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This evidence is submitted on an individual basis. It addresses the questions raised in paragraph 5 of the *Call for Evidence*, in particular the first question: “What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship?” It also addresses the aim stated in the third paragraph of the *Call*: “to identify new ways of building bridges within and between communities, and to support civic engagement”.

My response to these questions is based on work that I have been conducting for the Council of Europe since 2013 on a project entitled “*Competences for Democratic Culture*” (CDC). The overall goal of this project is to enhance levels of active democratic citizenship, and to encourage greater respect for democratic processes and for cultural diversity, using formal education for this purpose. In order to achieve this goal, the project has developed a comprehensive description of the competences that citizens require for participating in democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, and has prepared detailed guidance for education policymakers and practitioners on how education can be used to equip young people with all of these competences. The project has also produced guidance on how education can be used to equip young people with the competences that are required to identify and deconstruct extremist propaganda and hate speech encountered on the internet and in broadcast and print media. The CDC project forms a core component of the Council of Europe’s Action Plan on “*The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism*”, was endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in April 2016, and was the main focus of the 25th Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education held in Brussels in April 2016 at which the Education Ministers of the member states issued a *Final Declaration* welcoming and endorsing the CDC Framework and calling on the Council of Europe to assist member states in examining and implementing the Framework in their national education systems. The UK was a signatory of the Declaration.

The challenges

The CDC project was set up in the context of the very serious challenges that are currently facing European societies. These include:

- The decline over the past two decades in citizens’ levels of satisfaction with democracy and levels of trust in formal democratic processes, national parliaments and national governments.\(^1\)
- The increase over the past decade in levels of hate crime, violence, hostility, intolerance, prejudice, harassment and discrimination towards minority ethnic and religious groups.\(^2\)
- The rise in support for extreme right-wing political parties that openly espouse Islamophobic, antisemitic, xenophobic and racist rhetoric.\(^3\)

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• The ongoing security threat that is posed by radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism.  

**Can education help to address these challenges?**

One way in which citizens’ commitment to and engagement with democratic processes and institutions can be enhanced is through the formal education system. There is clear evidence that appropriate educational input and practices can boost democratic engagement. There is also clear evidence that educational interventions can be used to counter prejudice and intolerance towards other national, ethnic and religious groups, and to reduce support for violent extremism, especially when that education is delivered in collaboration with local partners and community organisations.

Education can therefore be used to address all of the challenges that European societies are currently facing. However, if education is to be used in this way, coordinated action is required at national level. This is because, ultimately, it is national governments that are responsible for determining the frameworks within which the contents of national curricula are determined and for making available the financial, material and human resources that are required by education institutions for delivering those curricula.

**The purposes of education**

It is often assumed that education has a single over-riding purpose, namely to prepare young people for future employment. However, the Council of Europe has a more comprehensive vision of education, which specifies four major purposes of education:

• Preparation for sustainable employment.
• Personal development.
• Preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies.
• The development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base within society.

All four purposes are of equal value and all four are necessary to enable individuals to live independent lives and to take part in all spheres of modern, rapidly changing societies. These four purposes are not in conflict with one another but are complementary. For example, many of the competences people need to be employable – such as analytical and critical thinking skills, communication skills and the ability to work cooperatively as part of a group – also help to make them active citizens in democratic societies, and are also fundamental for their personal development. Likewise, the competences that are required for active citizenship are precisely those that many business leaders and employers seek in employees but report are often lacking in new recruits to the labour market. Thus, while the CDC project has focused its attention on the competences that young people need to acquire in order to participate as active and respectful citizens in democratic societies, it should be borne in mind that these are precisely the competences that are sought by many employers and business leaders.

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Background assumptions made by the CDC Framework

The CDC Framework that has been developed assumes that democracy requires not only democratic institutions but also a culture of democracy. While democracy clearly cannot exist without democratic institutions, these institutions themselves cannot function unless citizens practise a culture of democracy and hold democratic values and attitudes. Among other things, these include:

- A commitment to public deliberation.
- A willingness to express one’s own opinions and to listen to the opinions of others.
- A conviction that differences of opinion and conflicts should be resolved peacefully.
- A commitment to decisions being made by majorities.
- A commitment to the protection of minorities and their rights.
- A commitment to the rule of law.

If citizens do not adhere to these values, attitudes and practices, then democratic institutions will not be able to function.

In addition, in culturally diverse societies, democratic processes and institutions require intercultural dialogue. A fundamental principle of democracy is that the people who are affected by political decisions should be able to express their views when those decisions are being made, and that decision-makers should pay attention to their views. Intercultural dialogue is the most important means through which citizens can express their views to other citizens who have different cultural affiliations from themselves. It is also a vital means through which decision-makers can come to understand the views of all citizens. This means that, in culturally diverse societies, intercultural dialogue is crucial for ensuring that all citizens are equally able to participate in public discussion, deliberation and decision-making. Democracy and intercultural dialogue are complementary in culturally diverse societies, and democracy in such a society can only function properly if it is accompanied by intercultural dialogue.

The CDC Framework has been developed specifically to assist educators to contribute to these two goals of achieving and consolidating a culture of democracy and fostering intercultural dialogue – and hence building bridges between communities – within European societies.

The three components of the CDC Framework

The CDC Framework has three main components:

- A **conceptual model** of the democratic and intercultural competences that young people need to acquire in order to participate effectively in democratic culture and intercultural dialogue.
- **Scaled descriptors** for all of the competences that are contained in the conceptual model.
- **Guidance documents** for ministries of education and education practitioners on how the CDC model and descriptors can be used to inform curriculum development, pedagogical planning, assessment, and teacher education. A fifth document has been produced on how a whole-school approach may be used to implement the Framework. A sixth document explains how the Framework can be used to combat radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

These three components are explained further below.

The first component of the CDC Framework: the conceptual model

The CDC Framework contains a conceptual model of the competences that people require to participate effectively in democratic culture and intercultural dialogue. These are the
competences that education needs to promote in young people so that they are properly equipped for their future lives as democratic citizens in culturally diverse societies.

The competence model was developed through the following process:

- An audit of existing conceptual schemes of democratic competence and intercultural competence that are available in previous research and policy documents – in total, 101 such schemes were audited.
- An analysis of the 101 schemes to identify the constituent competences which they contained.
- The use of a set of principled criteria to identify the core competences contained across the 101 schemes.
- The production of a first draft of the CDC competence model.
- An international consultation with academic experts, education practitioners and policymakers, including experts nominated by the Education Ministries of the member states – the model received very strong endorsement in the consultation.
- The fine-tuning and the finalisation of the model, taking into account the feedback received in the consultation.

The conceptual model contains 20 competences in total. These are the competences that young people need to acquire if they are to function as effective democratic citizens in culturally diverse societies. The 20 competences fall into four broad categories: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. A diagrammatic summary of the model is shown in Figure 1. The text that describes the model explains each of these 20 competences and their various facets in detail.\(^9\)

\(^9\) Council of Europe (2016), Competences for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, [https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07](https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07)
Importantly, some of these competences, such as cooperation skills, may be promoted already during pre-school education, whereas others, such as critical understanding of politics, law and human rights, are more suitable for targeting during secondary and/or higher education. For this reason, the CDC Framework has relevance to all levels of education, including pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.

The second component of the CDC Framework: the descriptors

The Framework also contains descriptors for all 20 competences. Descriptors are statements or descriptions of what a person is able to do if they have mastered a particular competence. They therefore provide an operationalisation of the competences in terms of concrete behaviours. The descriptors have been formulated using the language of learning outcomes, so that they can be used directly in curriculum development, pedagogical planning and assessment.

The process of developing the descriptors involved the following stages:

- An audit of existing psychometric scales, research documents and policy documents – 98 source documents were audited.
- Scale items and statements found in these documents were extracted and rephrased to construct short statements that could potentially serve as descriptors – in total, 2,085 descriptors were written.
- These descriptors were evaluated using a series of rating tasks, validation tasks and scaling tasks that involved 3,094 teachers across Europe.
- The data collected from the teachers were used to identify a set of 447 validated and highly rated descriptors, and a smaller set of 133 key descriptors that were judged to be especially useful for indexing the achievement of the 20 competences contained in the model.
- The data were also used to scale the descriptors to different levels of proficiency – this means that the descriptors can be used to index whether a person has a basic, an intermediate or an advanced level of proficiency in any given competence.

An illustrative example of the key descriptors for one specific competence is given in Box 1 below.

**Box 1: The scaled key descriptors for skills of listening and observing**

- **Basic level of proficiency**
  - Listens attentively to other people
  - Listens carefully to differing opinions
- **Intermediate level of proficiency**
  - Can listen effectively in order to decipher another person’s meanings and intentions
  - Watches speakers’ gestures and general body language to help himself/herself to figure out the meaning of what they are saying
- **Advanced level of proficiency**
  - Pays attention to what other people imply but do not say
  - Notices how people with other cultural affiliations react in different ways to the same situation

The third component of the CDC Framework: the guidance documents
The Framework also contains guidance documents that explain how the competence model and the descriptors can be used in formal education. There are six guidance documents in total. These explain in detail:

- How the CDC Framework can be used for the purposes of curriculum review and development.
- The pedagogical methods that are most appropriate for the teaching and learning of the 20 competences.
- How the Framework can be used for assessing pupils and students.
- How to apply the Framework using a whole-school approach in order to promote the development of the 20 competences.
- How teacher education and training may be adapted to support the use of the Framework in national education systems.
- How the Framework can be used to build and enhance young people’s resilience to radicalising influences and violent extremist propaganda, and to boost their commitment to democratic processes and respect for fellow citizens.

The formal launch and implementation of the CDC Framework

The six guidance documents and the validated descriptors are currently in press. They will be formally launched to the Education Ministries of the member states of the Council of Europe at the end of October 2017, at a meeting of the Prague Forum (a conference hosted by the Czech Ministry of Education).

The Education Ministries of the member states have been kept informed about the CDC project at all stages of its development, through the biannual meetings of the Council of Europe’s Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (which consists of policymakers from the Education Ministries of all 47 member states). The Education Ministries have also been inputting ideas to the project throughout its development at these meetings. The Steering Committee has expressed very strong support for the CDC project since its inception in 2013.

Formally, the Framework is being offered to member states as a non-binding reference framework. This means that the member states can refer to it and use it in whatever ways they judge to be the most appropriate for their own education systems. The guidance documents outline various options for implementation and explain the issues that should be borne in mind when considering these options, but it is end-users who are required to make the decisions about which options are most suitable for use within their own countries. The Framework is intended to be supportive rather than either normative or prescriptive – it provides a set of resources that may be drawn upon and adapted by member states, as they see fit.

Ahead of the formal launch and the publication of the Framework, the Council of Europe – together with its education resource partner the European Wergeland Centre – has already delivered training in the Framework to education practitioners in 18 countries (Andorra, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Ukraine) and two countries have already committed to implementing the framework in whole (Andorra) and in part (Ukraine). Additional member states are expected to commit to implementing the Framework in whole or in part after the formal launch has taken place in October.

Conclusion
The CDC Framework offers a systematic approach to planning the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, and to introducing these competences into national education systems in ways that are coherent, comprehensive and transparent. The Framework provides an approach that can be used to equip young people with all of the competences that are needed to function as engaged and active democratic citizens, live peacefully and respectfully together with others in culturally diverse societies, and be resilient to propaganda that aims to radicalise them into violent extremism or terrorism.

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