

## Human Rights and Democracy in Action

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by the European Union  
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by the Council of Europe

# Democratic Culture in Action - democratic competences in the digital era

**Country name**  
BULGARIA

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**Final Narrative Report**

**1.12.2016 – 30.9.2017**

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### ***List of acronyms used in the report***

CDC	Competences for Democratic Culture
CoE	Council of Europe
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EDC/HRE	Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

## 1. Description

<b>Name of Coordinator of the grant contract:</b>	<b>Open Education Centre Foundation</b>
<b>Name and title of the contact person:</b>	<b>Prof.Rumen Valchev Program director</b>
<b>Name of beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in the Action:</b>	
<b>Title of the Action:</b>	<b>Human Rights and Democracy in Action Democratic Culture in Action – Democratic Competences in Digital era</b>
<b>Reporting period:</b>	<b>1.12.2016 – 31/10/2017</b>
<b>Target country(ies) or region(s):</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>
<b>Final beneficiaries &amp;/or target groups<sup>1</sup>:</b>	<b>Teachers, students, teacher trainers, parents in participating countries</b>

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<sup>1</sup> "Target groups" are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level, and "final beneficiaries" are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

## 2. Assessment of implementation of Project activities

### *Executive summary of the Project*

The overall goal for Open Education Centre was to contribute to the dissemination and of the implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Competences for Democratic Culture and to explore the development of the competencies in Digital era. The Project has been developed in partnership with NGO's from Armenia, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Czech Republic and Belarus.

Under the Project has been realized review of the educational standards of civic education in their relation to the Framework of CDC. In focus groups with educators and with students have been explored the digital competence of the students and the participation of the students in social media.

In order to disseminate the Framework on CDC and the ideas for social media literacy and digital citizenship training have been realized five two day trainings with 150 educators in five different regions of the country.

The Project introduced the model of competences for democratic culture and the need of social media literacy and digital citizenship education into the educational debate in the country.

### *Results and Activities*

#### **Expected Project Outcomes:**

- The project brought the impact on national educational policy and strategies at following levels:
- Presenting the Competences for Democratic Culture to the teachers and teachers' associations in the country.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for implementation of Competences for Democratic Culture into teaching about, through and with social media in Bulgaria.
- Provide concrete proposal for development of social media curriculum based on CDC in the participating countries.
- Prepare a review on the set of civic and social competencies in Bulgarian education in its relation to the Framework of the Competences for democratic culture developed by the Council of Europe.
- Exploring the way young people use social media.

- Preparing a set of educational materials on media literacy and digital citizenship based on the Framework of competences for democratic culture.

### **Main activities:**

#### **Activity 1– Literature and curriculum review**

Literature and curriculum review was the first activity realized under the Project. We have commissioned two reviews to experts

Emil Mutafchiev University for National and World Economy “Educational Standards, The Law on Preschool and School Education and the Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture”

Krassimira Damjanova Europedirect, Haskovo “Digital Literacy, Media Literacy, Social Media and the Framework on competences for democratic culture”.

As well a report have been elaborated by Rumen Valchev and have been presented at the first partners meeting in Strasbourg.

#### **Activity 2 Kick off meeting in Strasbourg Assessment of how competences are currently reflected in the education system. Reaching common understanding how competencies are reflected in the education system of the partners countries**

Open Education Centre participated in the kick of meeting in Strasbourg. Rumen Valchev and Virginia Valova participated in the meeting. There has been presented the report on Bulgaria but there was not enough time for a real discussion and reaching an understanding how competences are reflected in the educational systems of partners countries.

#### **Activity 3 Focus groups with teachers (two FG in each country) collecting their opinions and needs related to the CDC and its implementation in the digital space.**

Aiming at the realization of this activity we have decided to organize two focus groups with students. This was one of the suggestions of the meeting in Strasbourg.

#### **Therefore we had two focus groups with educators:**

Sofia 27.3.2017 20 participants

Haskovo 5.4.2017 10 participants

**We have realized 2 focus groups with students**

Sofia 23.3.2017 13 students

Haskovo 10.4.2017 15 students

**Activity 4 Team-sharing of national reports including best-practice: connecting with i) Charter on EDC/HRE and ii) own project research (results from focus groups). Development of a common approach which will encompass the specificities and context of the participating countries. Team-sharing will be held in form of on-line virtual conferences. - 35 workshops for educators (5 in each country) using this approach. - Development of materials for teachers (e. g. discussion topics, games, dummy classes, theatre) which will provide insight to students about democratic competences through new didactical approaches.**

We did translate the main content of the focus groups discussions and did publish it on our site and did share with our partners.

After discussions with our partners we did decide to apply an approach on our own for the realization of the training with teachers

In fact we managed to organize 1 one day and 4 two day trainings with teachers based on the official letter from the deputy minister of education

**Sofia 3 July 32 educators**

**Haskovo 13-14 July 33 educators**

**Burgas 11-12 September 21 educators**

**Pleven 16-17 September 28 educators**

**Kardjali 26-27 September 40 educators.**

Trainers were Rumén Valchev and Virginia Valova and based on the agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science the participating teachers have received 1 credit valid for

in service teachers training.

As a result of the training the **teachers have prepared more than 70 lessons** (some of the teachers worked in small groups) on digital citizenship and media literacy. All the lessons are published on the OEC site [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) and **five lessons have been translated into English and published on the site.**

#### **Activity 5 Second partner meeting in RO: preparation of the strategy paper.**

For the second partners meeting in Bucharest we have prepared presentation with main conclusions from the work in focus groups, country review and with presentation of the teachers training concept.

#### **Activity 6 Strategy paper – summary of national research, suggestions from the meetings and best practices toolkit.**

We went ahead with suggestion to be included in the strategic paper during the Bucharest meeting and we have report of our own which has been published in the site and as well have been presented to the ministry of education.

#### **Impact on target groups**

##### ***Please describe the impact of the project on target groups.***

The project is small so we have to be cautious when talking about the impact

We could talk about the impact on the teachers-participants in the trainings.

**Awareness building.** They had an opportunity to think about CDC as a whole and not just a sum of separate unconnected competences.

They had explored the digital literacy and the role of social media for the students and for their socialization.

The students had as well the opportunity to develop their awareness about social media and their participation in it, but, of course the Project had been directed mainly toward teachers and educators, so the impact on students is minimal

## **Outputs**

***Please list all materials (and no. of copies) produced during the project stating how the items produced are being distributed and to whom.***

### **Three reviews**

**Emil Mutafchiev** “**Educational standards, Law on Preschool and School Education and the Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture**”, Review has been presented as an working material to educator trainings and has been presented to the Ministry of Education and Science, to the deputy minister Tanya Michailova and to the experts responsible for civic education and to the national coordinator for EDC and HR.

**Krasimira Damjanova** “**Digital Literacy, Media Literacy, Social Media and the Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture**”. Review has been presented as an working material to educator trainings and has been presented to the Ministry of Education and Science, to the deputy minister Tanya Michailova and to the experts responsible for civic education and to the national coordinator for EDC and HR. The Review has been translated into English and is published on the site of OEC [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com)

**Rumen Valchev** **Review of the situation in Formal and Non-Formal Education in the light of the Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture**, presented to the first partners meeting in Strasbourg, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Review has been presented as an working material to educator trainings and has been presented to the Ministry of Education and Science, to the deputy minister Tanya Michailova and to the experts responsible for civic education and to the national coordinator for EDC and HR

### **Educational materials**

**72 lessons prepared by the educators participants in the five seminars “Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture and Digital Citizenship Education”**. The lessons have been published on the [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) . Five of the lessons have been translated into English and have been published on the OEC site as well.



The lessons have been presented to our partners Union of Bulgarian Teachers, Initiatives for International Co-operation and disseminated through their structures.

**Site of the Project** [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com)

A special part of the site of Open Education Centre has been developed in order to present and to reflect Project developments – there have been published all materials, all documents, all products developed by the educators under the Project. The site is in two languages – English and Bulgarian.

**Focus Groups records**

Records of all four focus groups ( two for educators and two for students) discussions have been transcribed and published into the OEC site [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) .

**Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture** has been translated from English to Bulgarian and published on OEC site [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) The copy has been Presented to the national EDC and HR coordinator for Bulgaria Krasimira Todorova and is expected the Framework to be published in 2018.

**Strategy Paper “Developing competences for democratic culture in digital era”** developed under the Project has been translated into Bulgarian published into the OEC site [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) and disseminated through our partners. The Paper has been presented to the Ministry of Education and Science.

**National Report on the “Democracy in Action – Democratic Competences in Digital Era”** has been elaborated by Rumen Valchev. The Report has been disseminated through our partners, published into the site of the Project [www.openedubg.com](http://www.openedubg.com) and have been presented to the Ministry of Education.

### **Activities that have not taken place**

*Please outline any activity and/or publications foreseen in the contract, that have not taken place, explaining the reasons for these.*

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## **3. Conclusions and Lessons Learned**

### **3.1 Conclusions**

Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture realisation requires a paradigmatic change in the way curricula have been built in the field of social studies.

The concept is not an easy one to be presented and it requires a lot of time, efforts, public debate and the agreement of its realization to be accomplished. The implementation of the Framework will be a long process because basically all curricula has to be reconstructed based on the Framework.

In Bulgaria it is difficult because in 2016 the new educational standards have been elaborated and at least couple of years have to pass before they have to be changed.

Now the most important is to start the awareness building process and in the same time to start the dissemination of the Framework. This could happen as well in starting public discussion on competences in social studies.

Our trainings where the Framework has been presented and analysed did show several things.

At first Bulgarian educators are still not well acquainted with the competence based approach in elaborating curriculum.

At second they do passively accept the proposed changes or new concepts and ideas and therefore they will not be active in the process of their implementation.

That's why the introduction and the implementation of the Framework requires officially started and supported by the Ministry public debate. The implementation of the Framework should be developed as a priority educational policy.

In Bulgarian case the good news is that the new educational standards in civic education, intercultural education, health education and environmental education are developed exactly on competence based approach. Our reviews of the standards and of the other normative documents had shown in many case the competences there do coincide or overlap with most of the Framework competences.

The better thing is that in a public debate and through the realization of a training scheme there is an unique opportunity to clarify, to develop and to complement the competence list with the competences from the Framework.

The other important conclusion from our Project is that we could not start working and training all the teachers (or at least the teachers from so called social studies).Our experience showed (and we have worked with 150 educators) that we have to focus our efforts in the innovative teachers, the teachers who are developing courses of their own.

The training should aim at making them to understand and to accept to Framework of competences and based on it in assisting them to develop their courses.

The last conclusion is that we that the Framework appears in the right moment because as we could see the young people do live more and more in a digital world and there is no attempts or courses who could prepare them how to live and to behave in this new world and how to develop their citizenship in these new conditions.

As well it could be a good start for the teachers who are developing courses in such new fields as digital citizenship, digital literacy, global education, education for sustainable development. They could use the Framework as a perfect starting point in their efforts to design teaching courses and to develop educational materials.

### **3.2 Lessons learned**

***Please describe what has worked well and what has not worked well in the project.***

The project was too small and in the same time too ambitious – in a short period within limited time not only to introduce CDC but as well to explore social media and their role for building citizenship

So it was just explorative one setting problems and building the general framework

The educators involved did express their interest in the Framework. Those of them who are really engaged in their work do need a foundation of their efforts, foundation on which their school programs have been built and the Framework of CDC gives this opportunity.

The teachers did share that a big advantage of the network is the detailed description of the competences. Up to now there were only very abstract formulated competences and they could not see their role as setters for their program design efforts.

The other important lesson is that from the acquaintance with the Framework to the stage where the set of competences is used for building educational programs and the change of the educational process there is a long way and the special training should be introduced. Because in our trainings we had very different educators from different subject fields we could see that the most appropriate was the acceptance and understanding of the social studies teachers. They did react to the framework they did express the desire to go further to participate in the implementation process and that they could use the Framework as a building stone in their programme design efforts.

The next lesson is that we could test the Framework and its validity in developing digital citizenship programs. This is the world where young people do live and in this digital world they will develop and in which they will realise their citizenship. Still the question is opened whether this set of competences is enough or we should add some other competences (digital competence for example or several competences which will exemplify digital competence).

From the focus groups with the students realised the main conclusion is that our educational system lags far behind the real developments in the lives of the students. The emergence of the digital world, the socialization in this world are not processes reflected in educational programs and policies. And it is more than urgent to develop policies and programs in this direction because the young people do enter and function into this digital world completely unprepared.

The next lesson is how much important is the role of the educational authorities – they are defining educational policies, curricula, educational standards and they have to lead the process of introduction and implementation of the framework on CDC, they have to launch the public debate.

And the realization of the Project gave us more clear vision of the role of social media on the lives of the young people. They do influence their lives more and more, the young people do spend growing amount of their time in these media but in the same time they do interact and live theirs on very daily level and do not use the media for building and developing social relationships or in another way their functioning in social media has no social dimensions at all.

### **3.3 Cross-cutting issues**

***Explain how the project has mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as promotion of human rights, gender equality, democracy, good governance, children's rights, etc.***

One of the main components of the training with educator was the analysis of the framework and therefore one of the main questions discussed was the Human Rights – human dignity, freedom, respect for human rights, tolerance as a competence.

So the framework is a good point for discussing and analyzing Human Rights and Freedoms in a very constructive and an abstract way.

The second important point is that we had included digital citizenship idea as another main point of our trainings. In exploring the idea of digital citizenship once again we came to the point – how human rights and freedoms are realized in this emerging digital world – once again the crucial points of freedom, human dignity, tolerance , respect for human rights, gender equality , freedom of expression were among the main points on discussion.

The important point is that training on Framework of CDC could be developed about the exploration, analysis and realization of Human Rights in this new world.

### **3.4 Sustainability**

***Describe the main achievements in guaranteeing the sustainability of project results.***

As a component with a paradigmatic importance as it is Framework of CDC it is not so easy to ensure its sustainability.

The first point for sustainability that this new concept and approach has to be integrated normatively which is a task impossible to be accomplished without the support and the leading role of the Ministry of Education.

The second point of sustainability is this approach and concepts to be accepted by the educators, the evident resistances to be overcome. With the project we just showed the road this could happen – awareness building process, exploration and critical analysis of the project, open debate, focusing on the central elements, looking at the implementation of the Framework in one's own work.

In order to become sustainable and to realize the objectives of the projects such training scheme should be developed in the future.

The exploration of the realization of the competences in the new digital reality should be one of the main paths for sustainability – this will raise the interest toward the scheme because it is really important and useful tool which will be helpful for the educators. We just introduce the training model how to build awareness and to present the Framework. The Ministry of Education support is crucial for the realization of the plan. All social studies teachers should be acquainted with the model.

We have translated the main document – The Framework.

We had shown the road - how the teachers to prepare education materials and even courses based on CDC Framework.

### **3.5 Evaluation**

***Please describe how and by whom the project activities has been evaluated. Please summarize the results of the feedback received, including from beneficiaries.***

We had short teachers evaluation by the end of each training but there was not a mechanism of evaluation. The teachers assessed highly the Framework on CDC and would like the Framework to be implemented. The teachers mentioned that the time for exploring and analyzing the Framework was insufficient and they proposed a special training to be developed. According to the teachers the training should have very practical focus – how the Framework should be implemented in their work.

As about the development of the democratic competences in digital era the teachers again had stated that there are no program and no curriculum, that they need a training which will build their competences in the field and will help them to develop educational courses on digital literacy, educational literacy and digital citizenship.

### **3.6 Follow-up**

***Describe if the project will continue after the support from the donor has ended. Are there any follow up activities envisaged? What will ensure the sustainability of the project?***

The evident follow up is the continuation of the process of introducing the framework and to begin its implementation. Basically there is an agreement on behalf of the ministry and the Minister of education did engage himself with this process on the meeting of the Ministers of Education.

The second thing is that the Ministry has to elaborate a plan of action how this process is going to happen.

An important task in the beginning is to redesign the set of standards in social sciences which have been accepted in 2016.

The next step should be a solid system of training for teachers who has to understand the Framework and to use it in building and designing their educational programs. This should happen using own resources but supports for such programs and policies on behalf of COE is always important and not necessarily this support should be financial one.

#### 4. Visibility

The visibility of the Project has been ensured with several reports sent to the ministry of education, with meetings with the chairman of educational commission of the Bulgarian parliament Mrs. Milena Damjanova and with the deputy minister Mrs Tanja Michailova, with meetings with the heads of the educational inspectorates of the Ministry in Kardjali, Pleven, Burgas and Haskovo. All trainings of educators had been opened by the civic education experts from the local inspectorate of Ministry of Education.

All educational materials developed by the teachers during the trainings have been posted into the site of Open Education and have been sent to our partners but of course it is far from enough.

We hope that the Framework on Democratic Competences translated under the Project will be published by the Ministry of Education next year.

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*Updated action plan*