultural and educational policies:

- offer advisory services to national parliaments and their committees, *inter alia* based on the results of governmental and parliamentary monitoring exercises;
- raise awareness about the Council of Europe's policies and initiatives, describing them in terms that will more easily be understood and accepted by national parliaments;
- facilitate exchanges of experience between national parliaments' education and culture committees;
- organise briefing sessions (seminars, round tables, lectures, etc.) for members of parliaments, committee staff and other parliamentary officials (including staff of the parliamentary political groups);
- help build parliamentary documentation and research facilities in the context of capacity building for parliaments, fostering the free flow of information, knowledge and data, using relevant existing Council of Europe information tools and sources.

71. The Parliamentary Assembly should encourage collaborative project design between the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Bearing in mind that, following Articles 165.3 and 167.3 of the TFEU, the European Union and its member States shall foster co-operation with the Council of Europe in the spheres of culture and education, the Council of Europe should be proactive in reinforcing such co-operation.

72. The Assembly should welcome the existing joint programmes in these areas, ranging from country-specific³⁸ and regional³⁹ to thematically-focused pan-European programmes;⁴⁰ and it should call for the development of a new pan-European programme aimed at putting into practice the recommendations of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity" and of Assembly [Recommendation 1975 \(2011\)](#) "Living together in 21st-century Europe: follow-up to the report of the Group of Eminent Persons

36. *Ibid.*, paragraph 13.

37. *Ibid.*, paragraph 15.

38. For example, the Joint programme on Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Turkey (2011-2014, total: €5.8 million) and the European Union/Council of Europe Support to the promotion of cultural diversity in Kosovo (2009-2012, total: €2.5 million). [All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council [Resolution 1244](#) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.]

39. For example, a programme for South-East Europe "Ljubljana Process II: Rehabilitating our Common Heritage" (2011-2014, total: €500 000).

40. For example, the Joint programme on Intercultural mediation for Roma communities (2011-2012, total: €1 million), the Joint programme on European Cultural Routes (2011-2013, total: €300 000), and the Joint programme on Intercultural cities (2011-2013, total: €666 000).

of the Council of Europe". Moreover, country-specific programmes on democratic citizenship and human rights education, similar to the one targeted to Turkey, could be envisaged for other countries in Europe and, possibly, beyond.

73. The Assembly should also seek closer contacts and joint work with the European Parliament in these fields. I believe the Assembly is well placed to become the hub of European inter-parliamentary co-operation in the fields of culture and education.

74. Finally, debates and informal co-ordination of national educational and cultural policies must be strengthened within the Parliamentary Assembly.

4. Conclusions: Towards enhanced cultural and educational policies in Europe

4.1. Promoting policies for culture and education that foster democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue

75. Cultural and educational policies are fundamental to sustaining our common core values – human rights, democracy and the rule of law – and are pivotal to a cohesive society where people live together in dignity. Education and culture are the foundations of citizens' empowerment.

76. Policy making in the field of culture and education should be designed to:

- ensure adequate education opportunities for all and actively promote participation in cultural life;
- develop deeply rooted attachment to democratic values and human rights and people's ability to make choices in a responsible and critical manner;
- value inter-culturality and uphold a positive attitude towards diversity, thus reinforcing the opportunities for intercultural dialogue and encouraging cultural and educational exchanges across borders, removing administrative barriers to such exchanges;
- promote (individual and collective) creativity and innovation, and awake consciousness on the need for sustainable use of resources in the framework of our global economies.

77. In this perspective, programmes and projects aimed at promoting democratic culture, intercultural dialogue and education for human rights and democratic citizenship should continue to receive our support and be part of the Council of Europe's priorities. In particular, parliaments could invite governments to report on actions taken to implement the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity" (2008), launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial Session, and of Assembly [Recommendation 1975 \(2011\)](#) "Living together in 21st-century Europe: follow-up to the report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe".

78. Furthermore, the Assembly should welcome the proposal by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to initiate work on a European framework of competences for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding and should suggest making it part of the Organisation's Programme of Activities for the next biennium.

79. Parliaments should take advantage of the tools available at European level, such as the Council of Europe Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe and the Intercultural Cities Index, in their policy work, and in particular in the setting of cultural policies and strategies aimed at living together in dignity.

80. Particular attention should be paid to introducing intercultural learning and practice in the initial and in-service training of teachers and educators, and as part of the Council of Europe in-service training programmes for teachers, such as the Pestalozzi Programme.

4.2. Enhancing the role of national parliaments and of the Parliamentary Assembly in setting policies for education and culture

81. National parliaments should reaffirm their attachment to culture and education as essential pillars of our democratic systems. They should re-engage in a broad debate on these policies and encourage people's participation in the debate and the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in policy reforms. Policy making in the fields of culture and education should better combine the need to provide adequate responses to short-term needs and a long-term perspective: parliaments should provide vision and a coherent strategy. The proposed legislation should be more comprehensive, based on a holistic approach which pays due attention to multiple challenges and to the global context.

82. Parliaments should also be better equipped to exercise their oversight function, *inter alia* by being adequately informed by governments and by keeping close contacts with relevant stakeholders in the field of culture and education, and in particular with civil society organisations.

83. Parliaments should reinforce inter-parliamentary co-operation at regional and European levels, as well as co-operation between national parliaments, on the one hand, and the European Parliament (as regards the European Union member States) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on the other.

84. National delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly should be encouraged to set up, in their respective parliaments, the arrangements necessary to ensure proper information of the relevant parliamentary committees on Council of Europe activities in the field of education and culture. They could establish a checklist and set up a roadmap for the implementation of policy instruments agreed upon at the level of the Council of Europe.

85. Our Assembly should create new opportunities for dialogue with national parliaments (their relevant committees), seeking to uphold the role of national parliaments as policy makers in the areas of culture and education and to increase the visibility of Assembly and Council of Europe work and its impact on national policy making. In addition to the Council of Europe relevant conventions,⁴¹ the Appendix to this memorandum lists a selection of texts adopted by our Assembly in recent years and of other Council of Europe instruments. We should seek to make these texts and instruments better known and encourage national parliaments to make better use of them.

86. Finally, the Assembly should also strive to strengthen co-operation with the European Parliament in the fields of education and culture, involving relevant committees, and, where appropriate, develop joint actions at European level, strengthening the European dimension of cultural and educational policies.

41. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5, 1950), and namely its Protocol No. 1 (ETS No. 9, 1952) (Article 2 of the Protocol); European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18, 1954); European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (ETS No. 93, 1977) (in particular Articles 6, 14 and 15); European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148, 1992); Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157, 1995) (in particular Articles 6, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17); European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163, 1996) (in particular Articles 7, 10 and 17); Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165, 1997); Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, 2005).

Appendix – Recent Council of Europe instruments in the field of cultural and educational policies

A. Parliamentary Assembly resolutions and recommendations (selection)

– Education

[Resolution 1907 \(2012\)](#) on governance of higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area

[Resolution 1906 \(2012\)](#) and [Recommendation 2005 \(2012\)](#) on the consolidation and international openness of the European Higher Education Area

[Resolution 1904 \(2012\)](#) on the right to freedom of choice in education in Europe

[Resolution 1803 \(2011\)](#) and [Recommendation 1965 \(2011\)](#) on education against violence at school

[Recommendation 1892 \(2009\)](#) on the contribution of the Council of Europe to the development of the European Higher Education Area

[Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) on cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education

[Recommendation 1849 \(2008\)](#) “For the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education

[Recommendation 1836 \(2008\)](#) on realising the full potential of e-learning for education and training

[Recommendation 1720 \(2005\)](#) on education and religion

Under preparation: Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge (Rapporteur: Ms Komar) ([Doc. 12256](#))

– Culture

[Recommendation 2001 \(2012\)](#) on the protection of and access to the audiovisual cultural heritage

[Recommendation 1990 \(2012\)](#) on the right of everyone to take part in cultural life

[Resolution 1883 \(2012\)](#) on Jewish cemeteries

[Recommendation 1975 \(2011\)](#) on living together in 21st-century Europe: follow-up to the report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe

[Recommendation 1962 \(2011\)](#) on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue

[Resolution 1743 \(2010\)](#) and [Recommendation 1927 \(2010\)](#) on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe

[Recommendation 1942 \(2010\)](#) on a balanced approach to the rescuing of archaeological finds from development projects

[Recommendation 1884 \(2009\)](#) on cultural education: the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education

B. Committee of Ministers recommendations (selection)

Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)6 on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching

Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)4 on education for global interdependence and solidarity

Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)7 on national film policies and the diversity of cultural expressions

Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12 on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 on the public responsibility for higher education and research

Recommendation Rec(2006)5 on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015

Recommendation Rec(2005)13 on the governance and management of university heritage

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

C. Other instruments

Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together as Equals in Dignity” (2008)

Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe, “Living together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe” (2011)

The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe is a unique reference work on European cultural policies and an online information and monitoring system, available at www.culturalpolicies.net/

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. See the main project web site: www.coe.int/interculturalcities

The Pestalozzi Programme of the Council of Europe