



## **Building a child-friendly Europe: turning a vision into reality**

**Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy  
for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015**

Empowering children through formal and non-formal learning:  
democratic citizenship and human rights education

Workshop

Monaco, 21 November 2011, 9.00-12.00

**CONCEPT NOTE**



## **Introduction:**

The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education emphasises the importance of “not just equipping learners with knowledge, understanding and skills, but also empowering them with the readiness to take action in society in the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law” – which are the core values of the Organisation. Such empowering requires in-depth change in educational policy and practice, based on concerted actions of many stakeholders, including decision makers, education professionals, civil society and youth organisations.

The objectives of the charter include the following:

- providing every person with the opportunity of citizenship and human rights education;
- promoting democratic governance of educational institutions;
- ensuring ongoing development for education professionals and youth leaders in the principles and practices of citizenship and human rights education;
- and promoting partnerships and co-operation.

The charter outlines policies that are needed to achieve these objectives, and proposes approaches to evaluation and follow-up activities. The charter highlights the importance of empowerment and active participation of learners, be it in respect of the democratic governance of educational institutions, partnerships and collaboration, research or evaluation of effectiveness of programmes on citizenship and human rights education. In accordance with the principles laid down in the charter, participation of children in its implementation is of fundamental importance.

The charter was developed in the framework of the Council of Europe programme on Citizenship and Human Rights Education. In 2006-09, the programme's main focus was on developing a comprehensive set of guidelines and tools for various stakeholders, from policy makers to education professionals and civil society organisations. The adoption of the charter in 2010 builds on the common understanding and commitment that was developed by the member states during this phase, and provides framework and spur for future action. Development of partnerships with key actors in the member states, with other international institutions and organisations was also of primary importance during this phase. In 2010-14, the main focus is on the development of sustainable mechanisms for the promotion and implementation of the charter.

The aim of the seminar is first, to explore ways to raise awareness of the charter to experts in the fields of children's rights and education, professionals in all types of educational establishments for children and children themselves; and secondly, how children can be involved in the implementation of the charter at school and local level.

The conclusions of the seminar will be used in the preparation of the Council of Europe strategy on “Building Europe for and with children” 2012-15.

## **Objectives:**

The workshop will pursue the following objectives:

1. To make the charter widely known among key actors

The adoption of the charter is an expression of the 47 member states' consensus on relevant definitions, objectives and principles, policies, evaluation and co-operation. An implementation strategy is currently being developed with a view to encourage and to support further progress in the member states, on a sustainable and systematic basis. This strategy will include regular reports to be prepared by governments and to be discussed at major European conferences with participation of a broad range of actors. As highlighted by many partners, raising awareness of the charter is key to increasing its potential for promoting citizenship and human rights education. The main target groups will include experts in the fields of the rights of the child and education; professionals in all types of educational establishments for children; and children themselves. The use of ICTs will be of particular importance in this respect.

2. To explore possibilities for children's participation in the implementation of the charter at school and local level

The concept of children and youth participation lies at the heart of citizenship and human rights education (see for example Article 3, 8 and 11 of the charter). This is why, from the outset, youth representatives were included in the drafting group of the charter, and contributed substantially to the quality of the text. For example, the issue of "bullying" was introduced thanks to a strong argument presented by the Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth.<sup>1</sup>

Strengthening the participation of children and young people is also of primary importance in implementing the charter. This topic was discussed at the Forum on Human Rights Education with Young People "Living, learning, acting for human rights" (Budapest, 2009), and several valuable proposals were made that are already being put into practice.

The main focus of the discussion will be participation of children in the context of democratic citizenship and human rights education at school and local levels, and on the support that could be required from the Council of Europe in this respect.

## **Setting:**

The workshop will be divided into two working sessions.

The 1st working session (90 minutes) will be devoted to: 1) awareness raising on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and its implementation, and 2) children's participation in the context of citizenship and human rights education at school and community level. Four to six brief presentations on the above-mentioned topics will serve as an introduction, and will be followed by questions and answers, and a general discussion.

The expected outcomes of this session are: 1) ideas for awareness-raising activities targeting member states governments, experts in the fields of the rights of the child

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<sup>1</sup> The Advisory Council on Youth is one of the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector.

and education, professionals in different educational establishments, children and families, and 2) ideas for children's participation in the context of citizenship and human rights education at school and community level as a way of implementing the charter.

The 2nd working session (1 hour) will be devoted to recommendations for the future Council of Europe strategy on "Building Europe for and with children" 2012-15, based on the outcomes of the first working session.

**Moderators:**

- Session 1 - Mr Jorma Kauppinen, Chair, Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education, Finland
- Session 2 - Ms Felisa Tibbitts, Human Rights Education Associates

**Speakers:**

- Mr Georg Pirker, Secretary, Democracy and Human Rights Education network (DARE), Germany
- Mr Calin Rus, Director, Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, Romania
- Ms Amina Limrini, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Morocco
- Ms Olena Styslavska, Member of the Council of Europe Pestalozzi programme for the professional development of teachers and education actors
- Ms Julia Lo Iacono, Ms Elodie Cassini, Mr Yann Corradi, Mr Mathieu Vidal, Lycée Technique et Hôtelier de Monte-Carlo