



Ljubljana 2010



MED-23-14

**Council of Europe Standing Conference of
Ministers of Education**

**“Education for Sustainable Democratic Societies:
the Role of Teachers”**

23rd session

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 4-5 June 2010

Declaration on the Conference Theme

We, the European Ministers of Education,¹ meeting in Ljubljana and Brdo on the occasion of the 23rd session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference, hereby adopt the present declaration:

1. CONSIDERING the Action Plan of the Third Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), which provides that education is one of the “essential enabling factors for effective implementation of Council of Europe core values in our societies” and that “the tasks of building a knowledge-based society and promoting a democratic culture among our citizens require increased efforts of the Council of Europe in the field of education”;
2. REFERRING to the Standing Conference held in Athens (10-12 November 2003), at which we discussed the importance of professional development for teachers in the implementation of new strategies and working methods for managing the new situations arising in our schools and resolving conflicts in a non-violent way;
3. REFERRING to the Declaration of the 22nd session of our Conference in Istanbul (4-5 May 2007) recognising that “the full enjoyment of the right to education is essential to sustainable, cohesive and democratic societies” and in which we identified certain competences for fostering democratic culture and social cohesion, including intercultural, social and language skills;
4. REFERRING to the Resolution on the 2008-2010 programme of activities of the Council of Europe in the field of education adopted at the Istanbul Conference (4-5 May 2007), in which we recommended “promoting, in member states, education and training for teachers, trainers, school heads and other educational staff in the formal and non-formal sectors in order to make teaching staff better qualified and more professional”;
5. RECALLING the establishment as of 2010, of the European Higher Education Area, as well as the important contribution of the Council of Europe to this Area and to the Bologna Process having led to its establishment;
6. RECOGNISING that, in times of global economic crisis, European societies are facing many challenges such as increasing inequality and social exclusion, which threaten the fundamental principles of socially sustainable societies including equal opportunities and social justice;
7. UNDERLINING the role and contribution of education in taking up these challenges and, more particularly, the role of teachers at all levels, from pre-primary through higher education to lifelong learning, as professionals and agents of change with an educational and social mission;

¹ and of Higher Education

8. **CONSIDERING** that all teachers and other education professionals are one of the essential pillars of the process of building sustainable democratic societies and need to develop the necessary transversal competences; these are interrelated knowledge, skills and attitudes enabling teachers to model democratic and participatory processes based on respect for human rights, diversity and human dignity;
9. **REAFFIRMING** our commitment to continued action to maintain and improve the quality of education for all and to prevent exclusion, so as to increase the competitiveness of Europe's citizens in the knowledge economy, while ensuring social cohesion;
10. **UNDERLINING** the need to maintain adequate levels of funding in the education sector and especially in initial and in-service training for education staff;
11. **EXPRESSING** our determination to implement educational actions geared specifically to Europe's diverse and multicultural societies with a view to reducing social tensions and furthering our societies' democratic culture;
12. **IDENTIFYING**, through the discussions at our Conference, as our common goals for future action in the field of teacher education :
 - 12.1 equipping teachers with the transversal competences required for fostering in the learner community the skills needed to live in a diverse, democratic society and to fully participate in it;
 - 12.2 encouraging partnerships within the educational community so that all players concerned with education are fully involved in an approach based on shared responsibilities;
 - 12.3 ensuring social recognition of the teaching profession;
13. **AGREE** that the achievement of these goals requires our governments to take a series of measures and **UNDERTAKE**:
 - 13.1 to support education professionals (including teachers, school principals and administrators) at all levels in fulfilling their educational and social responsibilities through appropriate public policies;
 - 13.2 to ensure that the degree of recognition enjoyed by the teaching profession is commensurate with the importance of the task it performs and is reflected through remuneration and conditions of service, including opportunities for continuing professional development;
 - 13.3 to promote a culture of lifelong learning for education professionals at all levels, including through high quality initial and in-service training;

- 13.4 to encourage higher education and training establishments to upgrade and improve the standards of their initial and/or in-service teacher training programmes, to make sure that they attract and support high quality entrants, taking account of the range of diversity within our societies;
14. **WISH** the above measures to lead principally to:
- 14.1 diversification of the training and/or recruitment options, *inter alia* by making use of the opportunities of the European Higher Education Area, for Europe's future teachers;
 - 14.2 the development of plurilingualism and the promotion of mobility and networking in initial and in-service teacher training;
 - 14.3 the development of "a" teaching and learning methodology, which equips future teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for managing a diverse sociocultural environment;
 - 14.4 the inclusion of research in the training programmes of future teachers and involvement of practising teachers in school-based research projects;
 - 14.5 the introduction of effective tools for evaluation and self-evaluation allowing teachers to take responsibility for and ownership of their professional development;
 - 14.6 working conditions that enable teachers to focus on their educational role and make the profession more attractive ;
 - 14.7 the involvement of education professionals in policy-making which affects them;
 - 14.8 the establishment and maintenance of sound partnerships between the educational community and all other relevant players in society;
 - 14.9 awareness among all education professionals of their role in promoting sustainable democratic societies;
15. **CALL ON** the Committee of Ministers to acknowledge the fundamental role of teachers as agents of change in the process of building and managing sustainable democratic societies respectful of human rights and diversity and accordingly to instruct the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) and the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), on the basis of the results achieved under their programme of activities and with a view to maintaining their long-term impact at pan-European level:
- 15.1 to endorse Council of Europe initiatives for co-operation in order to help education professionals to continue developing the transversal competences needed in diverse, democratic societies;

- 15.2 to support intercultural understanding, in accordance with the Council of Europe White Paper on intercultural dialogue, advancing intercultural dialogue through the development of democratic governance of cultural diversity, the strengthening of democratic citizenship and participation, the teaching and learning of transversal competences, the provision of spaces for intercultural dialogue and exchanges;
- 15.3 to encourage the participation of education professionals in pan-European networking and training in the framework of the Council of Europe Pestalozzi Programme;
- 15.4 to continue work to improve the status of teachers in the member states;
- 15.5 to endorse plurilingualism and mobility among teachers and future teachers;
- 15.6 to identify the values and principles of effective partnerships between education institutions and other sectors of activities and to promote examples of good practice;
- 15.7 to report in due course to the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education about the initiatives taken by member states to implement this declaration.

16. Warmly **THANK** Finland for its offer to organise their next session.