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## Transferring International Politics in Education to National School Systems: Case studies from Ukraine and Romania on the Implementation Process of a Council of Europe Material

This issue of the online journal "tibi" presents two studies that follow up an earlier comparative study conducted for the Council of Europe (Abs 2009). While this more comprehensive study analyses the preconditions and opportunities for implementing a material of the Council of Europe (CoE) in ten countries, "tibi" presents studies from two countries, where real implementation took place.

The former study and the research presented here refer to the "Tool for Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) in Schools" (Bîrzea et al., 2005). This material was developed as a result of analysing EDC experience in South-East European countries and by adapting mostly western European materials to this context. Thereby, principles, methods and instruments have been described, all of which are intended as a generic resource for users in any country. In order to make the tool manageable for people without previous knowledge of it, the first chapters explain the basic concepts of quality assurance, education for democracy and school development planning. At its core, the tool offers an evaluative framework for EDC in schools, providing a set of broader indicators in the sense of questions an evaluation has to answer (for example, "Are the design and practices of assessment within the school consistent with EDC?"). Each indicator is accompanied by a set of sub-themes (for example, fairness, transparency and improvement) coupled with concrete statements that can be taken as evaluation checkpoints (for example, "Teachers do not use assessment of knowledge and skills in specific subjects for enforcing discipline"). Different ways of collecting data and working with results in school development planning are also illustrated.

The tool is a free online material, and it can be downloaded from the Council of Europe website: www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Pdf/Documents/2006_4_Tool4QA_EDC.pdf
Further information about the Council of Europe's work in the field of EDC is available at: www.coe.int/edc.

The production and implementation of resources such as the Tool can be seen in the broader context of international organisations' educational policy activities. Several international organisations try to influence the structure and content of school education in general, and citizenship education in particular. Among these, the Council of Europe has focussed on more specific contents and has continuously developed a focal programme entitled "Education for Democratic Citizenship" since 1997. The CoE's programme supports the development of joint principles and practices via the formulation of recommendations, projects and materials.

Given the complexity of politics, it is far from the case that supranational recommendations are simply immediately translated into national state policies. This is especially true because the recommendations of the CoE are not legally binding in any of its member states, but they rather symbolise the commitment of member states to certain common values and their intention to collaborate on that basis. Hence, a gap is created between agreed and realised policies – this discrepancy has been termed a "compliance gap". One of the most logical reasons for non-compliance derives from a lack of awareness or competencies. Hence, the CoE has concentrated

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on producing materials that might help raise awareness and develop competencies. Initially, materials focused on outlining the state of the art in citizenship education (Bîrzea, 2004). Subsequently, good practice reference material was produced, and products have since 2005 been collected as part of an "EDC Package". The package covers the areas of policy-making, the democratic governance of educational institutions, teacher training and quality assurance. The "Tool for Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Schools" (Bîrzea et al., 2005) forms part of this package.

The countries that are addressed by the two studies presented in this special issue are Romania and Ukraine. Both countries share a communist history with different degrees of integration into the Soviet empire. After 1989, Romania and Ukraine went through an ongoing process of system transformation. We cannot recapitulate the major steps during this transformation and remaining problems and open questions in this introduction. Even today, 20 years after the transformation started, it still does not seem to have come naturally that the Ukraine succeeded in building up an independent nation state and that Romania succeeded in becoming a member of the European Union. Of course, every democratic state has continuously to work on its political, economic, and judicial structures in order to sustain the rule of law, common wealth and democracy, but the relatively young Eastern European democracies have to work even harder in this respect. They have to establish judicial systems, while acting against the law was the only way to liberty for many generations. They have to build up economic structures in an international environment, where economic pressure and competition are more globalised than in former times. Finally, they have to develop democratic societies in a context where parts of the society benefited from the undemocratic nature of the former state.

In this situation, the educational system plays a key role. Expectations regarding schools and universities are high: they should not only enhance the employability of the people. Moreover they should prove their worth as organisations where the future citizen can experience democratic principles, like transparency, pluralism, equality and freedom from corruption, which is part of the rule of law. Against this background, it sounds reasonable that the CoE supports school related projects in some Eastern European Countries. These projects are intended to serve both as lighthouses offering orientation to teachers and the policy makers in the respective countries and as laboratories providing the national systems with adaptations of international models.

From the point of view of comparative education research (Bray, 2007; Postlethwaite, 1995; Hörner et al. 2007) the two studies follow an experimental purpose: the educational systems under comparison are viewed as participants in an experiment. The reader can learn about different systems by studying how they deal with a common international resource and approach to schooling. Unlike in a scientific experiment, however, there is no random assignment of interventions to the experiment or to the control group. Preconditions differ, as previous studies have shown: Dumbraveanu (2007) and Hellwig, Lipenkowa (2007) deliver more general descriptions of the educational systems in Romania and Ukraine. Additionally, several studies conducted within the last five years provide information on citizenship education and on further conditions for implementing the tool in the two countries (Bîrzea, 2004; Sardoc, 2004; Froumin, 2004; Wulff, Malerius, 2008, Pometun, 2009; Paunescu, Alexandrescu, 2009).

Both studies were designed along a common set of questions, which were agreed upon by the authors of the studies and the editor. These questions highlight the organisational side of the

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implementation process as well as the reception of the implementation work in schools and the embedding in the educational systems. We present these questions below.

1. Who organises the implementation project? What kind of agency or cooperation of agencies?

2. How is the agency financed? How was/is the project financed? Does the agency have any mandate by the state? How many persons are involved in the project on the side of the agency and what are their duties?

3. How do you find and select the participating schools?

4. What is offered to the schools in terms of training, supervision, financial support etc.?

5. Why do schools participate in the project? How is the decision to participate made on the school level?

6. Please describe the working process in schools: Who is involved in the schools: All or a group of Teachers? All or a group of students? Parents? Principals? What are the respective tasks of these people? How large is the workload? What chapters of the Tool are used by the schools?

7. How do schools deal with evaluation results gained from the project? Can you see consequences on the school level?

8. What do schools have to deliver to agencies?

9. What is the relevance or added value compared to national educational politics?

10. How is the project evaluated by the agency (or by other organisations)? How did the working procedures within the project change after evaluation of the first field trial?

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