RECOMMENDATIONS

TO EDUCATION POLICY MAKERS

Fostering a Democratic School Culture in Serbia

Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

Funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented by the Council of Europe

Dr Bojka Đukanović, December 2018.

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ACRONYMS

AP – Action Plan

CDC – Competences for Democratic Culture

EPAN – Education Policy Advisers Network

EU – European Union

ICT – Information and communication technologies

IEP – Individual education plan

MESTD – Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development

ILO – International Labour Organisation

PPP – Preparatory preschool programme

RS – Republic of Serbia

CoE – Council of Europe

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

NSED – National Strategy of Education Development

UN – United Nations

LFES – The Law on Fundamentals of the Education System

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY 4

INTRODUCTION 5

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA 8

1 OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION 8

1.1 STRATEGY OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT 2020 11

1.2. EDUCATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES 12

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM 15

2 DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN EDUCATION IN SERBIA 16

2.1 COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE 20

2.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES AND DEMOCRATIC CULTURE 21

2.3 GENERAL COMPETENCES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPING DEMOCRATIC CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA 21

3 FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE 23

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT “FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE” 24

4.1 PROJECT ORGANISATION 24

4.2 SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT 25

4.3 THE SELECTED COMPETENCES AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE THEM 26

4.4 LESSONS LEARNED: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AS SEEN BY TEACHERS, PROJECT PARTICIPANTS 33

4.5 A REVIEW OF ACHIEVED AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY PARTICIPANTS 43

5 TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: RECOMMENDATIONS 44

6 GUIDELINES TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN EDUCATION 47

6.1 CONCLUSIONS 47

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 50

7 SOURCES / REFERENCES 53

8 APPENDICES 55

8.1 APPENDIX I – EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES 55

8.2 APPENDIX II 63

8.3 APPENDIX III 65

SUMMARY

The Report on Fostering a Democratic School Culture in Serbia includes an introduction to the legal framework for education with laws and bylaws providing for the development of democratic culture through the education system and a detailed presentation of activities implementing the Project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture in Serbia" initiated through the Joint Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe "*Horizontal Facility*" for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The laws in the field of education, bylaws, and different provisions and regulations in the Republic of Serbia fully enable the protection and achievement of all rights of the child. Starting from the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the Anti-Discrimination Law (2009), the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), the Strategy for Education Development 2020 (2012), to ratification of numerous international agreements on human rights, Serbia is accepting and introducing all measures for the protection of human rights, the rights of the child, as well as measures to enhance the democracy of the school system. The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in Article 71 guarantees that everyone is entitled to education ... and that the fundamental principles and instruments of the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System are the "introduction and promotion of the principles of inclusion, equal opportunities for all children, anti-discrimination, anti-segregation, tolerance, and the interest of the child." The system of education must ensure equality and access to education free of discrimination and segregation on the basis of sex, social, cultural, ethnic, religious or other background, place of residence or origin, financial or health status, development disorders or disability.

Apart from the obligation to include all children, the system of education in Serbia is characterised also by individual approach, IEP, balanced education suited to the age and specific needs of the child/ student/ adults, inclusion, pedagogical assistants, and engagement of parents and cooperation with local community.

The challenges faced by the system of education in contemporary, global social circumstances have put forward the need for having education grounded on solid democratic principles and strengthening competences for democratic culture. In line with

these challenges, and in line with its mission, the Council of Europe has developed the concept of non-binding guidelines and recommendations through the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture". The purpose of this intervention is to develop competences for democratic culture and measures aimed at promoting tolerance and interethnic dialogue as fundamental inclusive education principles to be integrated in school development plans. The piloting stage of the Project included twenty schools across Serbia. By applying the Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC), developed by the Education Department of the Council of Europe, the teams of the selected schools made up of teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, and principals developed examples of best practice and piloted them through regular educational and extra-curricular activities, including also the wider local community.

Through a framework of twenty competences from the groups of values, attitudes, skills and the group of knowledge and critical thinking, the schools organised an incredibly great number of diverse activities, with pedagogical approaches appropriate for the development of competences for democratic culture and building a more pleasant, interesting, and safe school environment, empowering at the same time their capacities to eliminate violent, discriminatory and anti-democratic structures in schools and school environment.

The project implementation process is described in this report. Based on the review of the education legislation of the Republic of Serbia, the action plans of pilot schools, questionnaires for participants within the project implementation and managers in education, interviews with pilot school teams and education policy makers, as well as publications and recommendations of the Council of Europe, the project formulated recommendations on how to make the experience sustainable and which measures can be taken in order for Project outcomes to be integrated in school curricula and become an integral part of general guidelines for education policy in the Republic of Serbia.

INTRODUCTION

The activity "Fostering a Democratic School Culture" was initiated within the Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe titled "*Horizontal Facility* for the Western Balkans and Turkey", implemented by the Department for Education of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade.

The project is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and includes a wider group of relevant actors, including the Institute for the Improvement of Education, institutes for education policies and research institutes, the selected pilot schools, local communities, media, NGO's, experts and other international organisations/donors active in Serbia.

The overall project goal is to improve the quality of education by fostering democratic culture in formal education, by implementing anti-discriminatory approaches based on standards and practices of the Council of Europe. The specific objectives include (i) enhancing the knowledge and awareness of the concept, policies, practice and benefits of inclusive education and democratic culture in schools among teachers, teaching staff, pupils, and local communities, and (ii) enhancing the capacities of pilot schools to eliminate prejudices and discriminatory approaches to vulnerable groups and dealing with cases of violence.

The following report includes the overview of legislation and practices in the field of education for democratic culture in the Republic of Serbia, the presentation of project implementation and experiences of pilot schools, conclusions and recommended guidelines on how to turn the experiences of pilot schools into education policies, as well as a number of best practices – activities implemented within the Project (Appendix I).

The conclusions and recommendations within the report resulted from insights into the education legislation of the Republic of Serbia, the experiences, conclusions and recommendations by those who participated in the implementation of the Project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture" collected through their action plans and questionnaires (Appendix II and III), interviews with pilot school teams and managers in education, as well as publications of the Council of Europe *Competences for Democratic Culture*, volume I, and *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, volumes II and III. In collecting data, their processing and interpretation, descriptive methods were used along with a desktop review (review of official documents), interviews and surveys as research techniques. The survey covered all pilot schools´ teams and a number of managers in education and education policy makers. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Institute for the Improvement of Education, and the Institute for Education Quality and

Evaluation; as well as the teams of the secondary school “Miloje Vasić” Veliko Gradište, primary school “Veljko Dugošević” Turija, the Hospitality and Tourism School from Belgrade, the primary school “Matko Vuković” Subotica, and primary school “Jovan Jovanović Zmaj” Đurđevo.

The quotes used in this report, which are not authorised, have been taken from the answers provided to the survey.

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

1 OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[1] the Republic of Serbia committed itself to ensure the achievement of rights for all children, especially the right to education, while the Constitution of the RS guarantees by its Article 71 that in Serbia everyone is entitled to education[2] which is free and mandatory in primary education, and free in secondary education. All citizens have equal access under equal conditions to higher education. The key principles and instruments of the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System (Official Gazette RS, No. 88/2017) are: introducing and affirming inclusive approach to education, equal opportunities for all children, anti-discrimination, anti-segregation, tolerance and the interest of the child.

The characteristics of the system of education in Serbia include enrolment and inclusion of all children, individual approach, IEP, balanced education suited to the age and specific needs of the child/ student/ adults, inclusion, pedagogical assistants, and engagement of parents and cooperation with local community. The system of education must ensure equality and access to education free of discrimination and segregation on the basis of sex, social, cultural, ethnic, religious or other background, place of residence or origin, financial or health status, development disorders or disability

Over the past decade the Republic of Serbia has ratified a number of multilateral treaties relevant to human rights: the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol[3], the International Convention on Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance[4], the Maternity Protection Convention of the ILO No. 183[5], the Revised European Social Charter[6], the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human

[1] "Official Gazette SFRY - International agreements", No. 15/90 and "Official Gazette SRY - International agreements", No. 4/96 and 2/97

[2] The right to education implies that every person is entitled to education and upbringing. Citizens of the Republic of Serbia are equal in exercising their right to education and upbringing irrespective of sex, race, national, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation, social or cultural origin, financial status, age, physical and psychological constitution, development difficulties or disability, political belief or other personal characteristics.

[3] „Official Gazette RS"-International agreements, number 42/09

[4] „Official Gazette RS"-International agreements, number 1/11

[5] „Official Gazette RS " - International agreements, number 1/10

„Official Gazette RS", number 42/09

Beings[7], the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse[8], the CoE Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society[9], the Convention on Cybercrime[10], the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage[11], the European Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes[12], the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine; the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine[13], the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness[14].

The Anti-Discrimination Law[15] was adopted on 26 March 2009. The Law introduces a general prohibition of discrimination[16], the forms and cases of discrimination[17], and procedures for protection against discrimination, as well as the establishment of the Commissioner for Equality as an independent state body, autonomous in its operations prescribed by the Law.

The following documents have been adopted in recent years: the National Strategy for Empowerment of Women and Enhancement of Gender Equality (2009), the National Strategy for Occupational Health and Safety for the period 2009 - 2012 (2009), the Strategy against Drugs for the period 2009 - 2013 (2009), the Strategy for Migrations Management (2009), the National Action Plan for Implementation of the Resolution 1325 UNSC – Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia 2010 - 2015 (2010), the Strategy for Personal Data Protection (2010), the Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma in RS (2010), the Strategy for Development of the Free Legal Aid System in the Republic of Serbia (2010), the National Action Plan against trafficking in human beings 2009 - 2011 (2010), the **Action Plan**

[7] „Official Gazette RS", number 19/09
[8] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 1/10
[9] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 1/10
[10] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 19/2009
[11] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 1/10
[12] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 13/10
[13] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 12/10
[14] „Official Gazette RS" - International agreements, number 8/2011
[15] „Official Gazette RS", number 22/09
[16] Prohibition of discrimination is defined as follows: "activities are prohibited in institutions which threaten, belittle, discriminate or set aside persons or groups of persons, on the basis of: race, national, ethnic, linguistic, religious or gender belonging, physical or psychological properties, development disorders or disabilities, health, age, social or cultural origin, financial status, or political affiliation, and instigation or failure to prevent such activities, as well as on other bases prescribed by the anti-discrimination law.
[17] Discrimination of persons or groups of persons means any direct or indirect, open or covert exclusion or limitation of rights and freedoms, unequal treatment or failure to act, or any undue making of difference by granting priority. Measures introduced in order to achieve full equality, protection and progress of persons or groups of persons who are in an unequal position shall not be considered discriminatory.

for implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence 2010 - 2012 (2010), the Strategy to reduce overloading in accommodation facilities in institutions for enforcement of penal sanctions 2010 - 2015 (2010), The Strategy for Personal Data Protection (2010), the Strategy for Development of Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia until 2016 (2011), the National Strategy for Employment 2011 - 2020 (2011), the National Strategy to Address the Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons 2011 - 2014 (2011), the National Strategy for Prevention and Fight against Domestic Violence against Women and Violence in Intimate Partnerships, along with the Action Plan for implementation 2010 - 2015 (2011), the National Strategy of Social Housing (2011).

Since the Republic of Serbia on 26 March 2009 adopted the ***Anti-Discrimination Law***, and on 31 August 2009 the **Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities** and the ***Law on National Councils of National Minorities***, the key national legislative framework has been put in place for the improvement of protection of rights of national minorities and a certain promotion of national symbols, such as language, tradition, and culture. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia is implementing international and national projects and programmes relevant to the fight against racism and discrimination, intended to school pupils, the teaching staff, local communities and/or other line ministries, in order to create a safer and incentive environment for all children and raising awareness of the majority population of issues related to this field.

In the field of fighting violence, abuse, neglect and discrimination, the following bylaws have been adopted:

- Rulebook on criteria for recognition of forms of discrimination by teaching staff, children, pupils or third persons in institutions of education and upbringing[18]
- Rulebook on protocol of how the institutions respond to violence, abuse or neglect[19]
- Rulebook on protocol of how the institutions respond in case of doubt or determined discriminatory behaviour or violation of honour or dignity of persons.[20]

[18] "Official Gazette RS", number 22/16
[19] "Official Gazette RS", number 30/10
[20] "Official Gazette RS", number 65/18

1.1 STRATEGY OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT 2020[21]

The Strategy of Education Development in Serbia until 2020 has two basic purposes:

1) **To be an integrated basis (framework) shaping the key laws, bylaws and other regulatory instruments and mechanisms for functioning and development of education in Serbia, and**
2) **To be the key strategic instrument whereby the system of education in Serbia efficiently and in an appropriate manner makes a shift from the existing into the desired and achievable state until the year 2020.**

In line with the Strategy and the laws in the field of education, the key principles and tools for the achievement of equitable education are: **introducing and reaffirming inclusive education approach,** equal opportunities for all children, anti-discrimination, de-segregation, tolerance, the best interest of the child, enrolment of all children, individual approach and individual education plans (IEP), harmonised standards, inclusive teams in schools, teaching assistants, engagement of parents, cooperation with the local community. The education system must ensure for all children, students and adults equal rights in access to education free of discrimination based on sex, social status, cultural or ethnic origin, religion, place of residence, financial or health status, disability, or physical or mental development.

Persons with development disorders and disabilities have the right to education and upbringing which takes into consideration their educational and development needs within the regular system of education along with individual or group support or a separate preschool or school group, in line with this special law.

The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System prescribes that **a child with development disorders or disabilities shall be educated in primary school together with all children.** When it is in the best interest of the child, the child **may enrol in special education school** according to the Law. Children with development disorders or disabilities are entitled to IEP (individual education plan) which prepares the school inclusive team in cooperation of the parents of the child, and the children with development disorders or disabilities are

[21] http://www.mpn.gov.rs/strategije-2020/

entitled to free transportation irrespective of the distance between the place of residence and the school.

Mandatory preparatory preschool programme / PPP is an important measure enabling quality preparation for future education by including all children in the preparatory preschool programme, thus affecting quality preschool upbringing and education, through acquisition of different experiences and opportunities for play, learning and participating in joint activities, and facilitating a smooth transfer to the next level of education and ensuring continuity in the upbringing-education process. Attending the PPP is free of charge for all children and is financed from the national budget. **Enrolment in the first grade of children with appropriate age** covers all children who, before the beginning of the school year, are between 6.5 and 7.5 years of age. Children older than 7.5 may enrol into the first grade or another appropriate grade based on previous knowledge check if, due to illness or other reasons, he/she was not enrolled in time in the first grade. Instead of assessing the readiness for starting school, **testing is conducted** only after the child starts school, in the mother tongue of the child, meaning that if the child does not speak the Serbian language (or has poorer fluency in Serbian), the testing can be attended by another person (interpreter, teaching assistant, representative of an NGO, parent, etc.). Testing of children with motoric or sensory disorders is done by using testing forms to which the child can best respond to.

1.2 Education of national minorities

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the **Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 - 2025**.[22] The Strategy prescribes that its implementation shall be ensured through the adoption and implementation of **two-year action plans**. For the purposes of achieving the objectives of the Strategy, an Action Plan has been adopted for the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 - 2025 – for the period 2016 to 2018. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development is working actively on improving access and quality of education for the Roma children. Knowing that education is the key link leading to sustainable social inclusion and breaking the cycle of poverty, the Ministry is investing additional efforts

[22] „Official Gazette RS", number 26/2016

through a set of measures and activities aimed at development of the Roma community in general and thereby to the wide society. Social and personal benefits of education are great, and therefore enrolment procedures for primary school have been simplified to increase the coverage of Roma children. Children from vulnerable groups can **enrol school without any evidence of parents' residence and other documentation. Testing of children is conducted only after enrolment and it can be conducted in the Romani language.** Additionally, in the course of primary education, additional support measures are put in place, if necessary, by developing individual education plans, and other institutions are engaged, for example centres for social work and health care institutions. **Scholarships, loans, accommodation and food** as support measures are systemically implemented in continuity, and of the total amount for scholarships and loans awarded, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development sets aside 10% for students and 10% for pupils from vulnerable social groups. In the case of higher education students, such measures also include exemption from payment of tuition, and measures whereby students' dormitories within their capacities set aside for this purpose 10% of their capacities. One of the results of scholarships for secondary school pupils is reduced rates of dropping out from school, from more than 7% to 3%, and the school achievements of pupils receiving scholarships is much improved, especially among girls. **Since the systemic introduction of affirmative measures** for enrolment in secondary schools (as of academic year 2005/2006) a total of **6,104 pupils have been enrolled** (of which 55% girls). The MESTD through the work of school administrations is collecting data on the effects of such measures. More than 65% of pupils enrolled through affirmative measures, and those who are beneficiaries of scholarships and have mentoring support, do complete secondary education. **Through monitoring of effects of affirmative measures for enrolment of Roma pupils under more favourable conditions in secondary schools it was determined that in academic year 2017/2018 a total of 1,969 Roma pupils were enrolled.**

The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System in Article 5 – **Use of language**[23], **prescribes that education and pedagogy work is delivered in the Serbian language and the Cyrillic script, while for members of national minorities the education and pedagogy work is delivered in the language of that national minority, with the possibility to deliver the**

[23] "Official Gazette RS", No. 88/2017, 27/18 (I) – other laws and 27/18 (II) – other laws, Article 5

education and pedagogy work bilingually in both the language of the national minority and the Serbia language, in line with a separate law. The part of the Law dealing with the objectives of education, **Article 8,** includes the objective "to develop and respect racial, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, sexual and age equality, tolerance and respect of diversity, develop personal and national identity, develop awareness and sense of belonging to the Republic of Serbia, respect and foster the Serbian language and the mother tongue, tradition and culture of the Serbian people and national minorities, develop multiculturalism, respect and preserve the national and world cultural heritage". With respect to the network of institutions, the LFES in **Article 104** prescribes that in units of local government in which the language and script of a national minority is in official use, or in which the education and pedagogy work is delivered in the language and script of the national minority, **the document determining the network of public preschool and school institutions and public primary schools** is to be adopted ... with the previously acquired opinion of the relevant national council of national minority whose language and script is in official use in the said unit of local government, or whose language is used in education and pedagogy work.

In the territory of the Republic of Serbia education is delivered in a total of 1,302 primary schools, 61 primary and secondary music and ballet schools, 48 schools for adult education, 44 primary special schools, and 23 secondary special schools and 573 secondary schools, for a total of 847,719 pupils. Education is delivered in the mother tongue for members of **8 national minorities: Albanian, Bulgarian, Bosniak, Hungarian, Romanian, Rusyns, Slovak, and Croatian national minority.** During the academic year 2016/17 primary and secondary schools were attended by 44,481 pupils (5.06%) in their mother tongue, and in 2017/18 primary and secondary schools are attended by a total of 44,633 pupils in 2,487 non-combined classes and 239 combined classes, which makes up 5.27% of the total number of primary and secondary school pupils in the Republic of Serbia. During the academic year 2017/18 there is a mild increase in the number of pupils attending their complete education in their mother tongue.

1.2.1 The Law on Textbooks

The Law on Textbooks[24] in Article 3, *Textbooks in the language and script of a national minority,* defines these textbooks in more detail**:** a textbook in the language and script of a national minority is:

1. a textbook in the language and script of a national minority which is published in the territory of the Republic of Serbia;
2. a textbook in the language and script of a national minority which is a translation of the textbook approved in the Serbian language;
3. an addition to the textbook used for delivery of the adjusted part of the curriculum and learning or the subjects relevant to the specific national minority;
4. a textbook in the language and script of a national minority which is published in another country and approved in accordance with the said Law.

Textbooks in the language and script of national minorities are listed in the Catalogue of textbooks for primary schools, and the list of approved such textbooks for the academic year 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19[25], includes a total of 1,521 textbooks in the language and script of national minorities for preschool, primary and secondary education. In May 2018 and Appendix to the Catalogue of Textbooks– primary schools – Textbooks in the language and script of national minorities for academic year 2018/2019[26] was published. The website http://www.mpn.gov.rs/udzbenici/ lists additional 174 titles which are available to teachers, parents and pupils, **of which 103 titles were produced through memorandums of cooperation in the field of publishing the missing textbooks in the language and script of national minorities, and the costs of preparation and publication of textbooks was covered by the budget of the Republic of Serbia. This means that 1,695 textbooks in the language and script of national minorities are available to pupils.**

1.3 Development of the education quality assurance system

With respect to monitoring and evaluating the development of competences for democratic culture within the system of education and pedagogy of the Republic of Serbia

[24] „Official Gazette RS“, No. 27/2018, Article 3
[25] http://opendata.mpn.gov.rs/rezultatikompletiprint.html
[26] „Official Gazette RS”, number 9/16

a significant role is played by the process of external evaluation of quality of school work[27] **and of preschool institutions as well as the assessment of the obtained results.** The Republic of Serbia in 2011 established the **National Framework for evaluation of quality of education and pedagogy institutions**. This Framework prescribes the evaluation of 7 areas of quality (*Planning and programming, Teaching and learning, Educational achievements, Support to pupils, Ethos, Resources, School work organisation, and Management*) which are monitored and evaluated based on 29 standards and 137 indicators. It should be noted that this **framework for evaluation of quality of work of education and pedagogic institutions is used also in the process of self-evaluation** (carried out by the institutions themselves). **There is a direct link between developing democratic competences and the framework for evaluation in two areas of quality – Support to pupils, and Ethos.** Standards and indicators in these two areas are very important guidelines to education advisors, evaluators and the teaching staff for development, monitoring and evaluation of democratic culture in educational institutions.

In 2017 a process was launched to review the concept of external evaluation in order to further improve it.

2 DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN EDUCATION IN SERBIA

The process of general democratisation of the society in Serbia, in recent decades, resulted in the need for changes in the education system. According to the *Strategy of Education of the Republic of Serbia until 2020*, the mission of the education system in Serbia in the 21st century is to ensure the key foundations for life and knowledge-based development of every individual, the society and the state.

On the basis of full acceptance of the role which education is to have in the economic, cultural, social, political, democratic and every other development and improvement of the strategic, cooperative and competitive capacity and position of Serbia in the contemporary world, and especially in the European Union, and on the basis of the present situation of education in Serbia, **the following key goals of long-term development of education have been identified**:

[27] See: www.ceo.edu.rs

- Raising the quality of the process and the outcomes of the education to the highest attainable level;
- Increasing the coverage of the Serbian population at all levels of education, from pre-school education to lifelong learning;
- Achieving and maintaining the relevance of education, especially the form which is entirely or partly funded from public sources, by harmonising the structure of the education system with the immediate and developmental needs of individuals, economic, social, cultural, research, education, public, administrative and other systems;
- Increasing the efficiency of use of educational resources.

Human rights education is incorporated in education programmes through mandatory and optional subjects. The complete programme content relevant to education for democracy and civil society has been introduced in the plan and programme for primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Serbia and is delivered through the subject Civic Education. Civic education is studied in primary and secondary schools as one of the two mandatory optional subjects (optional along with Religious education) and is delivered one class per week.

Civic education was introduced in the education system in the academic year 2001/2002. Initially, it had a status of a facultative subject, as an alternative to Religious education, and could be enrolled by pupils of initial grades of primary and secondary schools. Subsequently, by legal provisions introduced in 2003, 2004, and 2009, and by the accompanying bylaws, it was given different status at different times – optional, mandatory optional selected for the specific cycle, and mandatory optional selected for each academic year. **It is delivered for all grades from 1st to 8th grade of primary and all grades of secondary education**. In primary schools it is delivered by class teachers, teaching associates, teachers of the Serbian/mother tongue, teachers of foreign languages, geography teachers. In secondary schools it is delivered by all teachers having the right to teach any subject in secondary education.

After twelve years of delivery of this subject, a need was identified at system level to review and improve the plan and programme by designing new training for teachers. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development entrusted this task to the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation.

The scope of the evaluation included:

1. Evaluation of opinions and assessment of teachers delivering the subject Civic education about the quality of teaching curricula for all grades of primary and secondary schools and the needs for their improvement.

2. Evaluation of type and level of development of professional capacities of teachers delivering the subject Civic education about the quality of teaching curricula for all grades of primary and secondary schools and the needs for their improvement and quality assurance.

3. Evaluation of pupils of primary and secondary schools attending the subject Civic education concerning the quality of curricula and quality of teaching.

Conclusions of the evaluation[28]:

- There is practically one hundred percent agreement of respondents that education for democracy and civic society is necessary in the second cycle of primary and secondary schools.
- About 90% of respondents think that **the subject should be studied in all grades** of the second cycle of primary education, and 95% of respondents think that **the subject deserves a place in all grades of secondary education.**
- **It is best to have the subject Civic education a separate and mandatory subject.**
- The biggest advantage of studying this subject is that it is a sound basis for responsible and engaged life of pupils in a contemporary society.
- The pupils positively view the teaching in the subject Civic education exactly because it is a **different way of working**, primarily through discussion and debate.
- Despite the identified weaknesses, the subject has lived up to the expectations of about one half of pupils or 47%, and more than one half of parents or 57%.
- This subject, apart from developing the ethical judgement among pupils, should contribute through ethical education to group development as an ethical community founded on the norms of trust, engagement and responsibility.

[28] See: www.mpn.gov.rs

- Additional training of teachers and the enhancement of the overall social environment in the school could contribute to developing independent personalities of pupils and democratic relations in schools.

The subject Civic education has a significant educational-pedagogical potential, and for this reason the review of curricula and programmes is conducted, and there is also a **need for support to initial training of teachers through new modules during university education, so that the training of teachers is not based on two-day courses**.

Democratic education requires an **integrated approach**, meaning that it is not achieved only through separate subjects and classes in school, but is integrated through all school activities and the overall school organisation.

In line with this need, in the course of the academic year 2014/15 translations were made of six manuals of the Council of Europe from the edition **Living Democracy** and they are posted on the website of the MESTD and the website http://www.living-democracy.rs/ as to be accessible to teachers, pupils and parents in order to develop skills and knowledge through workshops intended to build democratic attitudes and principles of tolerance. These manuals are a unique education resource promoting democracy and human rights in schools. They combine the preparation of teachers with the ideas for action in the classroom.

Additionally, the old law on the foundations of education (2009) introduced the obligation to establish **pupils' parliaments** in the seventh and eighth grade of primary school and in secondary school, and the Law prescribes the respect of the principle of participation also in exercising individual rights of the child in the education system, while the manner of ensuring the implementation of this principle is regulated in separate bylaws.

Human rights education is implemented also in the relevant national and provincial authorities and independent state bodies for the protection of human rights. These authorities and bodies conduct training within their regular and project activities. **Human rights training** is also conducted by relevant civil society organisation.

The Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade is delivering the **Specialised Studies of Human Rights Law.** The specialised studies are intended for staff employed in state bodies and the judiciary, as well as to journalists, those working in the civil society

sector and international organisations. Training is conducted through seminars, conferences and lectures.

2.1 Competences for Democratic Culture

The Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation was founded by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The scope of its activities is defined by the **Law on the Foundations of Education System**. The scope of work of the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation includes monitoring, ensuring and improving the quality systems in education and their development. The Institute provides development, advisory, research and other technical activities in preschool, primary and secondary education. The Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation consists of three centres[29]:

1. Centre for development of programmes and textbooks,
2. Centre for occupational training and adult education, and
3. Centre for professional development of staff employed in education.

One of the key activities of the **Centre for professional development of staff employed in education** is accreditation of programmes of professional development of teachers, educators and school psychologists and pedagogues. The accreditation process includes not only the staff of the Centre but also experts from universities, institutes, school and preschool institutions.

Each programme of professional development of teachers, apart from the priority areas defined by the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development** for the previous three years, develops one of the four competence for teachers, educators and school psychologists and pedagogues. These competences are:

- K1 – the field of expertise
- K2 – teaching and learning
- K3 – support to pupils' personal development, and
- K4 – communication and cooperation.

Competences K3 and K4 are directly linked to the topic of democratic culture. It is also worth noting that the existing Catalogue of programmes of professional development includes 980 programmes. Of that number, 247 programmes or 25% are aimed at

[29] http://zuov.gov.rs/centar-za-razvoj-programa-i-udzbenika/

developing the competence K3, 118 programmes or 12%, develop the competence K4, meaning that 37% of all programmes support the development of democratic culture.

2.2 Teaching and learning programmes and democratic culture

The new curricula and programmes which are centred on learning outcomes for the first and fifth grades of primary school and the first year of secondary school will be put into practice in the Republic of Serbia starting with the academic year 2018/2019. Currently training is being delivered for implementation of the new programmes and this training covers teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues and school principals (21,500 teachers). The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development assigned to the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation to prepare and deliver this training.

The training covers topics such as: planning, delivery and evaluation of teaching and learning, general competences in education, project-centred teaching and entrepreneurship.

The general competences are directly linked to democratic culture, and based on key competences.

According to the Recommendation **2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and Council of Europe** of 18 December 2006 **on key competences for lifelong learning**[30]**,** the key competences for lifelong learning are defined as a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the environment. They are especially necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

This reference framework is especially relevant to vulnerable groups whose education potential requires support. The examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, those leaving school early, the long-term unemployed, persons with disabilities, migrants, etc. This reference framework selected eight key competences.[31]

2.3 General competences and their contribution to developing democratic culture and education in the Republic of Serbia

All teaching and learning processes in all school subjects should lead to developing the general competences. Only then the system of education will achieve the goals set to it by

[30] The Official Gazette L 394 30. 12. 2006

[31] The eight competences are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competences, learning to learn, social and civic competence, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

society. General competences are developed through all school subjects and all subjects contribute to them even when the link is not too obvious. They are used in different situations and contexts, and also for problem solving. All pupils need them for their personal fulfilment, development and employment and they are the basis for lifelong learning.

In the education system of the Republic of Serbia there are 11 general competences and they are listed in the Law on the Fundamentals of Education System.[32]

The general competences are the following:

1. Digital competence
2. Aesthetic competence
3. Learning to learn
4. Communication
5. Environmental responsibility
6. Responsible participation in democratic society
7. Entrepreneurship and focusing on entrepreneurship
8. Handling data and information
9. Problem solving
10. Cooperation
11. Being responsible for one's health

Some competences, such as the aesthetic competence, communication, cooperation, environmental responsibility and healthy lifestyle are more or less directly developing democratic culture. Of course, the responsible participation in democratic society competence is directly involved in development of democratic culture.

2.3.1 General competence – Responsible participation in democratic society (description)

Pupils understand and accept the significance of the principles of justice, freedom, solidarity, national, sex, religious and ethnic equality, and responsibility as the basis for democratic society, and actively participate in school life (peer teams, pupils' parliaments, etc.) and their community (family, local community) in line with their age. They respect and promote human rights, the rights of the child and of national minorities, as well as personal and national dignity. Pupils are familiar with their social roles and strengthen their identity, personal integrity, independence, confidence and a positive relation with others. They

[32] See: "Official Gazette RS", 88/2017

respect equality of different communities, their traditions and cultural identities. They are responsible for the decisions and choices which they make and they act by respecting others around them. They defend their opinions and positions while respecting conflicting opinions and using the acquired decision-making procedures.

Indicators:

- They respect human rights and freedoms.
- They are familiar with the rights of the child and basic human rights and obligations, can identify their violation and are capable of defending them.
- They act responsibly and with tolerance in society.
- They practice the democratic procedures of the society in decision-making and choices; they respect the decisions made by the majority and respect the opinion of the minority.
- They foster their national cultural heritage and participate actively in intercultural dialogue.
- They promote positive social values in different activities (for inst. humanitarian, environmental, cultural activities); they fight violence and discrimination on any basis (for inst. religious, national, sex, age, ethnic, etc.), they initiate activities against addiction disorders, animal abuse, etc.).

The challenges that education faces in contemporary, global social circumstances lead to the need to emphasise the aspects of democratic education and upbringing, stronger integration of democratic principles and values in educational curricula, strengthening competences for democratic culture.

In line with the increasingly pressing need for education flexible to adjust to the social changes and respond to their demands, and in line with its mission, the Council of Europe has initiated the project “Fostering a Democratic School Culture.”.

3 FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE

The most recently developed concept of the Council of Europe is the Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) which pupils are to acquire in order to be active and successful actors of life in the culture of democracy. The competences have been developed in order to be introduced into education systems. They are non-binding guidelines and

recommendations offered to member states, who can use them and adjust this framework to all levels of education in a manner which is most appropriate to them.

The purpose of this intervention is to have the development of competences for democratic culture and measures promoting tolerance and interethnic dialogue integrated, as fundamental inclusive education principles, into the development plans of pilot schools. Along with the approach at the level of a whole school (holistic approach) in its ecological environment, it is necessary to also understand the curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, and teacher training as linked to Competences for Democratic Culture, as well as the broader context of the legal, institutional and social-economic context in Serbia, as it impacts the development of these competences.

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT "FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE"

4.1 PROJECT ORGANISATION

The schools which applied and were selected for participation in the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture", 20 schools from across the country, were ready to fully promote the concept of democratic culture in schools through education, training, awareness raising, information, practice and activities aimed at empowering pupils by providing knowledge, skills and understanding, and enabling the development of attitudes and behaviours whereby these pupils will be made capable to achieve and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and play an active role in democratic life, with the objective of promoting and protecting democracy and rule of law; they demonstrated readiness to work on enhancing inclusiveness and extend measures for elimination of prejudices and discriminatory approaches to Roma and other vulnerable groups, and to address cases of violence through strategic plans and policies including special measures to fight discrimination and mechanisms to monitor such measures.

Before the project implementation started, local coordinators for schools were selected and trained (training of trainers). The local coordinators then visited all the schools and introduced the concept of competences for democratic culture. The schools then selected 3 priority competences which they would be implementing in schools.

During the first *peer learning* which was organised in form of a three-day workshop for project participants, 100 school representatives acquired knowledge on improving the

specific competences (Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices, Valuing democracy, justice, decency, equality and rule of law, Valuing human dignity and human rights), their connection with the national legislation and the strategic framework, and the schools developed draft action plans for the coming period. The workshop was delivered by local coordinators.

After the workshop, the local coordinators provided support to schools to finalise their action plans, and the schools started implementing the action plans.

During the second three-day (peer learning) workshop with 100 representatives from 20 schools the schools exchanged experiences and knowledge which they acquired until that time regarding certain competences for democratic culture, and elaborated in more detail the action plans for the coming academic year. This workshop was also delivered by local coordinators.

Local coordinators were the on-going support to school teams through regular visits, instructions, interviews with all school partners (stakeholders) and local community representatives.

4.2 SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT

The schools which participated in the project are the following:

Primary schools: Bratstvo (Novi Pazar), Dušan Dugalić (Beograd), Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (Đurđevo), Miroslav Mika Antić (Pančevo), Radoje Domanović (Niš), Sveti Sava (Vladičin Han), Veljko Dugošević (Turija), Žarko Zrenjanin (Banatsko Novo Selo), Zdravko Gložanski (Bečej), Matko Vuković (Subotica).

Secondary schools: Grammar school (Požarevac), Agricultural-Chemical School "Dr Đorđe Radić" (Kraljevo), Agricultural School with Students' Dormitory "Sonja Marinković" (Požarevac), Fashion and Beauty School (Niš), Secondary School "Miloje Vasić" (Veliko Gradište), Technical School "23. maj" (Pančevo), Technical School (Bor), Hospitality and Tourism School (Belgrade), Zemun Grammar School (Zemun); School with dormitory for pupils with hearing and speech disability "11. maj" (Jagodina) – primary and secondary.

The teams of selected schools, made up of teachers, pedagogues, and psychologists, organised an incredible number of diverse activities, with pedagogical approaches appropriate to developing competences for democratic culture and creating a more attractive, interesting and safer school environment, empowering at the same time their

capacities to eliminate violent, discriminatory or anti-democratic structures in the school and the school environment.

4.3 THE SELECTED COMPETENCES AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE THEM

Of the twenty competences included in the basic model, most schools opted for the competences from the group of attitudes *Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices* (9) and competences from the group of skills *cooperation skills* (9) and *conflict resolution skills* (8). The following are the competences *valuing human dignity and human rights*, the group of values (6), *valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and rule of law,* group of values (5), *responsibility* group of attitudes (4), *respect* group of attitudes (3), *empathy* group of skills (3), *valuing cultural diversity* group of values (2), *civic mindedness* group of attitudes (2), *knowledge and critical understanding of the self* from group of knowledge and critical understanding (2), *knowledge and critical understanding of the world* group of knowledge and critical understanding (2), *valuing cultural diversity* group of values (1), *analytical and critical thinking skills* group of skills (1), *flexibility and adaptability* group of skills (1), *skills of listening and observing* from the group of skills (1), and *linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills* group of skills (1).

Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices, as an attitude to people following different cultural or religious patterns, world views or actions different from ours was developed through many project activities, for instance through marking of the Day of Democratic Culture, or joint classes for pupils from different school classes and of different nationality (ex. Serbian and Hungarian), through workshops on interculturality, class community sessions on the topic of “Stereotypes and Prejudices”, pilot classes on the topic of religious buildings, religious communities, their customs, cultures, holidays, etc. the expected outcome of mutual respect, accepting otherness, and providing support was achieved through peer education facilitated by teachers of the Serbian language and teachers of foreign languages, religious teachers, and teachers of history, IT, art and music.

Cooperation skills, implying good cooperation with others, team work on solving tasks and conducting action encouraging pupils to participate and by their actions contribute to the

group in achieving the set goals[33] encouraged through different forms of peer learning and support to learning, preparation of the Days of Democratic Culture, pupils' participation in theatre performances, organising a week of sports activities, cooperation with citizens from the local community on preserving the environment. Raising awareness of relevance of cooperation and cooperation skills among all school actors and at all levels - this desired outcome was developed through many joint activities, responsible and constructive work of team members, teams, organisations, and the community.

Conflict resolution skills necessary for non-violent, peaceful mediation to influence the parties in conflict to come up with an optimum solution acceptable to all sides – these skills were developed through activities such as making a documentary film on peer violence, workshop with the pupils' parliament on the topic of preventing violence, performing a theatre play – a role play on tolerance, humanity, understanding, resolving and overcoming conflicts. By acquiring different skills necessary for conflict solving and prevention of all kinds of violence in and out of schools, as the expected outcomes, the actors also achieved understanding of the importance of prevention and peaceful conflict resolution.

Expected outcomes: school practice shows that the activities developed sensitivity for otherness and a higher level of understanding the position of socially vulnerabel groups. The school is a supportive environment valuing and celebrating diversity; everyone is treated with respect. The stakeholders understand the importance of prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts (pupils, teachers, parents). The school developed cooperation at all levels.

Fashion and Beauty School, Niš

Valuing human dignity and human rights, a value based on the general belief that every human being has equal value, same dignity, and thus the right to the same respect and entitlement to the same human rights and fundamental freedoms, and consequently deserves to be treated in this way – this value was encouraged through activities such as marking the Human Rights Day, designing banners with messages relevant to democratic culture – valuing and respecting diversity, tolerance, non-discrimination, rights, actions for assessment of attitudes to gender equality, many workshops on the topic of stereotypes, prejudices, the respect to diversity, and sending affirmative messages of the self and of

[33] See: Appendix I, Examples of best practice, example 4 – cooperative learning

others, organising the living library; the expected outcomes were demonstrated through the achieved learning environment fostering the culture of inclusiveness, accepting diversity, fostering interculturality, and the pupils feeing accepted in the school environment; school ethos was developed based on respect of diversity.

Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and rule of law, a competence from the group of values based on the general belief that society should function and be led by democratic processes respecting the principles of justice, fairness, equality and rule of law – within the project activities this competence was developed through different school subjects (for example, through the teaching of history and the teaching unit *Ancient Greece,* pupils learned about democracy and its origins), also through the project on the topic of getting familiar with and promoting the **values of the EU and of the Council of Europe**, through banners designed for promoting the values of democratic culture, through **selecting the most tolerant pupil**,[34] marking the World Day of Social Justice, through the debate for pupils and parents "I am different, I have the right"; but also through sports cheering[35], through **organising a small football tournament** developing awareness of the importance of fair play, tolerance and respecting the rules of the game and respecting the opponent. These and many other activities led to the achievement of the desired outcome – the school becomes a safe environment for all; the school is a holder and promoter of democratic values in its environment, and curricula and extra-curricular activities are enriched with content of democratic culture.

Responsibility as the ability to take a stand on one's own actions, implying consideration of one's own actions, deciding how to act appropriately in an ethically acceptable manner, acting in line with such decisions, and consequently consider oneself responsible for the outcome of such decisions – this value was encouraged by different activities such as organising and marking the International Family Day "Strong Family – Stronger Community", through school subjects such as biology with the teaching unit *factors and importance of protecting animals*, and others. In order to raise awareness of the importance of one's actions in an ethically acceptable way and with personal responsibility for the outcome of actions taken, the expected outcome was that "pupils and parents will act responsibly and

[34] See: Appendix I, Examples of best practice, example 1
[35] See: Appendix I, Examples of best practice, example 2

cooperatively in school-related situations, will respect the principles of democracy and rule of law in their actions and actions taken at their own initiative and the initiative of the school", and on-going daily promotion and development of the sense of responsibility, respect and dignity and the rights of every person.

Respect, expressing respect and a positive attitude to someone or something, based on the judgement that they are by nature important and valuable, as a position of respecting those who follow different cultural or religious patterns, world views or practices different from ours – this value is key for intercultural dialogue and democratic culture, and the schools decided to promote the development of this competence and encourage it through activities such as selecting the most tolerant pupil. The goal and the expected outcome in this case was to adopt regular daily promotion and development of the sense of responsibility, respect and respect of dignity and rights of every person, and respect of different beliefs and opinions in order to achieve efficient intercultural dialogue and democracy.

Empathy, a competence to feel the thoughts, understanding and feelings of others, and see and understand the world from the perspective of others – was developed through workshops of expressing feelings, the model class of the tiflopedagogue – as a way of functioning and education for persons with impaired vision or blind persons, by visiting the occupational centre of the association "Half Way" (working with persons with development impairments), going to theatre performances dealing with the topics of empathy, conflict solving, openness to other cultures, beliefs, world views and practices. A good example that was used to sensitise the school and the local community to embrace diversity was the inclusive performance from Jagodina "Differently Awake". The schools dealt with this competence expecting to achieve increased empathy among pupils, parents and the teaching staff, reducing prejudice and discrimination to different ethnic groups, minorities, socially vulnerable and sensitive groups.

Valuing cultural diversity, a competence from the group of values based on the general belief that belonging to a different culture, cultural diversity and pluralism of perspectives, views and practices should be viewed as richness of culture, respected and fostered – this competence was promoted through numerous activities, such as the debate "Building Bridges, not Walls" (familiarising pupils with the important features of Novi Pazar and its

surroundings as a nationally mixed area), marking the Day of Rusyns, Roma, etc., Carnival of Cultures, Carnival of European Cultures (French, Russian, Italian, German, Serbian), the International Food Day, and so on. The expected outcomes of these activities are that pupils develop the sense of belonging to the school and community in which they live.

Multiculturality enriches a young person and broadens the perspetive.

Civic mindedness as an attitude to community or social group to which one belongs, developed sense of belonging to the group, sense of living together with others and sense of how one's actions impact the life of others, solidarity with other members of the community and sense of civic duty and civic obligation to the community – this was developed through many joint activities with partner schools, organising the Neighbour Day, Kindness Day, marking the Europe Day, participating in art and literary competition "Building Bridges among Generations" invited by the Office for Equality in Belgrade on the occasion of 1 October, the International Day of the Elderly, and many other activities leading to the expected outcome that pupils, professors, parents and other members of the wider community be enabled to live in a civic society.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the self, understanding one's own thinking, convictions, feelings and motivations, and one's cultural belonging and world view – this competence was encouraged through interesting activities such as a thematic day "I as a Citizen", workshop for pupils "Is this Me?" aimed at developing the sense of the self and how others see us, with the expected outcomes being developing the ability of pupils and teachers to objectively perceive their actions and understand the causes and consequences.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world, the competence which implies mastering the huge volume of knowledge and critical thinking in different fields including politics, law, human rights, culture, religion, history, the media, economy, environment, sustainability, and which can in terms of teaching be actively promoted through all educational contents – this competence was promoted through numerous project activities like a biology class on symbiosis of different species in nature (pupils acquiring knowledge on the interlinkages of the living world in nature, of the benefits of living together), marking the Planet Earth Day in the context of respect of human rights and environmental rights,

organising interdisciplinary approach through biology and chemistry classes to mark the World Water Day (in order to enhance critical thinking and responsibility in using natural resources), the district competition for the best caricature by pupils ,,Little Pierre" (in order to develop in pupils creative and critical view of the world), organising the exhibition "Milutin Milanković" on the life and work of the famous scientist, academic and professor of the University of Belgrade. The expected outcome was that pupils be empowered for critical understanding of the world.

Valuing cultural diversity – valuing interculturality, a value based on the general belief that belonging to a different culture, cultural variability and diversity and the pluralism of perspectives, views and practices should be positively accepted, valued and fostered – was promoted through numerous activities such as organised familiarisation with the culture, language and tradition of national minorities in the local community, designing and exhibiting works on the topic "Holidays" (presentation of customs in different religious communities), where the expected outcomes were for pupils and teachers to improve their capacities, develop understanding on their rights and responsibilities, and mutual respect and understanding.

Analytical and critical thinking skills, a competence necessary for analysis, evaluation and assessment of any content (tests, arguments, interpretation, subjects, events, experiences, etc.) in a systematic and logical way – this was promoted by organising pilot classes related to critical and analytical thinking, with an interesting example of making and using **check lists** to monitor the selected democratic competences in curricular and extra-curricular activities.[36] The expected outcome was that pupils learn to think and truly critically view the world around them.

Flexibility and adaptability, as a skill of adapting and directing one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours so as to be able to respond effectively and appropriately to new contexts and situations was promoted through cooperative teaching – anger control techniques, a debate "It Is Not Easy Being Me" (for pupils of VI, VII, and VIII grade), with the expected outcome to work on adopting the attitude of openness to other cultures and other beliefs, worldviews and practices.

[36] See: Appendix I, Examples of best practice, example 3

Skills of listening and observing, the ability to listen and understand what is being said and how, to observe and understand non-verbal behaviour of other people – this competence was developed by training teachers for cooperative learning, with the expected outcome to improve the cooperative atmosphere in schools.

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, the competence necessary for successful and appropriate communication with people using the same or another language, and to act as mediators between speakers of different languages – was developed through marking of the International Mother Tongue Day, marking the European Day of Languages, organising the event International Tea Party – the European Day of Languages, the seminar "The Art of Communication", with the expected outcome to successfully develop democratic culture in schools, achieve better communication in the local community with a higher level of understanding and tolerance. It is interesting that only one school dealt directly with this competence, while many schools participating in the project used the school classes of the mother tongue or the foreign language classes to develop other individual or group competences.

During this stage of project implementation none of the schools were interested in working on promoting attitudes of *self-efficacy*[37] and *tolerance of ambiguity*[38], or the skills of *autonomous learning*.[39]

In the course of project implementation practically all methods and contents were used which are put forward in pedagogical literature as models for dissemination of democratic culture in and through education. There is an impressive diversity of activities intended to schools and the wider community and impressive creativity that the schools participating in the project demonstrated. Their activities included the marking of state and religious holidays, marking of days dedicated to important universal values (democratic culture,

[37] Self-efficacy is an attitude towards the self. It involves a positive belief in one's own ability to undertake the actions which are required to achieve particular goals, belief that one can understand the situation/problem, can select appropriate methods for accomplishing tasks, can navigate obstacles successfully and lead to changes in the world.

[38] Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards situations which are perceived to be unavoidable and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations. This attitude implies a positive evaluation of such situations and dealing with them in a constructive way.

[39] Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication implies knowledge and critical understanding of socially acceptable verbal and non-verbal communication conventions which operate in the language(s) that a person speaks, and the impact that different communication styles may have on other people, and how every language expresses culturally mutual meanings in a simple way.

tolerance, etc.), days of Vlachs and Serbian culture, the Water Day, the Safe Internet Days, the Girls Day, the Day of Kind Words, but also the Pancake Day; they also included **peer education,** workshops for members of pupils' parliaments and the mediation team **based on the Council of Europe manual,** forum performances, *e-twinning* activities, visits by pupils' parliaments to the local radio station, workshops with pupils on empathy, networking with associations of the youth and children with disabilities, organizing the "Week of Sports", workshops based on sources from **livingdemocracy.rs**, numerous humanitarian actions, model language classes "Teaching Democratic Culture", classes on the topic of openness to otherness, **surveys conducted among parents on how they assess the situation related to democratic values in schools (their proposals, suggestions and active engagement) and data processing in math classes,** the Serbian language class working on contents linked to respect or violation of human rights in the Serbian tradition, **math classes** with adapted content in order to develop the selected competences in pupils (responsibility, cooperation, and respect of diversity) while getting familiar with human rights, inter-school cooperation, and marking the **Democratic School Day with partner schools**, the Museum Night, marking the day against trafficking in human beings, setting up a debate club, workshops with parents on the topic of democratic culture, model classes: using cartoons in teaching and stereotypes and prejudices, **classes for development of inter-subject competences, designing inter-subject competences among pupils (adapting the curricula), workshop for teachers: correlations between school subjects and values of democratic culture, designing appendices to the curriculum to plan integrated teaching, and working on topics related to selected competences during regular school classes.**

Along with the general title of the project, *Fostering a Democratic School Culture*, a number of schools promoted their own ideas through specific messages expressed through adapted titles: *Responsibility Zone, #Zemunska#demokratija#followme*, *Little Citizens – Future Big People*, *Lets Walk Together*, *Colours of Democracy, Different but Equal, Find Your Formula for Democracy, School of Tolerance, Open Space Open Mind* (*OSOM*).

4.4 Lessons learned: project implementation as seen by teachers, project participants

Project participants were led by a strong belief that democratic culture needs to be strengthened because it promotes the quality of education, develops awareness of rights

and responsibilities, and the school becomes an actor of democratic values in its environment.

They see democratic culture as a priority in contemporary society because the increasing mobility of the global population requires fitting into new environments, understanding and accepting diversity and other cultures. Democratic culture is the basis of a healthy society striving for progress, and that is why the values and competences making up democratic culture are values of the contemporary people which need to be fostered and promoted globally. Familiarising pupils with democratic principles and ways of seeing the society and others facilitates their better integration in democratic society which we want to build and whose members they are going to be.

Project participants recognised the **need to foster democratic culture in schools** through the following facts:

Democratic culture does not happen of its own, and the schools are the right place where practicing democracy should begin since the earliest age. Pupils should be educated to accept in all aspects of life the general human values, to respect diversity and to actively understand each other while being led by the principles of democratic culture. Thus, schools have a very responsible role in contributing to developing a mature, socially responsible individuals who will be successful in contributing to the development of their societies. To achieve this task, schools need to work on developing competences for democratic culture.

Our schools mostly deliver knowledge to pupils. However, apart from knowledge, a broader education of pupils requires more focus on developign values, skills and attitudes.

Competences for democratic culture are closely linked to achieving the educational objectives and at the same time they empower educational and pedagogic staff.

For a successful education of pupils and the achievement of better learning outcomes it is necessary to create an **environment** inductive for both pupils and teachers, while fully respecting each personality and respecting and understanding the needs of every individual, fostering positive values – justice, equality, and fairness.

Improving democratic culture in schools enables better interpersonal relations and thus creates safe schools for all pupils in the education system: safe stay is ensured for pupils, parents have no concerns about their childrens' safety and progress, teachers are working in a good and cooperative environment. Thereby all actors in the education process achieve greater satisfaction and find it easier to better master the curriculum, everyone in his/her own way.

Democratic school governance improves discipline, improves learning, reduces conflicts, makes schools more competitive and ensures lasting democracy in the future. **Once democratic values are accepted, there is less violence in schools, the education process is not focused only on knowledge but also on upbringing and adopting attitudes and values.** Improving democratic culture in school life generally strengthens its links in cooperation with local community, which in turn also contributes to much higher and better quality education.

Implementing the project Fostering a Democratic School Culture is a way to have democratic values directly targeted and involved in the education process, and to have the pupils getting to know all democratic values through direct participation, to understand them and practice them in their daily life.
Project participant

The participants recognise **project outcomes** in empowered teachers, pupils and parents capable of changing stereotypes and bad habits, and having a true impact on society development. They see improved communication and democratic culture not only in schools, but also in their local community of which the school is a part, and in school networks able to provide support to other schools through horizontal learning and **increased autonomy of schools in practice (which is prescribed by the law but is not too often the case**).

Fostering democratic culture in education by applying anti-discriminatory approach, by **raising one's own awareness and the awareness of one's colleagues, pupils and the local community on issues relevant to inclusion, discrimination, and violence in schools.**
Increased participation, both by pupils and by teachers in different school activities; improved team work at all school levels. Improved school ethics; created environment of trust and good cooperation. The school becomes more open to all forms of cooperation with associations, institutions and the local community in general. Curricular and extra-

curricular activities in schools are enriched with content relevant to democratic culture. **Greater openness to new practices and ideas and lower dropout rates.**

Finally, we see a community respecting diversity, fostering collectivism, and pupils are promoting tolerance and respect of each other, other people and are open for cooperation.

Integrating democratic competences in curricular and extra-curricular activities, through the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture" and its activities provides an opportunity for pupils to freely present their opinions which are respected, to participate actively in the life of the school, and to learn to accept differences, develop critical thinking, non-violent conflict resolution and on daily basis practice tolerance and empathy, to recognise and oppose discrimination and to more often take initiative and, thereby, responsibility.

The pupils became familiar with different cultures, increased the level of cooperation, improved acceptance of others who are different or faced with problems, and developed empathy with others, they observe problems and attempt to solve them without violence.

Expected outcomes: the primary outcome is to develop the respect of otherness, valuing human dignity and rights of all as the umbrella for all other competences by building sound foundations for the development of other democratic competences. Pupils and parents are expected to have greater awareness of the need to live together and not just along each other, and this is expected through different curricular and extra-curricular activities. Great changes are expected in how the class teacher classes are conducted and civic education classes as the foundation for the upbringing aspects of school work. We aspire to raise awareness among teachers of the fact that conventional teaching has lost its relevance in the 21st century and that there is need for them to change and change the way they work. Introducing innovations in teaching should lead to making the teaching more attractive, more motivating for the pupils, and leading to better pupils´ achievements and outcomes. We wish to teach the pupils to think and critically see themselves and the world around them. We actually want to put into practice everything that is written in the law – cooperation within the expert councils, conducting model classes, all of this in order to increase the quality of the school institution. The whole action plan should produce benefits also for the teachers as they will be developing themselves and acquiring a set of competences in an attractive manner. The pupils' parliament will be empowered to undertake responsibility and take actions in the interest of all school pupils. Pupils participation will be raised to a higher level and we expect that they will be consulted on all issues relevant to them. The key expectation is that at least 80% of teachers will take part int he planned activities. Parents, who are important actors, will become familiar with the school and the democratic competences through meetings, debates and the forum theater. Collecting best practices will build a solid base of learning from other schools. We will be more open to change and we expect real changes in attitudes, values, behaviour, greater cooperation among the teaching staff and better interpersonal relations (Ethos). Finally, we expect all activities to be integrated into policies of inclusiveness, the culture and practice in schools, thus ensuring the sustainability of the project.

Primary school „Zdravko Ložanski" Bečej

In order to promote more strongly the competence for democratic culture, the project **participants identified the following factors which were missing in the practice in schools in Serbia:**

- Planned and systemic encouragement; most competences are planned and mandatory in schools, but there was no strong emphasis on them, and they were not promoted in a planned and systemic manner.
- Very little curricular content directly mentioning any concept of democratic culture or its application.
- More examples of best practice needed.
- More practical – workshop and project – activities needed.
- Exchange of best practices and support to teachers.
- Systemic and on-going training of pupils, teachers and parents in democratic competences.
- Networking with other schools; few meetings organised to exchange best practices.

A project of this kind was very much needed. We think that the project has to a great extent opened the door, and raised the awareness of teachers of the relevance of these topics.

We understand that we were on the good track, but the engagement in the project helped us improve and systematise the existing and new activities and work more on improving the identified competences.

Participants perceive that there was **lack of implementation through formal school activities**, meaning that all efforts were depending on individual approach by teachers who, due to the excessive requirement of teaching their professional subject matters, they often neglect the content, methods and techniques promoting competences for democratic culture. Curricular activities were not focused on the aspect of upbringing, but mostly on purely educational aspect. **The upbringing aspect of education was neglected.**

Civic education as a school subject offered most content relevant to democratic competences, but it was attended only by pupils who opted for this subject.

The existing system of education developed democratic awareness among pupils mostly through the content of the subject Civic Educatrion. Insufficiant motivation, training and inadequate teaching staff made this subjectinefficient.

Project participants stated the **absence of holistic approach,** greater and more adequate engagement of all, teachers and pupils, but also parents and the local community.

And if every school was to work on developing these competences, only then will it be relvant and complete.

The prerequirement for further development of competences for democratic culture, and their greater promotion, as seen by project participants, is reflected in the need for:

- Introducing the competences for democratic culture in the school plans and programmes as mandatory teaching areas.
- Regular daily practice of developing democratic competences for all school subjects.
- More attention to developing competences for democratic culture through cross curricular approach**.**
- **Strengthen the holistic approach**: more teachers, pupils and parents need to be involved in order to ensure long-term promotion of competences, rather than only for the purposes of the project.
- **Develop an incentive school environment** and good interpersonal relations, good communication and cooperation: when we have good cooperation, it implies all the other competences.
- Improve the individual competences of teachers.
- Introduce more practice; more training courses and seminars, workshops; more professional development for teachers.
- Develop mechanisms and strategies to disseminate examples of best practice.
- Empower peer education.

Different planning of curriculum, based on outcomes, where outcomes emphasise democratic values, with less focus on content and acquiring of content.

Finally, project participants state that all the steps require systemic solutions and systemic support, so that not everything depends on enthusiasm of individuals. **They also state that "what the pilot schools are doing should be mandatory for all schools in Serbia"**.

The upbringing aspect of schools shuld be strengthened.

Project implementation evolved smoothly and in a very positive atmosphere. **Challenges and problems** that teachers anticipated and were ready to face and overcome mostly included: in terms of *challenges* of competence – designing activities, acquiring new knowledge and acquiring the examples of best practice, a different approach to designing curricular and extra-curricular activities, "mainstreaming" competences in the educational/upbringing process and developing in pupils the knowledge and skills for life in a multicultural society free from prejudices, project-based teaching, engagement of the broader community, engagement of pupils from sensitive groups into activities, **how to explain to pupils of lower grades in the best and simple way the significance of developing democratic competences, motivating pupils to take initiative and implement activities**, participation of pupils and their engagement in the work of the civil society, how to best raise awareness among all school staff about the principles of this project and of democratisation of relations, and inspire them to work in that way, and **excessive expectations of project participants.** *Problems*, on the other hand, referred to lack of knowledge of the topic, lack of motivation, weak cooperation with the local community and parents, insufficient number of teachers who participated in project implementation, great work load on the team members, inflexible curriculum and programme, **colleagues not open for new working methods,** lack of interest and motivation of a portion of the institution and hidden resistance, passivity of some colleagues, **sometimes lack of support from school management, dissipation of pupils from Roma communities,** but also **lack of appreciation and encouragement to pupils by teachers/educators.**

The positive energy for project implementation was generated by good cooperation among team members, the interest demonstrated by pupils, meetings between schools participating in project implementation, exchange of experiences, generation of new ideas – and numerous friendships – during the meetings, school management, and support of the local community.

The participants especially noted the **quality learning of competences which they received from the local coordinators**, use of best practices which they saw during the ***second peer learning***, and the **support provided by the Council of Europe**.

Peer learning events were spot on.

The supporting teaching **materials for teachers** on democratic citizenship and education for human rights were also a factor contributing to successful project implementation.

The crucial factor for project success were the pupils who enthusiastically and energetically accepted the tasks and enjoyed the project activities, which they did not perceive as an additional burden. They are curious, willing to participate, discuss and present their opinions. They approached all tasks responsibly and demonstrated that they have "plenty of knowledge and skills and ideas and that they are very receptive and successful in increasing the level of their engagement". Project effects are seen in their works and their behaviour. They are looking forward eagerly to the continuation of activities.

Once you exaplan the concept to the pupils, get them involved in the school team, and allow them to implement part of the activities on their own, you can do everything.

The forum theatre and the debate club, activities organised and conducted by the pupils, demonstrated a specific feature of the process of developing democratic competences.

An added value of the project was the creative freedom given to pupils which resulted in many activities which will, as examples of best practice, be accepted as models for disseminating the competences for democratic culture. The forms of inter-school cooperation, combining more than one class in order to promote interculturality, tolerance and unity, *peer learning*, designing the numerous workshops, marking important dates and national holidays, the competitions for the most tolerant pupils, and organisation and marking of the Day of Democratic Culture, which "sublimed all our efforts and activities during the year".

Much has been done and achieved, positive changes in the school are evident. The best is the gradual but sure spreading of the positive changes and how much it was needed to work on interpersonal realations among us grown ups.

The project participants recommended **as significant activities** for future work on promoting competence for democratic culture the following:

- Work on correlations between competences with formal school subjects; applied inter-subjects competences on specific examples

- Further development of **training of teachers** in the field of competences for democratic culture, with more examples of best practices; and with examples of best practice from the wider environment
- Learning about the experiences from developed democracies and presenting mechanisms which regulate these values through normative acts from individual systems
- Designing a portal for development of competences for democratic culture for teachers, and also for pupils, which will enable international communication and exchange of knowledge and experiences
- Engaging more pupils, teachers and representatives of parents and of the local community
- More active engagement of parents
- **Empowering skills for cooperation across the whole school institution as an important requirement for work**
- Activities which develop cooperative competences and solidarity
- Cooperation and support to parents of pupils with developmental problems
- Design a portal within the project for pupils, similar to the *eTwinning* portal.

Most participants recommend, as examples of best practice, organising the Day of Democratic Culture, Debate Club, and Forum Theatre, Live Library, and round tables related to competences for democratic culture.

Finally, **participants stressed a clear wish for project activities to become part of daily life in the school and to continue to foster and develop democratic culture in schools after the project is over.** To work on an on-going basis on "raising the level of knowledge and awareness among teachers, other staff, pupils and local communities regarding the concept, the practice and benefits of inclusive education and democratic culture".

To work on designing and verification of seminars for continued dissemination of competences for democratic culture

All project participants expressed their wish to continue to **acquire knowledge and skills** for competences for democratic culture, assigning priority to **intercultural competences, communication skills and cooperation skills**. They also expressed interest in developing cultural competences in the digital age and learning about the experiences of other

countries in that respect. They are convinced that we should look also "beyond our region because the world is becoming a global village and if we want to be part of that society, we need to keep pace with the world and learn about how they do it in their communities".

I see communication as the biggest challenge.

Teachers can always organise numerous activities based on pedagogical principles which are necessary for Fostering a Democratic School Culture, and thus create a pleasant and safe learning environment, but in order for their efforts to be successful and efficient they think that it would be necessary to do the following:

- Engage the line ministry and make this a part of the **legislation**,
- Introduce work to promote the competence **"through the curriculum, through the regular plans and programmes, through educational objectives",**
- Introduce competences for democratic culture through a **separate subject**, and subsequently through **a cross curricular approach**.

We see developed competences for democratic culture through different general and specific school subjects: Philosophy, Civic Education, Sociology, the Serbian Language and Literature, History, Geography, Geography of Culture, National Cousine, Cousine, Confectionery, Hospitality, the English Language, the French Language, Mathematics.

Hospitality and Tourism Occupational Secondary School, Beograde

Establishing pupils' parliaments is also seen as useful, as well as peer teams in schools, and cooperation with partner schools, project activities, extra-curricular activities, and use of ICT. It is also possible to promote pilot schools as role models.

Finally, the conclusion is that the education process and context should reflect the values of democracy and human rights, and that it is necessary to ensure education based on the experiences and development of competences for democratic culture.

4.5 A review of achieved and recommendations by participants

The experiences gained through the implementation of the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture" resulted in the following recommendations by participants to education policy- makers:

- Work on promoting democratic culture in schools and invest in quality education, so that the pupils of today become active citizens in a democratic society
- Strengthen the status of the school subject Civic Education
- Continually improve programmes. Our schools are mostly focused on transferring knowledge to pupils; there is need to strengthen the upbringing aspect of schools and pay more attention to developing values, skills and attitudes.

There is need at all levels to think about the 20 competences and how to integrate them in all segments of the school, starting from the school development plan, school curriculum, self-evalueation, etc. And this aspect should in the future be covered by external evaluation.

In the framework of standards for quality evaluation of school work, introduce a new area or join it to the Ethos area as a separate standard with indicators relating to the application and implementation of competences for democratic culture.

There is also the need for the following:

- Continually empower the staff in the educations sector. Support teachers and enthusiasts and enable them to turn their ideas and energy into practice
- Hear the opinions of teachers before making the decisions in all areas of education
- Involve as many schools as possible in new and similar projects
- Digitalise teaching

Always plan follow up, because one or two projects are not enough. **For system changes, years of constant work are required.**

Change takes time and patience, but whatever is fostered and promoted in the end gives results.

5 TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: RECOMMENDATIONS

Continued and sustainable fostering of democratic culture and competences for democratic culture in schools, based on what is offered by the existing legal framework of the Republic

of Serbia and the already more or less developed practice in schools which has been verified through implementation of the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture" is recommended:

At the level of local community, insisting on the holistic approach – have the local community as strongly involved as possible in the life of schools and have the school live the life of the local community. Interaction between the school and local community has proved to be an added value in adopting the principles of democratic culture and development of competences for democratic culture, through the involvement of parents, NGO's, and other institutions in school activities, as well as the involvement of pupils, teachers and school management in the life of local communities by organising the marking of significant dates, marking the day of national cultures, organising environmental actions, humanitarian, sports and cultural events, etc.

At school level, including democratic principles and democratic citizenship in the school's institutional mission.

Integrating the development of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue into the very core of educational objectives defined in the school development plans and curriculum.

Involvement of all stakeholders, especially teachers and pupils, in decision-making and designing of the school development plan and the school curriculum.

Ensuring adequate support to teachers and pupils to promote and involve competences for democratic culture in teaching and learning.

Design new and further develop the existing democratic and participatory structures and procedures to ensure the school democratic culture. Pupils' parliaments, project teams, parents' council, etc.

Identify and classify programme content which promotes or could promote democratic culture in schools.

Identify and classify programme content which promotes or could promote democratic culture in schools and which could be addressed through **cross curricular approach**.

Develop own plans of activities to promote democratic culture.

Encourage activities of linkages between school subjects and *peer learning*.

Encourage cooperation and exchange of experiences with other schools.

At the classroom level, creating a democratic learning environment.

Applying the relevant pedagogy and methodology of teaching which respects democratic values and is based on explicit theory of learning applicable to all pupils.

Applying the relevant pedagogy and methodology of teaching encouraging pupils to engage actively in learning by practice, in individual problem solving and facing challenges, in analysis, comparison, consideration and developing cooperation – like cooperative learning, project learning, and the like.

Encourage pupils to actively participate in decision-making regarding their own learning.

Identify programme contents which promote or may promote democratic culture in schools and cover such content by applying adequate interactive learning methods which in themselves contribute to developing competences for democratic culture.

Identify programme contents which promote or may promote democratic culture in schools and which can be covered by linkages between school subjects and implemented by applying adequate interactive learning methods which in themselves contribute to developing competences for democratic culture.

Integrate the evaluation of teaching and learning, as they are inter-related and share the same justification, taking into consideration and using the competences for democratic culture.

At personal level work continually on one's personal development, and acquisition of knowledge and development of skills from the domain of competences for democratic culture.

Keep up with the scientific developments and contemporary social developments in order to organise the education process in line with the needs of the society and of times.

Identify in one's programmes content which promotes or may promote democratic culture in schools and cover such content by applying adequate interactive learning methods which in themselves contribute to developing competences for democratic culture.

Be the model of principles of democratic culture which you advocate.

6 GUIDELINES TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN EDUCATION

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDUCATION POLICY MAKERS[40]

6.1 Conclusions

The model of competences for democratic culture is a powerful instrument and its introduction into the curriculum content will enable its upgrading as required in modern democratic societies and education suited for the 21st century. It is essential for the children and youth to be equipped with values, attitudes, skills and critical thinking necessary for their future lives both as individuals and as members of society.

The model of competence for democratic culture (CDC/CDC) can contribute to developing the innovative and creative potential, if the competences developed within regular school subjects are enriched with the competences which contribute to acquiring of democratic culture.

Competences for Democratic Culture can be developed as part of key school activities and within the content of all school subjects. It is not necessary for teachers to give up what they are already doing, but they are invited to think about enriching their practice by involving the competences for democratic culture into their teaching, using the model

[40] These conclusions and recommendations resulted from insight into the relevant legislation in the field of education in the Republic of Serbia, the conclusions and recommendations of participants in implementation of the project „Fostering a Democratic School Culture" stated in their action plans and questionnaires (Appendix I and II), and through interviews with managers in education, as well as based on publications of the Council of Europe *Competences for Democratic Culture*, volume I, i *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, volumes II and III.

developed also through this project and in line with the activities and recommendations of the Council of Europe.

The model of competences for democratic culture can be used in designing and developing the new curriculum or reform of the existing curriculum in education.

The model of competences for democratic culture can be used for planning and analysis and review of existing teaching plans and their implementation, particularly education outcomes designed by such plans. The expected learning outcomes can be compared with the descriptors of competences and the relevant manifestations/behaviours. The descriptors of competences can be used in both the formal and informal evaluation in order to verify the achieved learning outcomes.[41]

In addition to its use with the existing curriculum, the model of competences for democratic culture can be used to identify the components and the expected learning outcomes of the new curriculum with relevant attention to implementation and evaluation.[42]

The objectives and the basis of the curriculum enriched with the model of competences for democratic culture emphasises the significance of the children and youth being educated to live together in equal and respectful living in a democratic society.

Competences for Democratic Culture can be linked to all subjects by means of separate sets of competences relevant for certain fields. The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture can therefore be used by selecting relevant competences for democratic culture and integrating them with competences specific to individual school subjects, thus forming clusters of competences for democratic culture and subject-specific competences. This would enable the competences for democratic culture to be explicitly involved in designing /developing curricula even when such subjects do not include civic education in the form of specific elements (subjects, modules).

Sets of competences can be stated in programmes for individual school subjects and can be integrated in the definition of the general mission of the institution. It is not necessary to define the selected sets, but only the list of general principles, possibly accompanied by

[41] See: *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, Vol.3, pp.12-13
[42] See: Ibid, p.13

examples, to enable teachers to take responsibility and establish the sets of competences adjusted to their context and pupils' needs.

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture includes formulated descriptors for all twenty competences. These descriptors are a set of positive descriptions of the visible behaviour as an indicator that the person has achieved a certain level of progress in the specific competence. The **formulations of descriptors use the language of "learning outcomes".** This means that they can be used not only for the purpose of evaluation but also for development of curriculum and for the purpose of pedagogic planning, and thus can assist in achieving coherence.[43]

Descriptors of the level of competences developed within the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture can also be used as evaluation criteria.
Descriptors of the level of competences developed within the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture can also be used to formulate the general criteria for evaluation of pupils.

Descriptors of competences for democratic culture should be used for evaluation of the level of competences and progress made by pupils.

Descriptors can also be used for the purposes of systematising evaluation.
It is important not to neglect the knowledge, skills and competences which are not a part of the narrow subject area. The application of the model of competences for democratic culture will mean that these challenges are not left exclusively to certain school subjects (such as civic education, history, and ethics). On the contrary, the approach advocated within the model of competences for democratic culture is to be applied as a cross-cutting dimension in education and training of future teachers, and also through the existing *in*-service training.
The success of inclusive educational activities attempting to deal with values and develop attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical thinking will depend on how successful the teachers will be in planning and developing these activities and adjusting them to their needs and the needs of their pupils. That is why **continued professional training of teachers is necessary.**

[43] See: *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, Vol.3, p.65

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture would be just theory without appropriately qualified and trained teachers; teachers are the only ones who can implement it through the education process. The framework in fact is not intended to school pupils only, but it is also very much needed in the initial training of future teachers and in their professional development. It is necessary in schools to apply the adequate pedagogical principles and teaching methodology which respect democratic values and are based on the explicit learning theory applicable to all pupils.

The Competences for Democratic Culture can be a separate school subject or course, they can be integrated into programmes of different school subjects, or they can be a cross curricula topic, and equally they can be part of academic programmes.

The very first step in implementing and developing the competences for democratic culture in education is the motivated, adequately supported and well-trained teacher at all levels of education, including teacher educators in teacher training institutions.

The development of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue should be included in the general mission of all educational institutions.

6.2 Recommendations

In order to enable schools to fully deliver on its specific task of being the beacon and the actor of social change, and in line with the activities and recommendations of the Council of Europe, which are operationalized also through the current project and based on its experiences, the following recommendations are formulated intended for education policy makers:

6.2.1 Short-term activities

a. The development of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue to be included in the general mission of all educational institutions
b. Develop new and upgrade existing democratic and participatory contents and methods to ensure the adoption of democratic culture through all educational institutions

c. It is of key importance that the subject Civic Education (Education for Democratic Culture) should be given a higher status in education and not be considered a less important school subject
d. Review the existing prescribed curriculum in order to identify the existing democratic and civic competences, and in doing so, when developing them, apply as an instrument the Competences for Democratic Culture
e. Place democracy and democratic culture in the centre of educational objectives and prescribed curriculum
f. **The first step in systemic integration of the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture into curricula should be the adopted, validated and ranked descriptors of competences of democratic culture, corresponding to groups of competences, and formulated in the language/terminology of learning outcomes, integrated with learning outcomes and thus introduced as a reference in determining the learning outcomes for different education activities**
g. Conduct a review of existing national strategies and provisions relevant to organising study programmes for future teachers in order to extend and deepen their competences in the field of competences for democratic culture
h. Develop the Action Plan for the implementation of the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in the national education system, with special emphasis on the initial and *in*-service training of teachers
i. Introduce an obligation that the development of competences for democratic culture be an integral part of the initial teacher training, and their future professional development
j. It is recommended that the integration and application of the model of competences for democratic culture be consistently integrated in education and training, the initial education of teachers and their on-going professional development. The key role in this should be assigned to the institutions of initial education of teachers and to the *in*-service training and programmes of professional development
k. In order to ensure sustainability of the school subject Civic Education, and thereby of the content promoting the development of competences for democratic culture, it is recommended to **organise formal training** of future teachers, or educators who are already part of the education system, in a form of **short cycle study programmes**

l. Develop **materials and manuals** for teachers for implementation of competences for democratic culture

m. Develop **manuals intended for work with parents** and pupils which will support strengthening of **competences of staff** to apply the competences for democratic culture

n. Continue increasing teachers' competences for democratic culture through **professional development programmes**

o. **In cooperation with the Council of Europe continue the implementation of the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture".**

6.2.2 Long-term activities

Initiate different forms of activities related to developing the competences for democratic culture at **institutions of higher education providing initial education of teachers**:

a. Organise and provide in-service specialised courses for teachers in schools, relevantly designed for teachers of humanities and other subjects, for different levels of education

b. Integrate and introduce new necessary components/topics in the programmes of initial study programmes which are already in place

c. In order to ensure the sustainability of the school subject Civic Education and thereby the content promoting the development of competences for democratic culture, it is recommended to **organise specialisations, or master studies** intended for future teachers or educators already involved in the education system. Such specialised studies do not exist at any of the universities in the Republic of Serbia, or in the wider region

d. Promote topics relevant to the development of competences for democratic culture at the level of **Ph.D. studies** related to education of teachers.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix I – EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

8.1.1 Example 1. Selection of the most tolerant pupil. Primary school "Radoje Domanović", Niš

1a

This type of activity has been included in our Action Plan for implementation of the project "Colour of Democracy", in order to improve the respect of intercultural attitudes, develop humane relations, develop tolerance and cooperation as features of daily life, as well as responsibility and readiness for decision-making. The selection of the most tolerant pupil is conducted twice a year: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. So far, we have conducted the selection of the most tolerant pupil in the older grades (from 5th to 8th). The initiative for this activity originated from the Mediation Team trained for non-violent conflict resolution, mediation of peer conflicts, and building of adequate understanding and cooperation within peer group. The team consists of 2 representatives of all grades from 6th to 8th. The team has identified the selection criteria for the most tolerant pupil. The criteria are as follows:

1. Communicates with all pupils and assists all pupils in the class
2. Initiates the process of cooperation among pupils (in learning, conducting joint class activities, company)
3. Initiates the organisation of humanitarian actions (financing of picnics, excursions and free tickets, different forms of assistance) for friends in need.
4. Enjoys respect in the peer group
5. Never causes conflicts and assists in identifying risks of peer violence

First stage: a survey is conducted, based on instructions, which listed all the criteria. The survey is anonymous. It is conducted in every class. The survey was conducted, along with the explanations, by teaching assistants or class teachers in every class of the higher grades. All pupils write down their proposal for one pupil from their class who could be said to be the most tolerant. For a pupil to be the winner, he/she should have more than 50% of votes

in the class. If it happens that more than one pupil have the same number of votes, the voting is repeated. In this way we get the 16 most tolerant pupils (which is the number of classes) in higher grades.

Second stage: promotion of the most tolerant pupils. The most tolerant pupils receive acknowledgement notes as promoters of cooperation and democratic values. To the most tolerant in the first semester these acknowledgement notes are handed on the occasion of Saint Sava Academy at the school, with clearly stated objectives of these selections and the relevance of promoting these values. At the end of the school year the acknowledgement notes are handed out at the Vidovdan ceremony. The names of the most tolerant pupils are displayed at the school website and the official school Facebook page. In order to make them recognised both in their peer groups and at school level, their names are stated in the Book of Notices. The next step is designing the panel with the photographs of the selected most tolerant pupils displayed in the school central hall. The activities and actions of these pupils are stated at the school panel titled "The Achievement of the Week and the Act of the Month", in order to additionally emphasise and promote their selection.

At the debate which is organised on the occasion of the Tolerance Day, and which is attended by all pupils, the most tolerant pupils speak in detail of themselves, their values and motivations why they act in that specific manner.

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1b

Primary School "Radoje Domanović" – Niš

Grade and class _____

May 2018

SURVEY

Dear pupils,

At the initiative of the Mediation Team of our school, we are conducting the competition for the most tolerant pupils in the classes. The purpose of this activity is to promote pupils who demonstrate good cooperation, tolerance and good will. That is why we are selecting the most tolerant pupils in your classes. It is you, the pupils, who are selecting, anonymously,

without signing the survey list (you only write the grade and class on the paper). For someone to be "the most tolerant pupil", that person should have the following features:

1. Communicates with all pupils and assists all pupils in the class
2. Initiates the process of cooperation among pupils (in learning, conducting joint class activities, company)
3. Initiates the organisation of humanitarian actions (financing of picnics, excursions and free tickets, different forms of assistance) for friends in need.
4. Enjoys respect in the peer group
5. Never causes conflicts and assists in identifying risks of peer violence

You should write the first and family name of only one pupil from your class, so before you write please think well.

I propose the following person as the most tolerant pupil in class: ----------

Thank you for taking part in the survey

After your voting, the title of the most tolerant person in the class will be given to the person getting at least 50% of all votes. If more pupils have the same number of votes, or if the number is less than 50%, the voting is repeated.

8.1.2 Example 2. Sports cheering "Games without Borders". Primary school "Žarko Zrenjanin", Banatsko Novo Selo

Competences: cooperation skills, knowledge and critical understanding of self, respect, civic mindedness, responsibility ...

The action involves all pupils of the school and their class teachers.

Each grade, from 1st to 8th, nominates two pupils to participate directly in the games, the others are supporters.

All supporters are divided into three groups: the red, the blue, and the white, and these are assigned by a draw. The cards equally divided into three colours are drawn simultaneously by all representatives of each grade.

Three teams are made up, each with nine members. Each team (red, blue, white) is mixed and made up of pupils from grades 1-8. The red supporters cheer for the red team, the blue for blue, and the white supporters for the white team. As the colours of supporters are known in advance, they come in T-shirts in the colour of their supporter group. They sit in groups in the spectators' benches. They make the cheering props for their group in school.

Until the competition begins, the competitors do not know who is in which team. The games can be organised indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather and technical conditions. Before the competition begins, all competitors come out on the ground, their names are called out by the colour of the team, they put on the shirts in the colour of the team for

which they are playing, and they take the relevant places for the game. In front of each team is a table marked in the relevant colours - red, blue, white. The facilitator is announcing the game and each team selects for each game a different competitor. Each team member can participate in one game only. Before the games begin, the participants can familiarise themselves with the games so that they can best assign their team members by games.

This is based on the TV show "Games without Borders" with nine games, appropriate for the primary school pupils, so that every team member can represent the team in line with his/her abilities. The success of players is assessed depending on the game: "who is first" or "how long does it take" – time measurement.

1. Getting a coin out of the glass of water by using a magnet

2. Carrying an egg in a spoon along the marked curved trajectory marked by markers which they go around

3. Puzzle (putting the pieces together to form a picture)

4. Jumping in a sack along the marked curved trajectory marked by markers which they go around

5. Apple in a water bawl – without the use of hands, bite the apple and get it out of the bawl

6. Pantomime

7. Spaghetti (who will eat more in 2 minutes)

8. Bicycle, practice ground

9. Sports practice ground (flips, bench, box, basket)

The objective is that the pupils – supporters should build the positive atmosphere in the supporters' benches to support the struggle and perseverance of the competitors, their representatives, to achieve the best results. They support each other to conduct their activities convincingly and in a positive competitive and supporting spirit. This implies respect, irrespective of the outcome of the game and the result scored, and the supporting quality is more important than the score in the game itself. Looking at the games as entertainment for all participants, which in itself is a success. Creating a positive outlook on supporting and supporters, raising awareness among pupils and their parents that fans are there to provide support and not be an association of hooligans.

8.1.3 Example 3. Drafting check-lists to monitor the selected competences for democratic culture in curricular and extra-curricular activities and their use in analysing the lesson in the Serbian language. Primary school "Veljko Dugošević", Turija

In order to develop democratic competences in curricular and extra-curricular activities, we have made a lesson plan. The plan was developed at the beginning of the school year and it includes the first and family name of the teacher, the school subject, the teaching unit, and the selected competences.

The lessons were analysed at the sessions of the Expert Councils and it was concluded that more detailed guidelines are needed on what to observe during the lesson and how to identify the democratic competences. It was also needed in order to facilitate the work of

teachers in preparing such lessons. Based on lessons analysis the teachers came up with the idea to compile a check-list with three democratic competences: **valuing human dignity and human rights, cooperation skills, and knowledge and critical understanding of the self**.

The check-list contains the name of the school, the first and family name of the teacher delivering the lesson and the teacher attending the class, the school subject, the name of the teaching unit, the class and grade and the date of delivery, divided into the following columns: competence, indicator, assessment, examples of behaviours, and recommendations. The **check-lists covered the competences and within each competence we developed a certain number of indicators for teachers and pupils**. As the activities of teachers and pupils are different during class, we developed separate indicators to assess activities by teachers and activities by pupils (for example: the teacher is encouraging cooperation skills, the pupils developing cooperation skills in class). The assessment of presence of each indicator is measured on the scale from one to four. For each assessed indicator examples of behaviours are to be stated which illustrate it. The column "recommendations" states what was good and what could be better or different.

After the class is over, the analysis is conducted. The analysis is attended by all teachers who attended the lesson. By comparing the assessments and examples of behaviours noted down it is determined to which degree the indicators are achieved and whether all those attending noticed the same thing. Assessment is made of whether the behaviours and actions by pupils and teachers are adequately evaluated on the scale from one to four. After the analysis come the recommendations and guidelines which can be helpful in preparation and delivery of future lessons.

This manner of evaluating lessons can be useful in assessing the presence of indicators of democratic competences in lessons in different school subjects and in extra-curricular activities. Based on recommendations and stated examples the teachers get a clearer picture of how these indicators can be used in planning and delivering their classes irrespective of the subject and field of work.

3a Analysis of the lesson in the Serbian language

The Serbian language class was conducted for the 6th grade. The teaching unit was the **processing of the work of literature "The Boys of Pavlova street" by Ferenc Molnar.** The objective of the lesson is to analyse the actions and characteristics of characters in the novel, **active participation in activities and developing cooperation, developing the democratic competences – empathy, tolerance, valuing cultural diversity, responsibility, cooperation and conflict resolution skills, knowledge and critical understanding of the self.** The lesson was attended by two teachers, a pedagogue and the school principal. The lesson was observed using the check-list which we designed in order to observe democratic competences. After the lesson, feedback was provided to the teacher and a comparative analysis was made of the check-lists. The following was identified:

1. Competence 1.1 – the teacher is encouraging cooperation skills
   Most indicators are present, but the attending teachers agreed that the indicator 1.1.3 was fully achieved. The teacher encourages collective efforts in clarifying concepts, analysing topics and activities. The teacher demonstrated to pupils the glossary of tolerance with explanations of concepts unknown to them and motivated the pupils to think of a different ending of the novel whereby the conflict among the boys of the Pavlova Street is resolved by mediation.
2. Competence 1.2 – pupils develop cooperation skills
   Most indicators are present, but the attending teachers agreed that the indicator 1.2.5 was fully achieved. Pupils adjust to the needs and speed of work of others and assist pupils with difficulties. The pupils are let to organise themselves regarding the tasks within the group and get their peer involved who is working according to an IEP. They assist her to do the tasks adjusted to her needs.
   As most indicators within the competence of cooperation skills was achieved, there were no specific recommendations.
3. Competence 2.1. – the teacher develops in pupils the competence of valuing human rights and dignity. Most indicators are present, but the attending teachers agreed that the indicator 2.1.4 was fully achieved. The teacher offers equal opportunity to all pupils to present their opinions. Based on the tasks completed, the teacher encourages discussion so that all pupils would present their opinions and attitudes and compare them to the attitudes of the group.
4. Competence 2.2. – the pupils are developing the competence of valuing human rights and dignity. The indicator 2.2.3 is achieved and the pupils have the right to present their opinions, to discuss and comment, and this is harmonised with the indicator 2.1.4 described above. The attending teachers have not agreed to which degree the indicator 2.2.5 is present. The pupils are familiar with their rights and obligations and act in line with them, they are not sure what they specifically refer to.
5. Competence 3.1. – the teacher develops in pupils the knowledge and critical understanding of the self.
   Most indicators are present, but the attending teachers agreed that the indicator 3.1.3 was fully achieved. The teacher is encouraging pupils to be self-critical in evaluating their work. The teacher distributed self-evaluation forms and instructed the pupils that the survey is anonymous and that they can feel free to honestly evaluate their work.
6. Competence 3.2. – pupils are developing the knowledge and critical understanding of the self. Most indicators are present, but the attending teachers agreed that the indicator 3.2.3 was fully achieved. Pupils are motivated to know about other cultures. At the beginning of the class the teacher asked the pupils what they know about the Hungarian culture, and the pupils did not know much. Then they saw a brief presentation about Hungary which encouraged them to search the Internet and find more interesting things about this country.

7. Although most indicators are achieved and thereby the democratic competences were recognised, a proposal was made, since the pupils learned about mediation, to discuss how they can apply mediation in other situations around them. Thereby the indicator 3.1.5 was achieved – the teacher develops awareness among pupils that their acts and beliefs have an impact on the wider community.

8.1.4 Example 4. Cooperative learning – Two "Secrets" of Success, Grammar school Požarevac

The role of cooperative learning in developing and improving competences for democratic culture

Cooperative learning is a process of teaching whereby pupils are at the same time capacitated for **team work, critical thinking, improving attitudes about democratic values,** acquiring the key competences and content in a number of school subjects. It is based on building teams of pupils with the task to master the learning outcomes set in advance. The outcomes can be set by the teacher alone, or they can be set (preferably) in cooperation with the pupils.

The principles of cooperative learning include:

Positive interdependence among pupils is order to master the content. Activities should be organised so that pupils cannot complete them without working together.

Personal responsibility which in this case is a system of rehumanising education. Activities should be adjusted to interests, abilities, temperaments and ambitions of all pupils so that personal responsibility can be demonstrated.

Balanced participation in activities in order to achieve inclusiveness of the approach. This is usually achieved by assigning roles and becoming familiar with performing the specific role. The learning process should be led so as to encourage and promote balanced active participation of all pupils.

Simultaneous interaction is a process in organising activities so that as many different interactions among pupils follow each other.

Cooperative learning can be performed as frontal, group or work in pairs. Although it is often mixed with working in small groups, it should not be forgotten that group work is only one form of teaching, while cooperative learning is a method.

Although it may seem obvious, I think that it will be useful to state that the benefits of cooperative learning for improving **competences for democratic culture**.

The value which is directly developed through cooperative learning is valuing democracy, justice, fairness and equality. Pupils soon experience that without these values they cannot

complete their tasks and finalize the assignment. In a multicultural environment other values will be developed as well, and if these two values are seen as the objective of the lesson, we cannot miss.

Attitudes which are sure to be developed are respect (through the positive interdependence), responsibility, and self-efficacy (through personal responsibility and simultaneous interaction).

The skills developed through cooperative learning (or the skills without which cooperation and cooperative learning is not possible) include cooperation skills (obviously), flexibility and adjustability (due to the need to work in a team, simultaneous interaction and balanced participation), skills of listening and observing (in order to achieve real interaction). Experience has shown that other skills are developed as well, especially if we teach pupils to insist on them.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the self and the world are developed through cooperative learning because pupils are left to the "task" and to each other.

To someone this may sound like wishful thinking, but many years of experience in the grammar School in Požarevac, as well as in the working groups of the Council of Europe, show that this is achievable.

At the end of this text, we will tell you **two "secrets" of success.**

First, start working in small groups (3 pupils). This means a lesser number of interactions, but also a lower likelihood of marginalisation. Gradually, increase the size of the groups when you see that certain competences have been developed until you achieve cooperative learning at the level of the whole class. Be patient, you will be rewarded.

Second, participate in the activities and play with your pupils. Play is a serious thing living up to all the principles of cooperative learning, and the best way to learn. Always be engaged in activities, so that pupils see you as a part of their team.

8.2 Appendix II

Project “Fostering a Democratic School Culture” in Serbia

Questionnaire for project participants

The Questionnaire is about your experience as project participant and your opinion/evaluation of implementing competences for democratic culture in your and other pilot schools in Serbia. Your answers will be valuable for further planning of activities and proposals for development of education policies in this field.

1. Why do you think it is necessary to improve democratic culture in schools?

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2. What do you see as outcomes of your project activities?

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3. What in your opinion was missing as policy/practice in the education process so far in terms of competences for democratic culture (CDC)?

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4. What needs to be improved in the system of education with respect to developing the **existing** competences for democratic culture?

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5. What were the challenges / obstacles so far in project implementation?

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6. What was helpful / supportive so far in project implementation?

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7. What is the response by pupils to project activities?

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8. What did you find most interesting among the activities related to project implementation?

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9. What would you recommend as important content /activity in future work on competences for democratic culture?

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10. Which aspect of cultural competences would you like to have additional training in?

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11. Cased on your experience so far, what would in your opinion be the most efficient way of implementing education for democratic culture in schools?

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12. Your recommendation to education policy-makers:

8.3 Appendix III

Project “Fostering a Democratic School Culture” in Serbia

Questionnaire for education policy-makers / managers in education institutions

This Questionnaire is about your opinion/evaluation of the project “Fostering a Democratic School Culture in Serbia”. Your answers will be valuable for further planning of activities and proposals for development of education policies in this field.

1. Why do you think it is necessary to improve democratic culture in schools?

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2. What do you see as outcomes of this project?

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3. Present your views of the direction in which education policy should be improved with respect to competences for democratic culture (CDC)?

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4. Which areas in social relations, which are reflected also through the education process, do you think are the areas that should be more strongly affected through education?

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5. In which way have you so far supported the Project implementation and how do you plan to continue the support?

ENG

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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The European Union member states have decided to pool their knowledge, resources and destiny. Together they have built a zone of stability, democracy, and sustainable development while maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and values with countries and nations outside its borders.

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This document has been produced using funds of a joint programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Council of Europe. Published within the scope of the project "Fostering a Democratic School Culture in Serbia".

Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

Funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

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