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The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education and culture

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2217 (2021)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2217 \(2021\)](#) “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education and culture”. The recommendation has been brought to the attention of the governments of the member States and forwarded to the relevant committees for information and possible comments.²

2. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly’s interest in and commitment to promoting the education and culture sectors. Like the Assembly, it recognises the central role of education and culture for democratic stability in Europe and the importance of active citizenship, particularly among young people, to collectively address the numerous social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

3. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers points to its own Recommendation on the role of culture, cultural heritage and landscape in helping to address global challenges, adopted at its 132nd Session on 20 May 2022 in Turin. This recommendation highlights the potential of culture, cultural heritage and landscape for helping to address challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and enhancing the quality of life in a constantly evolving society, marked by the accelerating impact of digital technologies. It recommends, in this context, the further development of a new understanding of cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources and proposes strategy lines for sustainable development policies.

4. The Committee of Ministers thanks the Assembly for the proposals set out in paragraph 4 of its recommendation and wishes to inform it that several of the initiatives proposed are already included in the present Council of Europe education sector programme. For example, the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) is currently developing a standard-setting instrument for inclusive quality education, hinging both on existing standards – including the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on ensuring quality education³ – and co-operation programmes geared to providing support for vulnerable groups. The CDEDU will also be drawing up a multilateral policy instrument on the development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) in education. This instrument will focus on the ethical, responsible and appropriate pedagogical use of artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education. The Committee of Ministers intends to closely monitor these activities while noting the importance of prior research into the consequences, positive or otherwise, of using online and hybrid tools, particularly in education for young people, including in non-formal education and learning. Furthermore, the Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe has decided to devote its first thematic report to: “Pandemics and natural disasters as reflected in history teaching”, with a publication planned for 2022.

1. Adopted at the 1437th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (15 June 2022).

2. Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) and Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU).

3. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2012\)13](#).



5. Regarding the Assembly's proposal in paragraph 4.2 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers informs the Assembly that guidelines aimed at supporting equitable partnerships between teaching establishments and the private sector have been drawn up within the CDEDU and a framework for monitoring their implementation is being prepared.

6. Where paragraph 4.3 of the recommendation is concerned, the Committee of Ministers notes the Assembly's proposal to create guidance for innovative approaches and partnerships between the education and culture sectors to implement the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). It recalls in this connection the conclusions of the Informal Conference of Education Ministers held on 20 October 2020 under the Greek Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, which, in addition to proposals for action on the Council of Europe education response to the Covid-19 pandemic, opened the way by organising discussion on the use of education to build awareness of cultural heritage at risk from climate change.

7. To conclude, in reply to paragraph 4.4 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers backs the Assembly's proposal to co-operate with the European Union to support innovative projects in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It mentions in this connection its recommendation on developing and promoting digital citizenship education⁴ which identifies possible initiatives, including the creation of a repository of knowledge and resources linked to digital citizenship education which could include examples of the cross-curricular integration of digital citizenship education in learning. This initiative, and other initiatives proposed, could be given further consideration.

4. Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)10](#).