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Learning to Live Together:
a Shared Commitment to Democracy
Conference on the Future of Citizenship
and Human Rights Education in Europe
Strasbourg, 20 – 22 June 2017

Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes
on Education for Democratic Citizenship and
Human Rights

I. DECLARATION

The Conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe held in Strasbourg on 20-22 June 2017, involving representatives of public authorities, education professionals, and non-governmental organisations active in the education and youth fields:

Confirming its shared commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

Affirming education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (hereafter "EDC/HRE") as an integral part of the right to education;

Expressing concern at the serious challenges to democracy and human rights in Europe today, in particular the growing exclusion, discrimination and polarisation in our societies; the increasing use of populist and nationalist discourse; the disillusion with traditional democratic processes; the rise of terrorism and violent extremism; and the slow progress made in overcoming the barriers to the successful integration of migrants and refugees in our societies;

Taking note of the Declaration and the Action Plan 2015-2017 adopted at the 125th Session of the Committee of Ministers (2015) on "the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism";

Taking note of the Action Plan on "Building Inclusive Societies" (2016-2019) adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2016;

Referring to the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE (hereafter "the Charter") adopted to support follow-up to the Declaration and Action Plan on the future of the European Court of Human Rights;

Referring to the Final Declaration of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education adopted at its 25th session in Brussels in 2016, which calls on the Committee of Ministers to instruct the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice to consider ways of increasing the impact of the Charter, and to assist member states in implementing the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture;

Recognising the important contribution EDC/HRE will make to the achievement of UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education, in particular target 4.7;

Recognising that EDC/HRE is a responsibility of a wide range of actors, including public authorities, and not only education and youth actors;

Concerned by the potential misuse of EDC/HRE to promote populist and nationalistic agendas, and the associated undermining of the values underpinning EDC/HRE;

Taking into consideration the findings of the Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe 2017 (hereafter "the Report"), and *bearing in mind* the importance of an integrated and comprehensive cross-sectoral approach, covering all articles of the Charter and bringing together all key actors, public authorities and civil society acting together in a lifelong-learning perspective;

Calls on the Council of Europe, its member states, and all relevant actors to renew their commitment to the Charter's implementation to further enhance EDC/HRE, and drawing on the Report, highlights the following Key Actions for the next phase of this effort.

II. KEY ACTIONS¹

Policy

1. Include EDC/HRE in national, regional and local policy and practices for formal and non-formal education including youth work.

Implementation

2. Ensure quality, balanced provision of EDC/HRE in all areas and types of education, with specific attention paid to areas where EDC/HRE is less present such as pre-school education, vocational education and training, and higher education.
3. Recognise the value and strengthen the capacity of education professionals and educators in civil society², and empower them through training and other support.

Co-operation

4. Strengthen the commitment of, and co-operation, co-ordination and shared ownership between public authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society, including through public debate and consultations involving, amongst others, youth and student organisations, in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices regarding EDC/HRE.

Access, visibility and relevance

5. Ensure access to EDC/HRE, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups, including young people who are not in education or training.
6. Increase the visibility of the Charter amongst all current and potential stakeholders, including examples of how it can be implemented, through awareness-raising, advocacy, relevant policy measures, capacity building and other targeted initiatives.
7. Collect and promote examples of learning practice illustrating the relevance of EDC/HRE to everyday life, with particular attention given to the experiences of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Assessment, evaluation and research

8. Consistently integrate EDC/HRE in curricula, and develop appropriate programme and process evaluation and assessment tools.
9. Make full use of available data and support systematic evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of EDC/HRE programmes.

¹ Key Actions and Expected Outcomes are numbered for convenience, and do not indicate order of priority

² Many civil society organisations play a role in EDC/HRE. These include, but are not limited to youth organisations, student organisations, teacher associations, trade unions, parents associations, and other groups or individuals in the education, youth and other fields

10. Develop partnerships with higher education institutions, research institutes and other relevant organisations to develop and promote research in this area.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The above activities, undertaken by a range of actors, should be guided by, and aim to achieve, the following outcomes (“We want...”)

Policy

1. EDC/HRE relevant to everyday life, and a shared understanding of EDC/HRE, including between and within professions, recognising its relevance in professional development.
2. “Whole-school”/“whole-institution” approaches to EDC/HRE emphasising participatory decision-making and the systematic consultation and involvement of children, youth and student organisations in developing policies and practices regarding EDC/HRE.

Implementation

3. Measures promoting EDC/HRE in all forms and at all levels of education, with particular attention to pre-school education, vocational education and training, and higher education.
4. New educational and advocacy resources for EDC/HRE, in digital format where possible, supporting education and training by and of all actors, in addition to the use of existing Council of Europe materials.
5. Use of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in implementing the Charter and achieving its aims.
6. Sustainable financial resources available for civil society organisations to provide EDC/HRE.
7. Digital dimensions of citizenship and human rights reflected in curricula and resources for learning EDC/HRE.
8. EDC/HRE promoted to education professionals, youth workers, trainers and stakeholders in formal and non-formal education through activities co-organised with relevant national authorities responsible for education and youth and National Youth Councils.
9. EDC/HRE integrated into education and youth policies and youth work at local level, including as part of the training curricula of education professionals, youth workers, youth leaders and facilitators of formal and non-formal education activities.

Co-operation

10. International cooperation programmes on EDC/HRE involving key stakeholders at national level, including youth exchange programmes reflecting EDC/HRE objectives and programmes which, amongst other things, promote the exchange of best practice between youth and other civil society organisations.
11. Guidelines for collaborative approaches and transparent processes in reviewing the outreach and quality of EDC/HRE at national level.

12. Mechanisms for cooperation and co-ordination of EDC/HRE across sectors at national level, including representatives of formal and non-formal education providers and other actors and beneficiaries.

Access, visibility and relevance

13. Removal of obstacles to EDC/HRE, including gender inequality and other barriers preventing young people and vulnerable groups from accessing their human rights.
14. Charter and other EDC/HRE materials accessible to all including through translations into local languages, including regional and minority languages.

Assessment, evaluation and research

15. Enhanced quality EDC/HRE notably by connecting EDC/HRE with recognised frameworks of competences, and through common criteria for evaluation across member states and by providers of EDC/HRE through non-formal education.
16. Tools and resources for evaluating the implementation of EDC/HRE programmes and processes in formal and non-formal education, including analysis and dissemination of data on effectiveness of EDC/HRE and examples of good practice.
17. Quality criteria/indicators for EDC/HRE, in formal and non-formal learning contexts at national level, consistently applied across Europe, as part of wider efforts towards achieving UN Agenda 2030 SDG4.
18. Independent, systematic and inclusive research on EDC/HRE at national and international level.

Institutional

19. Council of Europe contribution to the UN 2030 review process highlighting in particular the role of EDC/HRE in supporting achievement of SDG4.7