

*PART IV Competence to provide for the EU dimension in
Education for Democratic Citizenship*

Introduction: Actors

278 Actors designing and implementing the EU dimension in EDC curricula

In Part three, a reading of EDC standards jointly with EU law led to the identification of substantial content for the EU dimension of EDC. Given the importance of this dimension for the empowerment of EU citizens, the question for Part four is: who has the competence to incorporate the EU dimension into the national EDC curriculum?

A curriculum is ‘a plan for learning in the form of the description of learning outcomes, of learning content and of learning processes for a specified period of study’.²⁰⁷³ Actors at four levels can be distinguished: competent authorities prescribe the curriculum by laying down what must be learned at different stages of education (system level); teachers and pedagogical leaders develop the prescribed curriculum, adapting it to the school context and education needs (institutional level); teachers, and sometimes learners, develop, interpret and apply the prescribed and the institutional curriculum in teaching plans and instruction materials (subject or classroom level); learners experience the curriculum planned by teachers and develop (educational) competences (learner level).²⁰⁷⁴ In Member States with centralised decision-making, public authorities responsible for education, or the bodies appointed by them, decide on the curriculum. In decentralised systems, educational institutions and teachers decide on the content and aims of the curriculum (e.g. school-based curriculum).²⁰⁷⁵

In addition to the actors at these four levels, other stakeholders may influence the curriculum: textbook authors and publishers, experts and scholars, quality assurance bodies, organisations assessing citizenship edu-

2073 CoE Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Vol 3: Guidance for implementation (2018), p 13. Analogue: Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *Citizenship Education in Europe* (2012), p 17 (curriculum: ‘any official steering document (national or central-level) containing programmes of study, or learning content, learning objectives, attainment targets, guidelines on pupil assessment or syllabuses’).

2074 Levels in CoE Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, Vol 3: Guidance for implementation (2018), p 14.

2075 *Ibid*, p 14.

cation, churches, etc.²⁰⁷⁶ Taking formal, non-formal, and informal education together, other actors should also be mentioned, such as parents, youth organisations, NGOs, networks, media, and grassroots actors in civil society.²⁰⁷⁷

Part four will focus on the competence of public authorities as actors to formulate curricula. In Part three, ‘competence’ was an educational concept, a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.²⁰⁷⁸ In Part four, ‘competence’ is used in the legal sense: who is authorised to regulate the EU dimension of EDC and on what legal basis?

279 Structure

This Part consists of two chapters. Chapter nine examines the conferral of competence on the EU. It starts by setting out the principles: the Member States enjoy the original competence in the field of education; the EU has a supporting competence based on Articles 165–166 TFEU, yet within limits. The requirement that the EU must fully respect Member States’ responsibility for the content of teaching seems like an insurmountable obstacle,

2076 See e.g. Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching [2018] OJ C195/1, Explanatory memorandum: ‘promoting awareness of EU citizenship and the values attached to it ... requires a joint effort of all actors concerned at all levels—the Member States, including their local and regional authorities, EU institutions and civil society’; Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning [2017] OJ C189/15, recital 7 and para 7. For the role of textbook authors, see e.g. F Piedade and others, ‘Learning About the European Union in Times of Crisis: Portuguese Textbooks’ Normative Visions of European Citizenship’ (2018) 17 Journal of Social Science Education 31: the ‘generalized resistance by textbook authors regarding the inclusion of pedagogical contents that transcend the national level’ is identified as one of the main shortcomings in education in Portugal. See the role of experts and scholars in CoE work on EDC in § 31 ff. On the influence of churches in Spain, see Motos, ‘The Controversy over Civic Education in Spain’, 270–71: ‘on claims of the Catholic Church and other conservative actors that moral education was exclusively reserved for families, not for schools and government via EDC’ (n 462).

2077 On actors and stakeholders, see i.a. Charter paras 5(b), (d), (i), 6, and 8. Networks, i.a. NECE, DARE, EUROCLIO; see further <lllplatform.eu/who-we-are/members-and-partners/>.

2078 Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, definition in Annex. Also text to n 849.

precluding any EU initiatives to formulate content for the EU dimension of EDC in mainstream education. Therefore, in order to understand to what extent the EU is competent to support the EU dimension of EDC in the Member States, three aspects of the legal basis for EU competence are examined in more detail. The Treaty expression ‘quality education’ (Article 165(1) TFEU) is linked to the third anchor point of the study, the right to education. The ‘European dimension in education’ in the legal basis (Article 165(2) first indent) is clarified and new elements are explored relating to the ‘participation of young people in democratic life in Europe’ (Article 165(2) fifth indent). The human rights-based approach to education (promoted by the UN and UNESCO) enriches the significance of the wording of Article 165 TFEU.

Chapter ten explores the exercise of education competences by the EU and the Member States. The EU has to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Possible EU measures for the inclusion of an EU dimension in EDC are examined, with suggestions for the way ahead. The last section examines Member State competence in education and draws attention to certain limits to national educational autonomy.

