



5 May 2007

MED-22-8
final

**Standing Conference
of European Ministers of Education**

**“Building a more humane and inclusive Europe:
role of education policies”**

22nd session

Istanbul, Turkey, 4 - 5 May 2007

Resolution on the results and conclusions
of completed projects 2003 – 2006¹

¹ This resolution was adopted unanimously with the exception of the Polish delegation

The European Ministers of Education, meeting in Istanbul for their 22nd session:

1. RECALLING that, at their 21st session, in Athens in 2003, they had decided:

1.1 to call on the Council of Europe to attach greater importance to education in general and, on the strength of its experience in this area, to pursue the aspects of its work programme relating to, amongst others, educational policies, history teaching, language policies and education for democratic citizenship and human rights;

1.2 to pursue its co-operation in the field of education for citizenship and democracy on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Organisation and to organise a European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005), which would make it possible to capitalise on and implement the achievements of the Council of Europe in the field of education for democracy;

1.3 to focus its work programme on enhancing the quality of education as a response to the challenges posed by the diversity of our societies by making democracy learning and intercultural education key components of educational reform;

2. HAVING DISCUSSED, at the present session, the conclusions of the following projects:

- The European dimension in history teaching (2002-2006);
- The new challenge of Intercultural education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe (2002-2006);
- Education for democratic citizenship (second phase, 2001-2004) and the European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005);

3. NOTE with satisfaction that at the 3rd Summit in Warsaw (2005) the central themes of the medium-term programme were included in the general lines of approach and priorities to be pursued by the Council of Europe which would “enhance all opportunities for the training of educators, in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history and intercultural education”;

4. CONSIDER that the three above-mentioned projects are excellent examples of multilateral co-operation, in that they concern all education systems, regardless of their specific national features, and CONGRATULATE the Council of Europe on completing them on schedule and meeting the objectives set;

5. WELCOME the high-quality results obtained, which have made it possible:

5.1 to carry out a detailed analysis of the themes selected, and, in particular, to redefine the content and context of intercultural education;

5.2 to draw up proposals and guidelines for educational policies that serve as a reference for member states in their educational reforms;

5.3 to consolidate work on the content of learning methods in order to provide member states with examples of teaching tools, with due regard for respect for human rights and cultural and religious diversity;

5.4 to introduce novel working methods meeting new requirements stemming from the greater diversity of situations within the Council of Europe;

6. Strongly RECOMMEND that the results and conclusions of these projects be widely disseminated by all appropriate means not only to government bodies but to all those involved in the education system;

7. WOULD LIKE these results to be taken into account in future when national educational reforms are devised and implemented and as they evolve;

8. NOTE that the results obtained strengthen their conviction that the implementation of intergovernmental and pan-European projects of this kind are essential if requests for assistance and advice from countries or regions faced with particular challenges or difficulties are to be met;

9.a. in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights and in the context of the European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005)

10. POINT OUT that education for democratic citizenship and human rights helps to foster an awareness of the values upheld by the Council of Europe – the principles of liberty, political pluralism, human rights and the rule of law – and to ensure that human rights instruments are effectively implemented by member states;

11. NOTE that education for democratic citizenship and human rights can help instil critical faculties and promote mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, solidarity and social cohesion;

12. CONSIDER that education for democratic citizenship and human rights is increasingly important as it provides a means of addressing certain problems in society, in particular political apathy, the disintegration of the social fabric, violence, the threat of terrorism, population movements within and between countries and risks to the environment;

13. WELCOME the flexible, decentralised approach taken to the organisation of the European Year of Citizenship through Education, which contributed to its success, with the result that virtually all the member states took part;

14. NOTE that **the second phase of the project (2001-2004) and the European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005)** made it possible:

14.1 to provide an overall conceptual framework for the action of governments, education professionals and civil society and to test out new projects and teaching approaches;

14.2 to elicit a political commitment and drive to strengthen programmes in the area of education for democratic citizenship and human rights in member states and thus to translate policy into practice by ensuring such education has a more prominent place in member states;

14.3 to prepare and disseminate documents providing a reference framework and practical tools for education in democratic citizenship and human rights and for ensuring the quality of such education, so as to enable policy-makers in member states to devise their own policies and tools in this field;

14.4 to develop a whole range of initiatives and partnerships, both within the Council of Europe and between the Council of Europe and other organisations or institutions;

14.5 to establish priorities and future lines of approach in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights;

15. UNDERTAKE to take account of the results of the project and to develop their policies and practices in this area and put them on a long-term footing;

16. RECOMMEND that the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education step up its work on education for democratic citizenship and human rights in order to make it an ongoing project of the Organisation;

17.b. in the field of history teaching

18. REAFFIRM that the teaching of history, a matter of constant concern to the Council of Europe since it was set up, is central to the promotion of democratic citizenship, as highlighted in particular by Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2001)15 on history teaching in 21st-century Europe;

19. OBSERVE that the objective of this work is not to replace national approaches, but to enhance them by strengthening the European dimension of history teaching through an educational approach that encompasses multiple outlooks, in order to contribute to intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, tolerance and mutual respect;

20. NOTE that the **project "The European dimension in history teaching" (2002-2006)** made it possible:

20.1 to determine what a European approach and dimension might signify in the light of an analysis of certain key moments in recent European history;

20.2 to highlight practical methods that can be used by teachers in the classroom in order to help instil a spirit of tolerance of different viewpoints, foster respect for others and inculcate independent critical faculties among the future citizens of democratic societies;

20.3 to prepare three educational aids for teachers: the book "*Crossroads of European Histories - Multiple Outlooks on Five Key Moments in the History of Europe*", the CD-ROM "*Turning points? Critical Moments in Recent European History*" and the accompanying *Teachers' Manual*;

20.4 to bring together eminent historians from Council of Europe member states at five conferences to discuss turning points in recent history, under the themes: "1848 in European history", "The Balkan Wars of 1912-13", "The search for peace in 1919", "The end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War in 1945" and "The events and developments of 1989-90 in central and eastern Europe", making it possible to publish the book "*Crossroads of European histories - Multiple Outlooks on Five Key Moments in the History of Europe*";

20.5 to combine new information technology with educational innovations in order to prepare the CD-ROM "*Turning points? Critical Moments in Recent European History*", to which historians from numerous Council of Europe member states contributed;

20.6 to contribute to the principles and methods of the new approach to initial and in-service training for history teachers;

21. UNDERTAKE to take account of the results and findings of the project in their national education policies;

22. WELCOME the fact that work on this project and the products that came out of it have already contributed to activities designed to provide assistance with the reform of history teaching and school textbooks in certain countries or regions of Europe;

23. RECOMMEND that the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education encourage the dissemination of the results of the project through the appropriate use of information and communication technology and, in particular, by systematically organising national and/or regional seminars for teachers in the next two years;

24.c. in the field of intercultural education, religious diversity and dialogue in Europe

25. REAFFIRM the importance of measures to promote a better understanding between cultural and/or religious communities through school education, on the basis of shared principles of ethics and democratic citizenship;

26. NOTE that, regardless of the religious education system that exists in a particular country, children must receive tuition that takes account of religious and philosophical diversity as part of their intercultural education;

27. POINT OUT that, as religion is in any event considered as a feature of society and culture, taking account of religious diversity in intercultural education is not incompatible with certain forms of secularism and the partial secularisation of several present-day societies;

28. NOTE that the **project "The new challenge to Intercultural Education: Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe" (2002-2006)** made it possible:

28.1 to make appreciable progress with framing the concept, content and relevant learning methods of the religious dimension of intercultural education;

28.2 to highlight the fact that taking account of the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue is of fundamental importance for the purpose of fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and a culture of "living together";

28.3 to identify, at the European conference on "The religious dimension of intercultural education" (Oslo, 6-8 June 2004), the relevant needs with a view to introducing the religious dimension of intercultural education in schools in member states in the light of the outcome of the 21st session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Athens, 10-12 November 2003);

28.4 to propose novel teaching methods and learning strategies that take account of religious diversity in intercultural dialogue;

28.5 to present, in a book entitled "*Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools*", a set of concepts and teaching approaches prepared by a team of independent experts to make teachers aware of the religious dimension of intercultural education;

29. RECOMMEND that the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education:

29.1 take initiatives, in the field of intercultural education, concerning religious diversity in order to promote tolerance and foster an ability to "live together";

29.2 make arrangements to disseminate the results of the project in member states and promote the use of the reference book among teachers and teacher trainers.

30.d. in the field of language policy

31. REITERATE their firm belief that language education, which has been a key concern of the Council of Europe for almost four decades and whose work has been instrumental in the renewal of national policies, remains a key factor in education for socially inclusive citizenship, intercultural dialogue and respect for the languages and identities of others;

32. NOTE that its **Language Policy programme "Plurilingualism, Diversity, and Citizenship"**:

32.1 successfully conducted a European Year of Languages in 2001 jointly with the European Union and has built on the positive evaluation of its results to launch a number of new initiatives to promote language learning and linguistic diversity, including an annual European Day of Languages;

32.2 has launched and widely disseminated practical tools to further promote linguistic diversity, improved language learning and mobility: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in thirty four languages, the European Language Portfolio and a Guide for Language Education Policies in Europe, the implementation of which was assisted by the training programme of the European Centre for Modern Languages;

32.3 has led to enhanced cooperation between the Council of Europe and the European Union concerning the transparency of qualifications and mobility through the inclusion in EUROPASS of the Council of Europe Language Passport;

32.4 has provided member states with assistance in reviewing their national or regional language education policies with a view to promoting more diversified language learning for social cohesion and democratic citizenship in multilingual societies;

32.5 has initiated a project on common reference standards for languages of instruction in schools;

32.6 has developed a draft curriculum framework for the Romani language in co-operation with the European Roma and Travellers Forum;

33. RECOMMEND that the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education:

33.1 intensify its work to develop European reference standards and guidelines for the languages of instruction in schools, taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including migrant children and Roma;

33.2 use the results to prepare a draft Committee of Ministers recommendation, drawing on the Conclusions of the Intergovernmental Forum held in Strasbourg in February 2007 on the theme "the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: challenges and responsibilities".