



5 May 2007

**MED-22-14**  
**final**

**Standing Conference  
of European Ministers of Education**

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

**22<sup>nd</sup> session**

Istanbul, Turkey, 4 - 5 May 2007

Final Declaration<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This declaration was adopted unanimously with the exception of the Polish Delegation.

We, the European Ministers of Education of the 49 States that have signed the European Cultural Convention, meeting in Istanbul on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of our Standing Conference, hereby adopt the present Declaration:

1. Recalling the Wroclaw Declaration (9-10 December 2004) on 50 Years of European Cultural Co-operation, in which we reaffirmed our determination to strengthen cultural co-operation in Europe, particularly in the education field;
2. Referring to the Declaration of the third Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, 16 and 17 May 2005), and taking particular account of Section III of the Action Plan that came out of it, "Building a more humane and inclusive Europe", to which this contribution will seek to respond;
3. Recalling our determination, already expressed at the 20<sup>th</sup> session of our Conference, in Cracow (15-17 October 2000), to "nurture ... social cohesion in open pluralist societies where children's rights and human rights are respected and no person or group is excluded";
4. Recalling the Declaration of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of our Conference, in Athens (10-12 November 2003), which recognised the social dimension of education policies and "the role of intercultural education and the major contribution of the Council of Europe in maintaining and developing the unity and diversity of our European societies";
5. Conscious of the fact that the full enjoyment of the right to education is essential to sustainable, cohesive and democratic societies;
6. Stressing the key role of education in achieving social inclusion;
7. Wishing to promote education policies based on the Council of Europe's fundamental values and to mobilise all human resources to bring about a common vision for society;
8. Reaffirming that education is a public asset and a public responsibility, which safeguards the principle of equal opportunities and universal access to a high standard of instruction;
9. Expressing our wish that this Declaration should be fully taken into account in the activities relating to the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue", drawn up by the Council of Europe following the Faro Conference (27 and 28 October 2005)
10. **Undertake:**
  - 10.a. to devise appropriate policies in order to put into practice the Action Plan of the Third Summit, "aimed at ensuring access to education for all young people across Europe and improving its quality", ensuring that they are successful in their educational careers and promoting intercultural learning, education for democratic citizenship and human rights in a lifelong learning perspective;
  - 10.b. to implement measures in order to ensure access to quality education for all, within a society that is more humane and more just for all its members;
  - 10.c. to promote programmes for inclusive education together with other relevant players in order to promote the active involvement and civic commitment of all members of society and thus prevent educational disadvantage;
  - 10.d. to give particular consideration to children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the relevant legal instruments of the Council of Europe in framing education policies;

10.e. through the education programme of the Council of Europe, to address the full range of purposes of education:

- preparation for the labour market;
- preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies;
- personal development;
- development and maintenance of a broad knowledge base

11. **Invite** the Committee of Ministers to acknowledge the crucial role that education plays in the pursuit of the aims and core values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to this end, maintain the necessary resources for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of its education programmes;

12. **Invite** the Committee of Ministers to instruct the Steering Committee for Education to continue its work as set out in the appended Resolutions and pay special attention to the following;

12.a. analysing and developing key competences for democratic culture and social cohesion, such as citizenship competence, intercultural competence, plurilingual competence, social commitment, a solidarity-based outlook and multiperspectivity;

12.b. developing concrete measures for inclusive education, in particular for the socially and culturally excluded;

12.c. stimulating reflection on the right to education, taking into account the provisions and implementation of existing legal instruments;

12.d. pursuing co-operation in this field with the European Union, by taking part in the practical action to be carried out in 2008 as part of "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue";

12.e. further developing or strengthening co-operation in the education field with other sectors in the Council of Europe, in particular the Steering Committee on the Media and new Communication Services (CDMC), the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, and with other institutions and organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, in particular UNESCO, OECD, OSCE and ALECSO;

12.f. contributing to the "Alliance of Civilisations" initiative, launched in 2005 by the Secretary General of the United Nations, in order to help implement the recommendations in the education field set out in Chapter VII of the report drafted by its High-Level Group (November 2006);

13. **Invite** the Committee of Ministers to instruct the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research:

13.a. to work to imbue the European Higher Education Area with a holistic vision encompassing the key objectives of higher education and the values of the Council of Europe;

13.b. to emphasise in this vision the values and functions of higher education in modern society as well as the ability of higher education and its graduates to address major issues, such as sustainability, democratic culture, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue;

13.c. to further explore the role and responsibility of public authorities as well as of universities and of staff and students in making this vision of higher education a reality.

14. **Take note** with satisfaction of the Norwegian initiative to set up a Resource Centre on democratic citizenship and intercultural education, working in close liaison with the Education Directorate of the Council of Europe and contributing to its programme, particularly as concerns relevant teacher training activities;

15. **Express** their gratitude to the Turkish authorities for their hospitality on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of their Standing Conference;
16. and warmly **thank** Slovenia for its offer to organise their next session.