

1. The All-European Study on EDC Policies and Legislation

1.1. The background of the study

In the late 1990s, one outcome of Council of Europe activities in the field of education was Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC), which became a common goal of education policies in Europe. Two major policy documents marked the trend:

- Resolution adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education (Cracow, 15-17 October 2000);
- Recommendation (2002)¹² of the Committee of Ministers to member states on education for democratic citizenship (adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 16 October 2002).

Both documents stress the pivotal role of EDC in education policies and reforms. In this sense, the Committee of Ministers' recommendation is quite explicit: depending on the specific context of each education system, it is advisable to make EDC "a priority objective of educational policy-making and reforms".

In this context, as part of the co-operation between the Stability Pact/Enhanced Graz Process and the Council for Cultural Co-operation, a piece of Stocktaking Research was carried out on national government policies on EDC in the countries of South-Eastern Europe (2000-2001).¹ The results of the project were well received by policy-makers, practitioners and researchers throughout Europe. Consequently, it was decided to extend this approach to all European countries, using basically the research instrument initially elaborated for South-Eastern Europe.

Based on the Stocktaking Research experience and the results of the EDC Project of the Council of Europe (1997-2000), the All-European Study aimed at:

- identifying the current policies on EDC in all European countries;
- mapping the concrete measures taken by governments to ensure the effective implementation of these policies;

1. C. Harrison and B. Baumgartl, Stocktaking Research on Policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Management of Diversity in South-East Europe, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2002, Doc. DGIV/EDU/CIT (2001) 45.

- collecting the views of a sample of practitioners and stakeholders on the implementation of EDC policies in the countries concerned.

The objectives were transposed into three key questions common to all participants at local, regional and European levels:

- What EDC policies exist?
- What implementation measures are taken?
- What are the views from practitioners and stakeholders on EDC policies?

1.2. Research design and methodology

The main goal of the All-European Study is to map the national policies on EDC across Europe and to share the findings for the benefit of users: policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, and all stakeholders involved in EDC policies. To do this, the research envisaged three levels of analysis:

- national level, by involving national EDC co-ordinators¹ and a sample of practitioners and stakeholders;
- regional level, by means of five regional studies, similar to Stocktaking Research for South-Eastern Europe;
- all-European level, through the current synthesis.

This multi-level approach has allowed for the use of a wide range of sources:

- Information provided by national EDC co-ordinators in the form of :
 - written contributions on national EDC policies;
 - legislative documents (constitutions, laws and regulations);
 - curricula, textbooks and methodological guides;
 - national programmes for EDC;
 - articles and research studies.
- Existing databases and comparative research projects related to EDC (e.g. the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education study, the European Values Survey, the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) comparative project on values education, the Eurydice database on education systems and curricula, the OECD study on cross-

1. National EDC co-ordinators constitute a network of resource people appointed by each ministry of education to act as contact people within the EDC Project of the Council of Europe.

curricular competencies, the country reports on the implementation of the Human Rights Education Decade (UNHCHR), the Council of Europe research on school participation, the Unesco regional project D@dalos);

- Information on practitioners' and stakeholders' views with the aid of focus groups in a limited number of countries; these qualitative research activities were carried out by national EDC co-ordinators.

It is the regional level analyses however, that make up the core of this study. For this purpose, the following five regions were identified:

- Northern Europe: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden;
- Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom;
- Southern Europe: Andorra, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Turkey;
- Central Europe: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia;
- Eastern Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine.

The studies dedicated to these regions are published separately. They complete the analysis previously limited to the region of South-Eastern Europe,¹ which covered Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

In concrete terms, the All-European Study started from the following questions:

- 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 intentions 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?

Members of the Council of Europe Education Committee and the EDC national co-ordinators finally validated the data obtained in the regional

1. C. Harrison and B. Baumgartl, Stocktaking Research on Policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Management of Diversity in South-East Europe, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2002, Doc. DGIV/EDU/CIT (2001)45.

studies. They were invited to consult five regional studies¹ before finalising them.

Generally speaking, the results obtained on the basis of this research design went beyond the initial purpose. Regional studies were therefore able to consider certain issues over and above those contained in the basic questions mentioned above:

- What is EDC policy and why do we need it?
- Why does EDC need a distinctive policy framework?
- What difference exists between policy statements and practice?
- What is the policy in use at different levels of the education system?

As a result, the All-European Study proved useful in providing at least two bodies of information:

- a systematic description of EDC policies across Europe;
- an empirical analysis of the compliance gap, namely the differences between political statements, policy intentions and implementation measures.

Despite these undeniable benefits, the results were limited by:

- the difficulty of determining responsibilities for education policies, especially in the case of federal states; this is the reason why the study is focused less on national policies and more on the various levels of the state (e.g. central, federal, Länder, autonomous regions);
- the five regions have no specific identity, historically or culturally justified; their demarcation is merely the result of certain methodological reasons;
- for the most part, only official documents were used;
- only some aspects of education policies were considered;
- the studies relied at times on indirect sources or translations (hence the difficulties related to EDC terminology or even basic concepts);
- the absence of studies on EDC policies' impact.

The above limitations do not invalidate our study. They simply give a more realistic picture of the results.

1. D. Kerr, All-European Study on Policies for EDC: Western Europe Region; B. Losito, All-European Study on Policies for EDC: Southern Europe Region; R. Mikkelsen, All-European Study on Policies for EDC: Northern Europe Region; I. Froumin, All-European Study on Policies for EDC: Eastern Europe Region; M. Pol, All-European Study on Policies for EDC: Central Europe Region, [all] Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2003.