

MIDDELBURG DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

We, the participants in the 6th International Human Rights Education Conference, gathered in Middelburg from 17-19 December 2015.

Reaffirming the need for each girl, boy, woman and man to know their inalienable rights in order to be(come) active and responsible citizens in an ever globalizing world.

Recalling that article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Recalling that these aims of education were made legally binding through, among others, article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 29(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and reaffirmed in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, and the Council of Europe Charter for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Concerned about the pace and scale of intolerance, Islamophobia, radicalisation and violence in Europe, which reveal a significant gap between Europe's human rights ideals and the state of human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

Acknowledging the important role that education and training play in awareness raising, fostering a culture of human rights and democratic institutions based on the rule of law, addressing intolerance, and in protecting the interests of minorities and other vulnerable populations;

Request the member states of the United Nations to continue to implement its international commitments and obligations under international human rights law and the World Programme for Human Rights Education, specifically human rights education and training for public officials –civil servants, law enforcement officials and armed forces– and educators in the formal schooling sector and higher education.

Acknowledging the range of valuable expertise, tools and materials in the field of human rights education which have resulted from the Council of Europe's intergovernmental programme on Education and Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Urge the member states of the Council of Europe to continue to support cooperation in this field and to implement, and regularly assess, the Council of Europe Charter on Education and Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and to bridge the gap between policy

and practice in this area, particularly within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan to combat violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism;

Being assembled in The Netherlands,

having learned that studies reveal that there is little progress in the way Dutch schools pay attention to civic and human rights education and that they have difficulties in designing such education. Furthermore, having learned that the Netherlands is considering its future curriculum for primary and secondary education.

We applaud the fact that the Advisory Body on the future of primary and secondary education in the Netherlands calls for a prominent role of the rule of law, democracy and human rights in the common core of the new curriculum.

Applaud the initiatives of the government to develop a learning method for trainee and practicing teachers to address human rights in the classroom, and to stimulate teachers to exchange experiences.

Applaud the resolve of the government to address education against radicalization as part of the Netherlands EU presidency, and call on the inclusion human rights education as part of that agenda,

Call on the government to include clear learning goals and teaching objectives based upon international experience in educational laws, policies and curricula, and to realize that human rights education forms an overarching framework on the basis of which themes as radicalization and discrimination can be well discussed.

Call on the government to also formalize human rights education in the learning goals at all teacher training colleges.

Recommend that the government promotes an understanding of human rights education as an education that involves knowledge, attitudes and skills, and that can only be effective as part of a wider human rights culture in educational institutions.

Recommend that the government makes use of the experiences and insights on the pedagogics of human rights education gained worldwide, including the importance of soft skills which leads to a safer learning environment.