



MED21-8
Final

Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education

**Intercultural education: managing diversity,
strengthening democracy**

21st session

Athens, Greece, 10–12 November 2003

Resolution

**to foster the integration of information and
communication technologies (ICTs) in educational
systems in Europe**

The European Ministers of Education, meeting at the 21st session of their Standing Conference in Athens on 10-12 November 2003,

CONSIDERING that the ongoing development of the new communication and information services should serve to promote the right of every person to express, seek, receive and transmit information and ideas, for the benefit of every individual and of a democratic culture in society;

WELCOMING this development as an important factor in enabling all the member states and every individual to participate in building a communications society throughout the European continent;

CONSIDERING that the education systems of all member states have a key role to play in ensuring the creation of a knowledge based society,

REFERRING to:

- the Declaration and Action Plan in which the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member states resolved, at their second Summit on 11 October 1997, to develop a European policy for the application of the new information technologies;
- the Committee of Ministers' Declaration of 7 May 1999 on a European policy for new information technologies;
- the Declaration on education policies for democratic citizenship and social cohesion, adopted at the 20th session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Krakow, 14-16 October 2000);

CONVINCED that the use of the new communication and information services can give everyone easier and enhanced possibilities of participating in the dissemination of information, of receiving training and participating in communication beyond borders, -with a view to increased international understanding and mutual enrichment of cultures;

REALISING that the skills and the knowledge required to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) and thus digital literacy, should be seen as essential for professional and everyday life in the communication society;

AWARE of the challenge education systems in Europe face today in implementing the most appropriate pedagogical approaches and practices supported by and taking full advantage of ICTs, in order to improve learning and offer all citizens a wider range of learning opportunities and service;

CONCERNED ABOUT social, economic and technical discrepancies that exist at national, regional and local level regarding the development of the new communication and information services as well as the dangers of a digital divide inherent in this development;

CONVINCED that training in the use of these technologies for society in general, and the younger generations in particular, helps to reduce inequalities between them and guarantee their better integration in the world of information, communication, lifelong learning, culture and employment;

HAVING NOTED with interest the problems examined in the studies conducted in the framework of the project “Learning and teaching in the communication society” (documents CD-ED 2003 22/ 23/ 24) concerning the challenges from the communication society facing the education systems in Europe;

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AGREE to implement the following principles in line with national education policies:

1. The generalisation of ICT-based teaching practices in educational systems should include:

- 1.1 supplying, and up-dating equipment in teaching institutions (hardware and software) and providing assistance on the basis of pluri-annual plans;
- 1.2 providing teachers and pupils with infrastructure, software facilities and broadband Internet access, sufficient in both quantity and quality to ensure that ICT-based teaching activities can be realised and integrated into the curricula of schools ;
- 1.3 providing broadband Internet access in schools, available to pupils outside classroom hours, particularly in documentation centres;
- 1.4 allowing for computer skills in pupil assessment, in particular within each subject area;
- 1.5 developing the widespread validation and recognition of skills in the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and enhancing their use in the classroom;
- 1.6 introducing a policy to support the production of computerised teaching resources, and particularly learning environments, fostering collaboration between peers and promoting self-reliance, and applying a quality charter which covers ethical and social aspects, and developing public/private partnerships able to create a viable economy in this sector.

2. Policymakers should encourage developments in the teaching professions by:

- 2.1 taking account of and certifying ICT-based teaching skills when recruiting new teachers;
- 2.2 allowing for ICT-based teaching activities in teachers’ working schedules;
- 2.3 making training available to serving teachers at regular intervals throughout their careers, so that they can keep abreast of new teaching techniques and practices, in the light of research results in this field.

3. Higher education institutions involved in basic and continuing teacher training should focus teaching and research on the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs):

- 3.1 the initial training provided for primary and secondary teachers should cover the proper use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in subject-teaching, and skills in this area must be tested when teachers are being recruited;
- 3.2 higher education teachers who provide this initial training should be encouraged to exemplify the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their own courses, giving future teachers points of reference and demonstrating scientifically the validity of ICT applications;
- 3.3 continued training programmes should allow all serving teachers to upgrade their professional skills by incorporating the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and include strong incentives to overcome reservations;
- 3.4 university research on the development and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and on their effects on learning, teaching methods and subject-content, should be encouraged and supported;
- 3.5 this research should be based as far as possible on classroom realities in European schools, and university research teams should involve practising teachers in their work;
- 3.6 the research should be accompanied by the necessary means to disseminate the findings to decision-makers and practitioners, in a language and form which non-specialists can understand.

4. Policy decisions should be implemented to stimulate the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in network building:

- 4.1 to support the establishment of databanks, carrying details of successful schemes, instruments, teaching aids, and to keep them up to date and add to them with the help of projects aimed at disseminating information;
- 4.2 to promote the co-operation, across Europe, between organisations in charge of the development of e-learning materials and educational databases, facilitating their adaptation to local context, by means of less restrictive legal rules and of equitable economic model;
- 4.3 to support networking and co-operative initiatives between teachers who teach the same subject or on the same level, or specialise in the same area (e.g. children with disabilities), and who are using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in pioneering ways to improve learning or solve learning problems;
- 4.4 to promote virtual sites for dialogue and sharing between teachers;
- 4.5 to foster the dissemination of information on techniques, teaching methods, research findings, requests for help.

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RECOMMEND the Committee of Ministers to:

1. pay special attention to the ethical and social aspects linked to the basic information and communication technologies (ICTs) skills;
2. continue giving high priority to foreign language-learning in its work-programme, so as to ensure that all persons involved in educational systems can communicate effectively in foreign languages and derive full benefit from the increasing wealth of information and opportunities for contacts and exchanges;
3. promote the training of teachers and teacher trainers in the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs);
4. encourage the development of research on the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) from an educational perspective, for all subjects in the curriculum.