

**A critical overview of the intercultural component in European official documents  
and projects focusing on Education for Democratic Citizenship.**  
Spanish Research Summary

**1. Introduction:**

Within the framework of the research, the analysis focuses on recommendations, declarations and resolutions approved by member states in the Council of Europe in which the principles of democracy and human rights have been set out.

**2. Methodology:**

The methodology deals with the collection, identification and interpretation of documents in order to understand how the concepts under study are defined and to determine the implications for education.

The procedure followed in the analysis comprises:

**3. Documents analysed:**

**3.1. Regarding Human Rights:**

**a. Teaching of Human Rights:**

- *Resolution (78) 41 on the teaching of Human Rights*, in their desire to maintain and realize human rights and with the aim to ensure a place in the curricula for teaching and training in human rights, recommends “to give the teaching of human rights a place in the curricula of teaching and training”.

- *Recommendation n° R (85) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on teaching and learning about human rights in schools*, in the context of the need to reaffirm democratic values, and aiming to encourage teaching and learning about human rights in schools.

- *Recommendation 1346 (1997) on human rights education*, states that in the context of the Council of Europe, “there is still a certain lack of human rights culture and a failure to understand the true meaning of human rights and their implications in everyday life”, feeling that “there is a real need for further action”.

**b. Respect for Human Rights:**

- *Resolution 743 (1980) on the need to combat resurgent fascist propaganda and its racial aspects*, aims to condemn racist/fascist propaganda and to call on legislation. The context in which this document appears is the concern with the emergence of fascist propaganda and the protection of principles of democracy and respect for human rights.

**c. Defence of Democracy:**

- *Declaration regarding intolerance –a threat to democracy (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 1981 at its 68th session)* appears in the context of the resurgence of various forms of intolerance, and aims to prevent the spread of totalitarian and racist ideologies, acting against intolerance.

- *Recommendation 941 (1982) on the defence of democracy against terrorism in Europe*, appears in the context of the assault by terrorism on the values and institutions of pluralistic, parliamentary democracy and on human rights. It aims to defend democracy against terrorism by a legal, judicial and legislative approach in coordination.

- *Recommendation 963 (1983) on cultural and educational means of reducing violence*, aims to reduce violence taking legislative, judicial and administrative measures in the field of terrorism, media, sports, and to promote educational approaches. Terrorism is defined as “a factor of cultural destabilisation” which can “undermine the individual’s confidence in values, interests or institutions”.

- *Vienna Declaration (1983)* which appears in the context of construction and consolidation of the new Europe, aims to strengthen democratic security in Europe.

### **3.2. Regarding Intercultural Education:**

We have identified three main contexts in which the intercultural component appears in the analysed documents:

- a. *Context of teacher education;*
- b. *Context of education for migrants’ children;*
- c. *Context of inter-community relations.*

#### **a. Context of teacher education:**

The references in documents to the concept of intercultural education in the context of teacher education are the following:

- *Recommendation N° R (84) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the training of teachers in education for intercultural understanding, notably in the context of migration.*

This recommendation appears in the context of multicultural societies in Europe due to population movements and the presence in schools of children from foreign cultural communities. It considers “the essential role of teachers in helping such pupils to integrate into school and society, as well as in developing mutual understanding”.

- *Declaration by the European Ministers of Education on intercultural education in the new European context Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education 21st session, Athens, Greece, 10-12 November 2003. MED21-7.*

The promotion of the intercultural dimension appears in the context of education for democracy calling on the Council of Europe “to enhance quality of education by making democracy learning and intercultural education key components of educational reform”.

#### **b. Context of education of migrants’ children:**

- *Recommendation 1093 (1989) on the education of migrants’ children*, appears in the context of the education and cultural development of migrants and aims to implement principles of intercultural education in the education of migrants’ children.

- *Recommendation 1277 (1995) on migrants, ethnic minorities and media*, states that “immigration and the presence of ethnic minorities are integral parts of the European identity”, contributing to the wealth and diversity of our society.

- *Resolution 874 (1987) on the quality and effectiveness of school teaching*, appears in the context of the necessity of a continual re-evaluation of school education and aims to promote European co-operation in the field of education.

- *Recommendation 1089 (1988) on improving community relations (European Days “Enjoying our diversity”, Strasbourg 25-27 November 1987)*, aims to improve community relations ensuring a larger participation by migrants, in the context of cultural pluralism in Europe.

**c. Context of inter-community relations:**

- *Resolution 874 (1987) on the quality and effectiveness of school teaching*, appears in the context of the necessity of a continual re-evaluation of school education and aims to promote European co-operation in the field of education.

**3.3. Regarding Citizenship:**

**a. Education for democratic citizenship:**

- *Recommendation (2002) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on education for democratic citizenship*, moved by a concern with the growing levels of political and civic apathy and lack of confidence in democratic institutions, recommends that the governments of member states make education for democratic citizenship a priority objective of educational policy-making and reform.

- *Declaration and programme on education for democratic citizenship, based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 May 1999, at its 104<sup>th</sup> Session)*.

- *Recommendation 1401 (1999) Education in the responsibilities of the individual*, in the context of dissatisfaction with the general situation in Europe with regard to Human Rights, aims at promoting education in the responsibilities of the individual and an awareness on the part of citizens of their responsibilities.

- *Recommendation 59 (1999) on “Europe 2000 –youth participation: the role of young people as citizens”*, states that “participation by young people in society is a constant vector of all Council of Europe youth policy”. In this sense, it considers essential “the training and education of young people, particularly in citizenship”, stressing the importance of participation by young people in political life, by making decisions and encouraging dialogue.

**b. Modern languages for democratic citizenship:**

- *Recommendation n° R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning modern languages (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 March 1998, at the 623<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).*

This recommendation, resulting from the “Language Learning for European Citizenship” project, stresses the importance of intensifying language learning in order to promote plurilingualism, and effective international communication by a mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. It provides for specific measures to promote the learning and teaching of modern languages in Primary and Secondary Education, vocational education, adult education, bilingual education and teacher training.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1. How is human rights defined.**

- a. The concept of “teaching human rights” has evolved from “teaching” only (1978) to “teaching and learning” (1985) to “education” (1997) which adds a wider perspective to Human Rights in schools.
- b. A shift from an “awareness” (in 1978) to an “understanding” (in 1985 and 1997).
- c. A shift from “intercultural and international understanding” (1985) to “inter-ethnic understanding” (1997).
- d. We find a link between Human Rights in education and the promotion of democratic values.
- e. The cognitive dimension of Human Rights in education is related mainly to the study of Human Rights and other subjects such as the teaching of Politics and History. There is no attention to Foreign Languages.
- f. The skills promoted in Human Rights education are mainly linked to an “understanding of human rights”. We find a lack of other strategies which are central requirements for the principles of democracy such as critical understanding, participation, autonomous thinking and so on.

### **4.2. How is intercultural education defined.**

- a. Intercultural education evolves from a focus on the integration of children from foreign cultural communities into school and society, to a wider context of education for democracy.
- b. Not many documents deal with the intercultural dimension in the context of teacher education (a gap between 1984 to 2003)
- c. The development of professional skills to meet the requirements stated in the document from 2003 will need further details to be implemented in an effective way.

### **4.3. How is citizenship defined.**

The concept of “citizenship” is defined in contexts of “education for democratic citizenship”, “human rights education”, “youth participation as citizens” and “modern languages”.

In the context of “education for democratic citizenship”, both documents (1999, 2002) agree on associating concepts such as social cohesion, life long learning and mutual understanding.

The three dimensions of knowledge (the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural) are taken into account, highlighting the skills of active participation.