

For a coherent policy frame for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in Europe

Presentation to CULT Commission of the European Parliament on Thursday, 2 April 2009 by Frank Elbers (DARE Network)

First, we would like to suggest to substantially increase the priority of democratic citizenship within the Lifelong Learning agenda and within the Lisbon strategy on education and training as a whole.

Our **second recommendation** is to include reference to **gender equality, social cohesion, diversity, democracy and human rights** in quality assessments of proposals submitted to **EU funding programs** in education and training. This will not only ensure that gender equality, social cohesion, diversity, democracy and human rights are better integrated into education and training programs but will also demonstrate a commitment to the fundamental values of the European Union as incorporated in the Amsterdam Treaty.

Third, in order to ensure sustainability of efforts to promote active citizenship with the Union we propose the **EU stimulates more research, specifically by including indicators on active citizenship in EU commissioned studies as part of a monitoring mechanism** as called for in the Lisbon Strategy. The EU is currently already funding the European module of the IEA study, the international research study on citizenship. Funding inclusion of indicators of active citizenship in ongoing EU research would be a logical extension of this support.

Our **fourth and final recommendation** is for the European Union to actively support a number of regional and international efforts aimed at promoting citizenship and human rights: First, we ask you to support the **Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education** as to be adopted by the COE this year. This Charter provides a framework policy for European states on how to equip citizens with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for life in democratic societies.

We also ask your active support for the implementation of the **World Programme for Human Rights Education**, which is an ongoing effort by the UN Member States to forward active citizenship and human rights, particularly in the formal schooling system.

Finally, we ask you to endorse the **United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training**, which is currently being developed by the Human Rights Council, and which will be a landmark for the international recognition of the importance education and training in human rights and active citizenship. There is a precedence for such support -- of cooperation between the EU and civil society organisations -- to forward the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and its Programme of Action back in 1993, which have been crucial instruments in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide.

(Taken from Frank Elbers (HREA) speech at the EP EAC –Committee)