

## Minutes

### DISCUSSION GROUP 1

#### Developing a coherent policy framework for EDC/HRE in Europe: Researchers meet practitioners and policy makers from various levels

Moderators: Frank Elbers, Human Rights Education Associates;  
Georg Pirker, Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten AdB (both DARE)

Participants: Ramunas Kuncaitis (EACEA), Doris Pack (Member of European Parliament), Christa Prets (Member of European Parliament), Martin Eaton (Council of Europe Expert), Bryony Hoskins (Institute of Education, University of London), Bettina Strewe (InterkultOst Potsdam), Ted Huddleston (Citizenship Foundation), Bruno Losito (University of Roma), Soren Ehlers (Danish Paedagogisk University), Alexander Pollak (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), Walther Lichem (Peoples' Movement for Human Rights Learning)

#### Session 1: EDC/HRE policies within Europe – A status analysis (Input by Martin Eaton)

Speaking first, MEP Doris Pack emphasized that although a speaker on the panel, she had come to listen to the experts and practitioners present in the audience and to learn from their experiences. Pack, who helped to initiate the Grundtvig Programme of the European Union, stated that the work of EDC/HRE is especially important since much discussion at the European level currently recognizes the central roles of education, culture and rights in European integration. For Pack, human rights and democracy education "give citizens an idea of the soul of Europe". While education is central to the integration and advancement of all European states, Pack also noted that it is especially critical in working with the Balkan countries and new EU member states.

Subsequently, Martin Eaton of the Council of Europe presented the findings of his feasibility study on new framework policy documents on HRE/EDC. Eaton began his study with an overview of existing global and regional frameworks and projects in EDC/HRE, which he noted to be positive steps though often out of date and generally lacking in strong legal obligations, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Often, these instruments even lag behind state practice and civil society, indicating the need for a stronger policy instruments to fill the existing gaps by dealing with both HRE and EDC, raising standards for stronger commitments, providing clearer definitions, supporting practitioners and aimed for a wider international effect. A European framework policy document could set forth a common policy to be later codified and implemented at the national level, while including a monitoring mechanism and strengthening and supporting educational practitioners and civil society. Eaton noted that questions remain as to the scope and binding nature of such a framework at the European level, but that the need for a common framework policy document on HRE/EDC is well established. In conclusion, Eaton encouraged conference participants to make their support for a European framework known to their representatives in the Council of Europe and national ministries of education in order to encourage further action.

Following the presentations by Pack and Eaton, conference participants raised questions and suggestions for further discussion. One participant asked about the potential to link the development of EDC/HRE on the European level with the Bologna Process, with special attention to its emphasis on learner-centered approaches to educational practice.

Summarizing the session, Frank Elbers noted that a framework policy document could contribute to more coherent European policy on HRE/EDC, officially recognize the field and establish a monitoring mechanism. As Eaton emphasized, the framework method is also a tested and proven method of policy development. Additionally, the right timing currently exists for such a framework document, as the next generation of EU programs is emerging in the field of EDC/HRE. The question of whether to link with the Bologna Process remained open, as well as the proper relationship between the Council of Europe and EU in this area. As each institution has its own strengths and weaknesses, how much should they cooperate to promote EDC/HRE, and what is the potential role of the European Fundamental Rights Agency as a partner institution?

Session 2: Results of the All European EDC Study – Gaps between policy and praxis  
(Input by Bruno Losito) and Lifelong Learning for Democratic Citizenship in Adult Learning – policy  
recommendations (Input by Soren Ehlers)

Bruno Losito (University of Rome) presented the results of the All European Study on EDC, which identified gaps between policy, implementation and practice of EDC. Through the study Losito identified a “compliance gap” marked by “rhetoric of EDC” without effective implementation measures. Main gaps exist in the areas of participation, teacher training and monitoring and quality insurance. As indicated by the study, future challenges for EDC include reducing the compliance gap, extending the participation of students and community representatives in educational systems, more effective and comprehensive teacher training and perspectives for lifelong learning.

David Kerr (National Foundation for Education Research) introduced the group to the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), which is examining the civic and citizenship knowledge and engagement of 13-14 year olds across Europe. Further information on the ongoing study is available at [www.iea.nl](http://www.iea.nl) or <http://iccs.acer.edu.au/>.

Soren Ehlers (Danish Paedagogisk University) shared policy recommendations resulting from the study on Lifelong Learning for Democratic Citizenship in Adult Learning. According to Ehlers, more empirical and comparative studies and needed on education for democratic citizenship in adult learning, and research must also focus more on micro-level relationships between learners and teachers or facilitators. Ehlers also noted that while most policy focuses on formal education and building knowledge, more attention should be paid to informal and non-formal learning, as well as individual attitudes.

Summarizing the session, Elbers reiterated that more coherence on HRE/EDC is needed at the policy level, in addition to more research on the compliance gap between policy and practice. As shown by the panelists, evidence-based research does exist to inform policy making, although HRE is often missing from the research and dialogues on EDC and civic/citizenship education and more research on informal/non-formal education and learning is needed. Future research should also focus on addressing the compliance gap between policy and practice, comparing approached to practice in various countries, and determining what policies and practices have the greatest impact on their target groups.

Session 3: Measuring indicators for active citizenship (Input by Bryony Hoskins)  
EDC/HRE and the European Union: An overview (Ramunas Kuncaitis)

Beginning the third session, Bryony Hoskins (Institute of Education, University of London) presented the results of her comparative study on Active Citizenship in Europe. Using a variety of different indicators, including youth civic competence, participatory attitudes, social justice and cognition, Hoskins illuminated the differences between the practices of active citizenship in various European countries. Key results of the study indicated that the age and stability of the democracy effects levels of active citizenship (with newer Eastern European democracies scoring higher on some indicators of active citizenship). Regional differences also existed between Southern Europe – where high youth competence did not appear to translate into high adult participation – and Northern and Western Europe where continued high adult participation may be endangered by youth apathy.

Ramunas Kuncaitis (EACEA) then provided an overview of European Union programs on lifelong learning for active citizenship, including the Action Plan on Adult Learning, the Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) and Grundtvig. The Action Plan seeks to improve monitoring and speed the recognition of qualifications for disadvantaged groups, while promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Lifelong Learning Program is also meant to promote active citizenship, respect for democracy and human rights, promote European citizenship and fight racism and xenophobia. As part of the program, Grundtvig grants provide assistance in accessing adult education to vulnerable or disadvantaged people in order to reintegrate and advance marginalized citizens.

After the third session of the discussion group, general consensus supported recommending more regular data collection and analysis of active citizenship in Europe, as well as cross-cutting and mainstreaming strategies for lifelong learning in HRE/EDC. Additionally, measures should be taken to address youth apathy in Northern and Western Europe and to address the gap in active citizenship in Southern and Eastern Europe, especially in the post-communist states. Remaining questions included how to construct active and dynamic models of citizenship, how to include new forms of citizenship in research models and whether research can better combine different methods to enhance our understanding of active citizenship.