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Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2014 (2013)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2014 (2013) on “Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge” and has brought it to the attention of member States’ governments. It has also forwarded it to the relevant intergovernmental bodies for information and possible comments.²

2. The Committee of Ministers believes that education – both formal and informal – plays an essential part in preparing young people for democratic citizenship, integration into the world of work and life in multicultural democratic societies. Within the framework of the 2014-2015 biennium, the Secretary General is proposing to introduce programmes designed to support member States in their efforts to ensure the integration of young people into society and enable them to acquire, in all educational contexts, formal and non-formal, the competences needed for engaging in active citizenship, based on European values. In particular, this area of action includes the development of model guidelines designed to develop such competences. In this context, consideration will be given to possibilities for undertaking further work along the lines of the Assembly’s proposals concerning the definition of principles for the recognition and validation of non-formal education, the collection of good practices and the development of policy guidelines relating to the points set out in paragraph 1.2. However, in view of the current budgetary constraints which require substantial savings, it is not possible to undertake activities which go beyond the priorities identified for the next biennium, such as the one proposed by the Assembly in paragraph 2.

3. It should be recalled that the Council of Europe’s activities aiming to further the fair recognition of qualifications are rooted in the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention, ETS 165), which covers both formal and – in Article IV.8 – non-traditional qualifications. They also draw on the principles developed more recently through the framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and compatible national qualifications frameworks.

4. At the same time, the Committee of Ministers shares the concern of the Parliamentary Assembly as regards early school dropout and violence at school. In this context, it would underline that Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education seeks to address these worrying trends. Quality education, amongst other things, implies providing a secure and non-violent learning environment in which the rights of all are respected. The recommendation also stresses that quality education means inclusive education, offering good opportunities to all, and encouraging pupils and students to complete the educational programmes in which they enrol. Close co-operation is planned with the member States in the coming years in order to develop, as appropriate, the policies and practices needed for implementing the principles of quality education.

1. Adopted at the 1187th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (11 December 2013).

2. Steering Committee on Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE), European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) and Joint Council on Youth (CMJ).

