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Review of the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Survey for Non-Governmental Organisations

Deadline: 15 September 2012

Fulfilling the promise! Your input is needed

Human Rights and Human Rights Education are at the core of the youth policy and subsequent youth programmes developed by the Council of Europe. The Human Rights Education Youth Programme developed and implemented by the Youth Department contributed to mainstream human rights education in youth work and youth policy. Young people and their organisations are not only beneficiaries; they are also educators and advocates.

The Council of Europe Charter for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2010, recognises the role of youth organisations and non-formal learning for human rights education. The Charter is an important tool for advocacy and policy development that further supports and builds on the experience at local and national level.

Two years after the adoption of the Charter, the Council of Europe initiates a review process on its implementation and influence. The Education Department is thus coordinating a questionnaire to member states. In order to have also the view of other stakeholders and actors in EDC/HRE, the Youth Department carries this survey among non-governmental organisations – youth organisations included.

Introduction, background and purpose of the questionnaire

The Charter represents a significant progress in the process of recognition of the role and importance of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in both formal and non-formal education settings. It highlights the important role and contribution made by non-governmental youth organisation in making human rights education programmes available for all young people. Adopted in the format of a Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to its member states, the Charter is not backed up by a formal monitoring system. However, the Council of Europe intends to establish a review process to map the progress and identify priorities for future action.

The results of the questionnaire and the survey will be presented at the conference "Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead: The Impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education", which will take place in Strasbourg, 28-30 November 2012. The conference will bring together governmental representatives responsible for education and youth affairs, representatives of the Committee for Education (CDED) and Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) of the Council of Europe and representatives of non-governmental organisations active in human rights education at local, regional and European level. It is planned that such a review will take place on a regular basis (every 3-5 years).

Further information on the conference 'Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead: The Impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education' and the call for participants for non-governmental organisations can be found at www.coe.int/youth and http://youthapplications.coe.int.

Definitions and scope of the Charter for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

According to the Charter:

Education for democratic citizenship means education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

Human rights education means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are closely inter-related and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and scope, rather than in goals and practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.

The charter's full text is available on-line at: http://www.coe.int/edc

Who should complete the survey

The Charter is to be implemented at national and local level by the member states in co-operation with various partners and stakeholders. Therefore, the survey among non-governmental organisations keeps this national focus. We recommend the international organisations/networks to support their members in completing the questionnaire.

Among the non-governmental organisations concerned are, for example, youth organisations, students' unions and organisations, teachers associations, parents' organisations, non-formal education providers, human rights organisations, children organisations, etc. The survey may be completed in English or in French at: http://youthapplications.coe.int.

Dead-line

The dead-line for completing the survey is 30 July 2012.

Results of the questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire will be made available in November 2012 for the conference

and published on the website of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe: www.coe.int/youth.

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