

Ministry of
Education
and Culture



Ministère de
l'Éducation et
de la culture



MED-24-1 Prov
Revised on 15 April 2013

Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education

“Governance and Quality Education”

24th session

Helsinki, Finland, 26-27 April 2013

Introduction to the main theme and sub-themes

Draft programme and agenda

Introduction to the main Theme of the Conference

The governance of education systems and the quality of education have been the driving forces of education reforms in most Council of Europe member States. These issues also feature at the top of the agenda of major international players as can be seen from Objective 2 of the UN Millennium Development Goal. Quality education and good governance with its underpinning principles, especially democratic participation, form a pair.

Over the past decade, the Council of Europe education sector has contributed to the definition of policy action in relation to the implementation of “democratic governance” at the level of school institutions and at the level of higher education. Its programme “Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights” has played a pivotal role in this respect. This programme has been complemented by the work done by the two steering committees, the one on education and the one on higher education, which since 2008 have been engaged in further defining the concepts.

The defining relationship between governance of education systems and quality education is corroborated by the Programme of Activities for 2012-2013 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 November 2011, which clearly states that: “Democratic governance through education, culture and youth policies aims at the reform of the education system and education policies to further democratic competence and participation ...”. Participation is, thus, considered not only as a major dimension of governance but also as a key element that will contribute to developing and sustaining “quality” through shared concerns and the shared responsibilities of all stakeholders. Participation implies that while democratic institutions are important, they will not function in practice without the active participation of citizens – in this case by the members of the education community.

For the last years, the Council of Europe’s work on “quality education” has been closely linked to giving “access to education” to every individual independent of their socio-economic or cultural background. Quality education is defined as an inclusive education and its implementation opens up new dimensions thereby improving social cohesion and individual opportunities. For the Council of Europe steering committees, the concept of “access to education” should be replaced by the concept “access to quality education”, the latter being understood as education “which not only gives access to learning to all pupils and students, develops each pupil’s and student’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and encourages them to complete the education programmes in which they enrol”¹. Quality education is embedded in a system of governance that fully recognizes the various missions of education, which include preparation for the labour market and preparation for active citizenship in democratic societies. Quality education, therefore, means that students have the necessary self-confidence to put their knowledge, skills and competences to good use as responsible citizens and workers.

At their meeting in Helsinki in Finland on 26 and 27 April 2013, the Ministers of Education of the 50 states parties to the European Cultural Convention will therefore be able to draw on the discussions at the 24th Conference to devise strategies for governance and quality education and thereby give direction to future Council of Europe action.

The three strands of discussion will be considered in the following contributions, which will provide the basis for debate in the working group sessions. They are considered as among the major challenges for effective implementation of quality standards in education from a human rights based approach².

1 Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on ensuring quality education
2 MED – 24 – 5 Proceedings of the 6th Prague Forum on Governance and Quality Education,

Introduction to the sub-themes of the Conference

DECENTRALISATION, SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION

In increasingly complex societies, local authorities are more and more at the forefront for ensuring access to mainstream education and equal opportunities for all children without discrimination. It is at this level that the recognition of cultural and social differences can be best dealt with, together with the promotion of linguistic pluralism.

The debate will focus on one dimension of local governance and quality education as defined by the Council of Europe, which refers to the way member states tackle the relevance of education to local contexts and local needs.

Ministers might also wish to reflect on the participation of representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the governance of education at local level and the actions taken on dropout prevention.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF TEACHERS AND THE INTEGRITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Lack of integrity and unethical behaviour are not consistent with one of the main the missions of education: forming responsible citizens respectful of law and human rights. The principles of respect for law, integrity and fair competition should be the fundamentals of the functioning of every education system. With the increased student mobility in Europe today, there is a proliferation of cases of fraud and corruption in higher education and research as well as in distance higher education.

This second sub-theme will take as its starting point the assumption that a quality education, as defined by the Council of Europe³, cannot take place in undemocratic institutions where the rights of major stakeholders (students, teachers, parents) are not taken into account, where the principles mentioned above are not the rule and where staff is not committed towards the teaching profession.

PARENTS', TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' INVOLVMENT IN EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY EDUCATION

Parents have a key role to play as major stakeholders and partners in ensuring quality education for all. Their effective participation in the governance of education and consequently in the quality of it could be explored through discussions on parents' essential rights with regard to education of their children: the right to information, the right to choose the school they prefer for their children, the right of appeal, and the right to participate in formal structures organised by the educational system.

Recent research and several experiences in member states have shown that formal participation of parents does not automatically empower them or improve the quality of education. In particular, ways and means to involve parents from disadvantaged social background would be the subject of debate. Defining new mechanisms that reflect the expectations and the opinions of parents, and developing new forms or methods of parental quality involvement in education, could be envisaged.

³ Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Thursday April 25th 2013

Registration of participants at Hotel Crowne Plaza and Scandic Continental

7 pm- 9 pm Welcome cocktail at Crowne Plaza Hotel

Friday April 26th 2013, Finlandia Hall

11.00 Registration of participants

12.00 am **Lunch** offered by Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Ministers or Heads of delegation, upon invitation

Lunch offered to the other participants by the Finnish authorities

1.15 pm **Official Opening Session**

Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Mr. Jukka Gustafsson, Minister of Education of Finland

Ms Roser Suñé, Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Mr. Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of the Council of Europe

Plenary Session 1– Theme: « Governance and Quality education » (1st Part)

Mr. Eero Heinäluoma, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland

Ms. Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

2.45 pm **Break**

Coffee break, family photo (Ministers and Heads of Delegations)

3.15 pm **Plenary session 1 - Theme: « Governance and Quality education » (2nd Part)**

Discussion (Ministers and Heads of delegations)

Key-questions for the working group discussions by Mr Germain Dondelinger, Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE)

- 4.30 pm** **Working groups** discussions with participation of Ministers and Heads of delegations
- Sub-theme A:** Decentralisation, social participation and empowerment of local authorities in the Governance of Education;
- Sub-theme B:** Ethics and integrity in education (with special focus on the ethical behaviour of teachers and the integrity of higher education and research);
- Sub-theme C:** Parents, teachers and student involvement in educational Governance and management and Quality Education.
- 6.00 pm** **End of Working Group sessions**
- 7.30 pm** Official Dinner offered by Mr. Jukka Gustafsson, Minister of Education of Finland

Saturday April 27th 2013, Finlandia Hall

- 9.00 am** **Plenary Session 2:** « Ensuring Quality Education »
- Panel** with the participation of Ministers: Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 13 on ensuring quality education – **Moderator:** Ms. Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe
- Discussion:** open to Ministers or Heads of delegations, Partner International Organisations and Observers
- 10.30 am Break
- 11.00 am** **Plenary Session 3:** “Final Declaration”
- Presentation and discussion on the development of the Council of Europe Education programme (2014-2015) based on the priorities of the Secretary General, by Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of DG II Democracy
- Presentation and discussion of the Draft Final Declaration
- Adoption of the Final Declaration**
- 12.30 pm** **Closing Session**
- Address by Ms. Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of DG II Democracy
- Address by Mr. Jukka Gustafsson, Minister of Education of Finland
- 12.45 pm **Buffet Lunch**

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Opening of the 24th session

Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Mr Jukka Gustafsson, Minister of Education of Finland

Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr. Jean-Claude Frecon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of the Council of Europe

2. Plenary session 1

Mr. Eero Heinäluoma, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland

Ms. Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

Discussion

Key-questions for the working group discussions

3. Working Groups sessions

Decentralisation, social participation and empowerment of local authorities in the Governance of Education;

Ethics and integrity in education (with special focus on the ethical behaviour of teachers and the integrity of higher education and research);

Parents, teachers and student involvement in educational Governance and management and Quality Education.

4. Plenary session 2

Panel with the participation of Ministers

Discussion

5. Plenary session 3

Presentation and discussion on the development of the Council of Europe Education programme (2014-2015)

Presentation and Adoption of the Final Declaration

6. Closing of the 24th session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education