

What we learnt from the “All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies”

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1. The “All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies” was carried out by the Council of Europe, within the framework of the “EDC Project” of the Council of Europe. The study was initiated in 2002. One synthesis report, plus six regional reports were prepared (Western Europe, Northern Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, and South-Eastern Europe). The reports have been included in the “EDC Pack” for the European Year of Citizenship through Education.

2. The study aimed at mapping out the national EDC policies in Europe. It involved a large number of people across Europe. The EDC coordinators in member states played a major role in providing the information needed for the study.

3. The key research questions of the study are the following¹:

What are the official EDC policies in formal education? What policy documents exist on EDC? What is the legislative basis for EDC policies?

What do governments do to implement their EDC policies? How do they transform policy intention into what type of government action? Are there implementation strategies? What obstacles exist in implementing policies?

What are practitioners’ views on EDC policies? Are policies creating the conditions that will enable appropriate practices? Are there provisions and mechanisms for the consultation of stakeholders and practitioners?

4. Starting from these research questions, collected important information about the following:

The existing EDC policies and the factors that influence their development

The differences between EDC policy statements and actual practices

The gap between EDC policies, implementation and practices

The involvement and participation of stakeholders and practitioners

5. A number of major challenges were identified by the study in the field of EDC. They include the challenges of²:

reducing the compliance gap between EDC policies and practices;

improving and extending the participation of students and community representatives in the education system, particularly in school management;

developing more effective and comprehensive teacher training, at both pre- and in-service levels;

introducing a culture of and suitable measure for monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation;

agreeing on and fighting for the place of EDC within competing educational reforms and priorities.

6. The study shows that the education policies of the individual countries fit within a perspective of lifelong learning, in most cases explicitly so. There is a fairly evident link with policies and recommendations developed at European Union level and with OECD research programmes. However, the relationship between school policies and those in the field of adult education still appears to be weak. Visible links in this sense are mainly (if not only) found in the vocational training sector.

7. In almost all the countries there is attention to the involvement of practitioners and stakeholders in EDC policies and their implementation, mainly in the formal education sector, above all in those countries where teachers’ associations, parents’ associations and NGOs have a greater tradition and a more consolidated role in the education field. However, this involvement is often considered unsatisfactory by practitioners and stakeholders themselves, especially as regards the actual possibility of being able to influence decision-making processes at different levels (national, regional, local).

8. The All-European Study identifies a series of gaps between policy statements and practice of democratic citizenship. At the same time, it shows examples of various solutions for bridging these gaps adopted in member states.

¹ See C. Birzea, *EDC policies in Europe – a synthesis*, in Council of Europe, *All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2004, p.15.

² See Council of Europe, op. cit., p.70.