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Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education ▲

21st session - "Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy", Athens, Greece, 10-12 November 2003

Declaration by the European Ministers of Education on intercultural education in the new European context
Resolution to foster the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in educational systems in Europe

Declaration by the European Ministers of Education on intercultural education in the new European context
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We, the European Ministers of Education of the 48 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, meeting on the occasion of the 21st session of the Standing Conference in Athens, from 10 to 12 November 2003, adopt the following Declaration:

1. Reiterating, in this symbolic place where it was born, that democracy – the political system common to all our states – is the reference value for both current and future generations;

2. Observing the diversity of our societies in terms of ethnicity, culture, languages, religions and education systems;

3. Having noted the social conflicts and disagreements that may result from the coexistence of different value systems;

4. Wishing to preserve the multicultural nature of European society and to avoid a situation in which globalisation exacerbates the processes of exclusion and marginalisation;

5. Aware of the disturbing persistence in our societies of xenophobic and racist practices, violence and intolerance that sometimes affect education establishments;

6. Recognising that, for over 50 years, the Council of Europe has been working in theory and practice on the development of education for democracy:

– by applying the fundamental values of the Organisation, in particular human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;

– by emphasising the learning of democracy, as one of the objectives of education policy in Europe, particularly since the first Summit of Heads of State and Government (Vienna, October 1993);

– by capitalising on the wealth of experience gained by the Council of Europe through its priority projects in the education field;

– by implementing the mandate given to the Council of Europe following the second Summit of Heads of State and Government (Strasbourg, October 1997), which recognised education as a priority for the development of democracy and human rights;

7. Recognising 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;

8. Reiterate our attachment to the European Cultural Convention as the fundamental

text where European cooperation in the education field is concerned, and <u>wish</u> to give practical effect to this statement:

– by being closely associated with the celebrations in 2004 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force;

– by backing the principle to study the possibility of drawing up an additional protocol which would update the text of the Convention to take into account the most significant developments that have occurred in the last few decades as well as the future priorities in the field of education;

9. <u>Note</u> with satisfaction the progress and results of the projects and activities currently being carried out by the Council of Europe, particularly:

– the implementation, in the framework of Recommendation (2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers on "Teaching history in the 21st century" of the "Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity" and the new project on the "European dimension in history teaching", devoted to key dates in the history of the European continent;

– the success achieved by the European Year of Languages and the henceforth annual "European Day of Languages", which each year celebrates linguistic diversity and strengthens intercultural education;

– the launch of the project "the new intercultural challenge to education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe", which will make a major contribution to the shared goals of mutual understanding, respect, and learning to live together;

– the implementation, in the framework of Recommendation R(2000)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the project on "Education for Roma/Gypsy children", a project that highlights the principles of intercultural education;

– the programme on the strategies and initiatives aimed at learning democracy, pursued in conjunction with higher education institutions, and concerned with the Bologna Process, the Lisbon Convention (drawn up jointly with Unesco), participatory governance, quality assurance and public accountability, under a life-long learning approach;

– the project on "education for democratic citizenship and human rights", a project which should be extended during the "Year of Citizenship through Education" in 2005 and beyond, through the implementation of Recommendation (2002)12 and development of the concept of learning democracy;

10. <u>Call on the Council of Europe :</u>

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

- to pursue its co-operation in the field of education for citizenship and democracy on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Organisation;

- 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;

11. <u>Request</u> the Council of Europe, as an organisation with a wealth of experience in the fields of managing diversity, intercultural education and quality education, to tailor its education programme and working methods in order to implement the following strategies and give fresh impetus to these activities by developing a coherent, feasible and integrated action plan;

In this connection, it should:

a. relaunch conceptual research on intercultural education with a view to adapting terminology and clearly defining the content and context of intercultural education;

b. help to build understanding of the European dimension of education in the context of

globalisation, by introducing respect for human rights and diversity, foundations for managing diversity, openness to other cultures, inter-religious dialogue and "Euro-Arab dialogue";

c. step up efforts in the area of content of learning methods and teaching aids, in order to provide the member states with examples of educational tools making it possible to take the intercultural dimension of curricula into account;

d. develop analytical instruments and identify and disseminate examples of good practice emphasising intercultural and pluralist approaches, in school textbooks;

e. develop programmes aimed at communication and mutual understanding, particularly through language learning and by encouraging awareness raising for the added value of linguistic diversity in multicultural societies;

f. encourage the member states to introduce the intercultural dimension in their education policies, in order to enable appropriate consideration of dialogue between cultures;

g. encourage research focusing on social learning and cooperative learning in order to take into account the "learning to live together" and intercultural aspects in all teaching activities;

h. support initiatives and experiments with democratic governance in schools, particularly through partnership, youth participation and cooperation with communities, parents and civil society;

i. develop quality assurance instruments inspired by education for democratic citizenship, taking account of the intercultural dimension, and develop quality indicators and tools for self-evaluation and self-focused development for educational establishments;

j. identify models of good practice in the areas of democratic governance and quality assurance in schools and prepare their potential users to be able to make use of them;

k. strengthen intercultural education and management of diversity within its programme of in-service training for education staff and encourage member states to contribute to that programme by organising seminars on topics directly linked to the aims of the present Declaration;

l. devise and promote work methodologies that are suitable to integrate into states' own initial and in-service training programmes the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism and equity;

m. recognise the potential of ICTs as a tool for promoting intercultural learning in a global context;

n. develop educational strategies and working methods to prepare teachers to manage the new situations arising in our schools as a result of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalisation and to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way;

o. encourage the development of professional competencies for the teaching profession, taking account of skills existing within a team linked to the roles of learning facilitator, mediator, counsellor, partner and human resources manager;

p. foster a global approach to institutional life in order to create a community of students, taking account of the hidden curriculum, school atmosphere, a school's organisational ethos and non-formal education;

q. encourage member states to acknowledge that managing diversity is not a problem in schools alone, but concerns the whole of society, particularly with regard to policies implemented in the social, family and migration fields;

12. Call on the Council of Europe to organise a European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005), which will make it possible to capitalise on and implement the achievements of the Council of Europe in the field of education for democracy;

13. Recognise the specific contribution of the Council of Europe to education for democracy and wish new synergies to be forged between the work of this Organisation

and that of its major partners, particularly the European Union, Unesco and the OECD;

14. Give support to existing global processes dedicated to the development of education, such as Education for All (Dakar Action Plan), Quality Lifelong Learning, Education for Sustainable Development (such as the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development), and Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights;

15. Are resolved to make the necessary arrangements to take intercultural education into account as an important component of our education policies; this entails appropriate measures at the levels of curricula, school governance and teacher training.

Resolution to foster the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in educational systems in Europe ▲

The European Ministers of Education, meeting at the 21st session of their Standing Conference in Athens on 10-12 November 2003,

CONSIDERING that the ongoing development of the new communication and information services should serve to promote the right of every person to express, seek, receive and transmit information and ideas, for the benefit of every individual and of a democratic culture in society;

WELCOMING this development as an important factor in enabling all the member states and every individual to participate in building a communications society throughout the European continent;

CONSIDERING that the education systems of all member states have a key role to play in ensuring the creation of a knowledge based society,

REFERRING to:

- the Declaration and Action Plan in which the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member states resolved, at their second Summit on 11 October 1997, to develop a European policy for the application of the new information technologies;

- the Committee of Ministers' Declaration of 7 May 1999 on a European policy for new information technologies;

- the Declaration on education policies for democratic citizenship and social cohesion, adopted at the 20th session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Krakow, 14-16 October 2000);

CONVINCED that the use of the new communication and information services can give everyone easier and enhanced possibilities of participating in the dissemination of information, of receiving training and participating in communication beyond borders, with a view to increased international understanding and mutual enrichment of cultures;

REALISING that the skills and the knowledge required to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) and thus digital literacy, should be seen as essential for professional and everyday life in the communication society;

AWARE of the challenge education systems in Europe face today in implementing the most appropriate pedagogical approaches and practices supported by and taking full advantage of ICTs, in order to improve learning and offer all citizens a wider range of learning opportunities and service;

CONCERNED ABOUT social, economic and technical discrepancies that exist at national, regional and local level regarding the development of the new communication and information services as well as the dangers of a digital divide inherent in this development;

CONVINCED that training in the use of these technologies for society in general, and the younger generations in particular, helps to reduce inequalities between them and guarantee their better integration in the world of information, communication, lifelong learning, culture and employment;

HAVING NOTED with interest the problems examined in the studies conducted in the framework of the project "Learning and teaching in the communication society" (documents CD-ED 2003 22/ 23/ 24) concerning the challenges from the communication society facing the education systems in Europe;

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AGREE to implement the following principles in line with national education policies:

1. The generalisation of ICT-based teaching practices in educational systems should include:

- 1.1 supplying, and up-dating equipment in teaching institutions (hardware and software) and providing assistance on the basis of pluri-annual plans;

- 1.2 providing teachers and pupils with infrastructure, software facilities and broadband Internet access, sufficient in both quantity and quality to ensure that ICT-based teaching activities can be realised and integrated into the curricula of schools ;

- 1.3 providing broadband Internet access in schools, available to pupils outside classroom hours, particularly in documentation centres;

- 1.4 allowing for computer skills in pupil assessment, in particular within each subject area;

- 1.5 developing the widespread validation and recognition of skills in the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and enhancing their use in the classroom;

- 1.6 introducing a policy to support the production of computerised teaching resources, and particularly learning environments, fostering collaboration between peers and promoting self-reliance, and applying a quality charter which covers ethical and social aspects, and developing public/private partnerships able to create a viable economy in this sector.

2. Policymakers should encourage developments in the teaching professions by:

- 2.1 taking account of and certifying ICT-based teaching skills when recruiting new teachers;

- 2.2 allowing for ICT-based teaching activities in teachers' working schedules;

- 2.3 making training available to serving teachers at regular intervals throughout their careers, so that they can keep abreast of new teaching techniques and practices, in the light of research results in this field.

3. Higher education institutions involved in basic and continuing teacher training should focus teaching and research on the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs):

- 3.1 the initial training provided for primary and secondary teachers should cover the proper use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in subject-teaching, and skills in this area must be tested when teachers are being recruited;

- 3.2 higher education teachers who provide this initial training should be encouraged to exemplify the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their own courses, giving future teachers points of reference and demonstrating scientifically the validity of ICT applications;

- 3.3 continued training programmes should allow all serving teachers to upgrade their professional skills by incorporating the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and include strong incentives to overcome reservations;

- 3.4 university research on the development and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and on their effects on learning, teaching methods and subject-content, should be encouraged and supported;

- 3.5 this research should be based as far as possible on classroom realities in European schools, and university research teams should involve practising teachers in their work;

- 3.6 the research should be accompanied by the necessary means to disseminate the findings to decision-makers and practitioners, in a language and form which non-specialists can understand.

4. Policy decisions should be implemented to stimulate the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in network building:

- 4.1 to support the establishment of databanks, carrying details of successful schemes, instruments, teaching aids, and to keep them up to date and add to them with the help of projects aimed at disseminating information;

- 4.2 to promote the co-operation, across Europe, between organisations in charge of the development of e-learning materials and educational databases, facilitating their adaptation to local context, by means of less restrictive legal rules and of equitable economic model;

- 4.3 to support networking and co-operative initiatives between teachers who teach the same subject or on the same level, or specialise in the same area (e.g. children with disabilities), and who are using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in pioneering ways to improve learning or solve learning problems;

- 4.4 to promote virtual sites for dialogue and sharing between teachers;

- 4.5 to foster the dissemination of information on techniques, teaching methods, research findings, requests for help.

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RECOMMEND the Committee of Ministers to:

1. pay special attention to the ethical and social aspects linked to the basic information and communication technologies (ICTs) skills;

2. continue giving high priority to foreign language-learning in its work-programme, so as to ensure that all persons involved in educational systems can communicate effectively in foreign languages and derive full benefit from the increasing wealth of information and opportunities for contacts and exchanges;

3. promote the training of teachers and teacher trainers in the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs);

4. encourage the development of research on the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) from an educational perspective, for all subjects in the curriculum.