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“DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION” EUROPEAN UNION / COUNCIL OF EUROPE JOINT PROJECT

Project Monthly Bulletin, May 2012

Dear colleagues,

Traditionally, June marks the end of academic year both for students and teachers. It is the time when they reflect on what they have done over the past year and the students receive their semester reports showing their progress. In the same way, as June is knocking on the door heralding the approaching anniversary of our Project, working groups have been busy reflecting on all they have experienced and gained from the various activities held so far and putting all this theory into practice. At the same time, the CoE Secretariat has been focusing on making all this progress visible through the first annual report.

For WG members, this month means a lot because they have the chance to show the results of their hard work explicitly and because they know that, no matter how much experience they have gained and how many ideas they have debated in theory, it means little to the outside world unless there are solid, verifiable outputs. Therefore, as a big family, we have been working a lot and clearly producing good results. As last minute news, I would also like to inform you that the call for proposals for the Grant Scheme Programme has been published; details are provided below.

Your sincerely,

Emir Adzovic
DC/HRE Team Leader

News of the month

As emphasised above, theory by itself does not suffice. All the six WGs have been intensively reviewing numerous resources of foreign origin, in addition to national ones and exchanging opinions with one another as well as with national and international experts. It is now time for them, especially the Curriculum Development and Democratic School Culture WGs, to produce their initial drafts for the elective EDC/HRE course curriculum and the Democratic School Culture Framework.

Similarly, the Material Development WG has made great progress in producing a number of animations and spot films, which they presented during the coordination meetings. The group is also working intensively on the Communication Strategy. Considering the work of all WGs on different aspects of the issue, the month of May was dedicated to ensuring coordination and finalisation of the first drafts.

Accordingly, two regular in-house coordination meetings were held between the CoE Secretariat and the WG Coordinators on 6 and 24 May during which the WGs had the opportunity to share their progress and outputs with the other WGs. The outcome of these meetings was really positive in the sense that the WGs have started to exert more influence on each other's work. These efforts to work more closely culminated in the organisation of the first three-monthly coordination meeting which is intended for a wider audience. The CoE team together with the national and international experts convened at the premises of the BoE on 28 May to exchange information.

The three-monthly coordination meeting was followed by two-days of intensive work on the draft elective course curriculum and the Democratic School Culture Framework under the coordinated guidance of the experts. For this focused work the Secretariat made its premises available for the two respective WGs.

On 31 May, the project team, accompanied by officials from the Board of Education and our international experts, Prof. David Kerr and Prof. Edward Huddleston, visited two schools in Konya;

Mehmet Akif Ersoy Anatolian High School and Mareşal Mustafa Kemal Primary School. Konya is one of the project's ten pilot provinces where the new curriculum for the elective subject of EDC/HRE in secondary schools and Democratic School Culture Framework will be piloted as of September 2012.

Both schools reacted very positively to the upcoming pilot and showed openness in facilitating the piloting phase. The Head teachers and current EDC/HRE teachers showed impressive maturity and experience in their work with the subject. In the primary school, the subject has been running successfully for the last 2 years and the teachers presented an impressive number of elements of good practice. More importantly, they showed readiness to share the issues and problems they faced during the original piloting of the curriculum two years ago as well as their ideas for innovation and improvement. At the secondary school level, the Director and the teachers had very clear expectations from the project and shared their insight on how to involve parents and students in the process of deciding on the elective subject. The student councils work successfully in both schools.

The secretariat put the heads and teachers from both schools in contact with the working groups that deal with Curriculum Development and drafting of the Democratic School Culture Framework. The WGs can profit greatly from such advice coming from the field and the teachers and heads will gain a feeling of ownership in the process. The secretariat offered to facilitate e-communication via the restricted areas of the website. The secretariat will invite the teachers and directors to the workshops on the public presentation of the draft Curriculum planned for mid June.

Another important development is the publication as of 5 June of the Call for Proposals for the Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Grant Scheme Programme, CFCU/TR2009/0136.01-02, which aims to strengthen awareness and build skills for democratic citizenship among those groups who are stakeholders in the education of children. The full Guidelines for Applicants are available on the following Internet sites: <http://www.cfcu.gov.tr>, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>, and <http://projeler.meb.gov.tr>.

Apart from all this concentrated work on its own products and content, the Project team also continued to follow the latest developments in the field. One of the project officers, Ms. Seda Arican, attended a Consultation Meeting organised by Education Reform Initiative (ERI) to exchange ideas about their draft Education Monitoring Report 2011. The international experts, Prof. David Kerr and Prof. Edward Huddleston, also informed the WGs about the Eurydice report, "Citizenship Education in Europe - more focus on democratic culture at school in Europe". This may be downloaded from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf.

During all this hectic programme, our Project itself was subject to the second round of Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM). The ROM team held several meetings with the project parties in the last week of May. As this coincided with the coordinated work on the draft documents, it gave the ROM representatives the opportunity to meet the international experts. The Secretariat is very much looking forward to the report and the recommendations of the ROM team so as to further improve project performance.

The Board of Education requested that the study visit for the Legislation Review Working Group be postponed to the new academic year starting in September, in order to get the best results possible by including school visits in the programme. The BoE tentatively proposed Germany as a potential country to consider in terms of legislative arrangements.

Project visibility was also maintained through the combined efforts of the MoNE and the CoE. On 9 May, MoNE representatives participated in the Europe Day Fair held at the Youth Park. The opening speeches were made by the EU Minister and Chief Negotiator, Mr Egemen Bağış, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, and HE Ambassador and Head of European Delegation to Turkey, Jean-Maurice Ripert. Project visibility materials were distributed on the MoNE stand, where officials also provided detailed information about the projects implemented by the MoNE.

After all this work, June is expected to be just as an eventful month. The Project team is buzzing with excitement.

The major activities of the coming month can be summarised as follows:

- The six-monthly plans of the WGs for the period June-December will be finalised in close cooperation with the CoE team in the first half of June.
- In the same period, a comprehensive Communication Strategy including a PR campaign designed to communicate the project message efficiently to different target groups will be finalised.
- Curriculum Development and Democratic School Culture WGs will hold a workshop to share their products with a wider audience on 18 – 20 June 2012 in Kızılcahamam. NGOs, pilot school teachers and school principals and academicians are expected to attend the event, which will be a major step before the finalisation of the drafts.
- The regular in-house co-ordination meetings will continue,
- In June, the third generation of national experts will be making further progress with their WGs.
- The Secretariat is already discussing with the working groups the tentative dates for the initial training of teachers in pilot provinces which is foreseen for the last week of August.
- Last but not least, the project team will be finalising the first Annual Report which is due at the end of June 2012.
- Visibility
 - As a result of the increased capacity of the CoE team, the project website is now updated much more quickly and is able to present more up-to-date information to relevant parties. The amount of materials presented on the restricted area of the website increases day by day with the influx of translated materials. Please come and visit us at www.edchreturkey-eu.coe.int
 - As always, you can check our <http://www.facebook.com/groups/dchreankara/> Facebook profile and we tweet from dchreproject@twitter profile ☺