

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## **Report by the Council of Europe Secretariat**

### **BFUG meeting LXXXII**

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The purpose of the present report is to provide the BFUG with an update on the Council of Europe's recent work in higher education, relevant to the BFUG activities.

### **Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)**

The Council of Europe intergovernmental education programme is overseen by the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU). Governments of the 46 member States of the Council of Europe are represented in the Committee by senior officials from the general education and higher education sectors, as well as 14 NGO representatives who hold the observer status.

Observer organizations provide valuable input to the work of the CDEDU. They let the Committee hear the voice of other stakeholders in the field of education, be they students, teachers or (higher) education institutions. The CDEDU counts among its observers highly representative organizations.

The Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) is currently undertaking an important task of developing the Council of Europe Education Strategy with the aim of defining long-term strategic objectives relating to the role of education in developing a culture of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is expected that this Strategy will be adopted by the European Ministers of Education.

The 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education on the theme 'The Transformative Power of Education: Universal Values and Civic Renewal' will take place on the 28 and 29 September 2023 in Strasbourg under the Latvian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

### **Renewal of the civic mission of education**

The Council of Europe is strongly committed to strengthening the potential of education to contribute to democratic renewal and trust in democracy. In this context it promotes the implementation of the [RFCDC](#), which is a model of 20 competences as the basis on which education systems and institutions can continue to develop competences for life in democratic diverse societies. It is also currently working on further development of the RFCDC by linking it to the Digital Citizenship Education and working on vocational and non-formal education. The intention is by 2023 to develop a Guidance document on applying the RFCDC in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The RFCDC project aims at building a democratic teacher ethos in Europe through enhancing their understanding of and capacity in applying the RFCDC in their practice. A series of training modules is developed for teacher trainers who will, in turn, train teachers in member States, in cooperation with teacher training establishments at national level.

### **Education in times of emergency**

In the light of the current crisis in Ukraine, in close consultation with the member states and their intergovernmental committee on education (CDEDU), the Council of Europe put together a number of tools that can be immediately applied by the educators and educational authorities to comfort the refugee youth and children from trauma, make them feel welcome in classrooms and help their rapid integration into the hosting schools and communities. A special webpage is accessible [here](#)

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees ([EQPR](#)) is a Council of Europe initiative supported by twenty countries<sup>1</sup> and the UNHCR aiming at facilitating the recognition of refugees' qualifications even in the absence of full documentation. The EQPR and the methodology on which it is based are used by the national information centres on recognition of qualifications (ENICs/NARICs) and higher education institutions in States Parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention to assess qualifications held by refugees that cannot be adequately documented, in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Recommendation on Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation.

The EQPR is used by local authorities, employers, higher education institutions and NGOs for better integration of refugees into their new societies through employment and access to higher education.

In order to go further, the Council of Europe is looking into developing a dedicated activity within the programme of the Education sector for 2023-2024 connected to the responsiveness capacities of education systems in times of crises and emergencies.

### **Higher education: democratic mission and new topics**

The work in the field of higher education is overseen by the CDEDU Sub-Group on higher education policy, comprising representatives of Ministries, in charge of higher education, as well as academic representatives and international NGOs.

Guided by the CDEDU Sub-Group on higher education policy the Council of Europe together with its partners is working on furthering the democratic mission of higher education through a series of Global Fora and publications.

The Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education works to build a global movement to fulfill higher education's democratic mission and strengthen the role of higher education in developing, maintaining, and sustaining democracy on campus, in the community, and the wider society. The cooperation is comprised of four pillar organizations: the Council of Europe; the International Association of Universities; the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy; and the Organization of American States.

The [2022 Global Forum](#) on "Higher Education Leadership for Democracy, Sustainability, and Social Justice" took place on the 16-17 June in Dublin. It is the seventh Global Forum and the first gathering officially co-hosted by the partners of the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education and will result in a volume in the CoE higher education series.

The Council of Europe is currently looking into developing new action lines in its work, such as digital dimension in higher education, which will explore the complex relationship between digitalization and democratic culture. Another topic is supporting inclusion in higher education, including facilitating access to higher education and exploring the role of microcredentials.

In September 2022 the Council of Europe signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Association of Universities regarding collaboration on the IAU Global Survey on Internationalisation of Higher Education.

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Belgium – Flemish Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom

Artificial Intelligence in Education is a new and fast-developing area, in which the Council of Europe started working. On the 18-19 October 2022 it held a working conference on 'Artificial Intelligence and Education: a critical view through the lens of human rights, democracy and the rule of law'. The aims of the conference was to discuss the application and teaching of artificial intelligence in education considering the core values of the Council of Europe. The project will work towards developing an actionable set of recommendations for member states, helping ensure that the application and teaching of AI in education is for the common good.

### **The Council of Europe as the Co-Secretariat to the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC network**

Together with UNESCO, the Council of Europe ensures the Secretariat to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee will take place in Strasbourg on the 15 November 2022.

One of the main items on the agenda is the second monitoring report on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which focuses on the implementation of the three following LRC principles

- Right to appeal (Article III.5)
- Information provision (Articles III.4 ; VIII.1 ; IX.2.2)
- Transnational education (Articles IV.9 ; VI.5)

Additionally, the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Bureau decided to collect details on topics not directly mentioned in the Convention, but highlighted repeatedly in recommendations, declarations, protocols, models of good practices and other instruments:

- Automatic recognition
- Digital solutions

The Committee will also celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lisbon Recognition Convention after its meeting; a special anniversary session was held at the annual ENIC – NARIC meeting in Dublin in June 2022.

### **The Pan-European Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)**

The [Platform](#) has produced guidelines for ensuring a culture of ethics in the teaching profession. It has developed targeted recommendations on academic integrity following assessments and exchanges with the actors on the ground. Through its working group on Education Fraud the ETINED Platform has been working on the topic of education fraud. On the 13 July 2022 the [Recommendation](#) CM/Rec (2022) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering education fraud was adopted.

The Council of Europe has also launched the Best Practice Programme to reward institutions and academics whose promotion of academic integrity can serve as an example and inspiration for others. The first cycle of the Best Practice Programme identified [10 best practices](#).

The main award went to the [Dilemma Game App](#), Erasmus University Rotterdam, which is intended for researchers, including those who find themselves faced with dilemmas, and through critical dialogue helps in further developing and strengthening their own 'moral compass'.

On the 5 October Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) in partnership with the Council of Europe organised a conference on promoting academic integrity. The conference concluded by a presentation of [Compendium of Best Practices](#) identified through the [project](#)'s first call. The compendium aims to encourage and inspire all European higher education institutions to work towards building cultures of academic integrity.

The next meeting of the ETINED Platform will take place in Strasbourg on the 17 November 2022.