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Press Release

Education Ministers back pan-European anti-corruption platform and ethical code for teachers

European Ministers have today backed the creation of a Europe-wide platform to tackle corruption and fraud in education and an ethical code for teachers.

Meeting at the Council of Europe's 24th Education Ministers Conference in Helsinki (Finlandia Hall) – 26-27 April – ministers and high-level delegations from 43 European States, as well as Mexico and the European Union, have been discussing 'Governance and Quality Education'.

The platform and ethical code are part of a five-point plan agreed by Ministers today to ensure access to an education of quality for every pupil and student in Europe and beyond¹, including Roma and other vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The platform would provide training, codes of conduct, accreditation and quality assurance and a space to share best practice.

It is not always widely understood that corruption is a real or potential problem at all levels of education across Europe, although the extent of corruption varies from country to country. It is most widespread regarding access to higher education and higher education qualifications. Corruption in education ranges from payment or favours in exchange for higher grades or for passing examinations, to more subtle forms of corruption where teachers only pass students who pay for additional 'services' such as extra lessons or books.

The other key points agreed by the conference are:

- Policy development to ensure access to education for all pupils, with special measures for those who have dropped out of school,
- Action to bring democratic and intercultural competences into the school curriculum and universities, and,
- Moves to measure the levels of participation in education as part of a project to assess citizens' participation in the life of their communities.

¹ The Conference covers the Council of Europe's 47 Member States as well as the additional three States which have ratified the Organisation's 1954 European Cultural Convention: Belarus, the Holy See and Kazakhstan.

Government representatives have already agreed that quality education requires universal access to learning as well as qualified teachers and the absence of violence and corruption in schools².

Notes to Editors

The Council of Europe was set up in 1949 and has 47 Member States. Its contribution to education is unique in that everything it does is based on its core values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It enables children and young people to learn to live in diverse societies and to participate fully in political and democratic life. It builds the democratic culture that makes democracy possible.

Please see media briefing for further information:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/standingconf/Source/press/media_briefing_education_Ministers_Conference_en.pdf.

Link to the Conference website: (<http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/EDUCATION/STANDINGCONF/>).

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² Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on ensuring quality education, adopted on 12 December 2012.