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Council of Europe Cultural Heritage and Education Policy: Preserving Identity and Searching for a Common Core?

Alicja Jagielska-Burduk¹, Piotr Stec²

¹ PhD, UNESCO Chair on Cultural Property Law, University of Opole,

² PhD, University of Opole,

Abstract

This article presents the Council of Europe's educational policy, indicating its major milestones and characteristics when it comes to issues of cultural heritage. First it offers an analysis of the strategic documents (i.e. recommendation No. R (98) 5 of the committee of ministers to member states concerning heritage education and conventions, with emphasis on the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention). The notion of a common European Cultural Heritage as a shared and non-renewable resource is presented in the human rights approach to cultural heritage. The article pays special attention to intercultural dialogue and how it is supposed to support the European cultural identity. The second part explores existing links between the Council of Europe (CoE) and EU policies. The EU joint programmes regarding Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG GROW] and Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG-REGIO] (Routes4U) are presented. Additionally, the authors point out the links between the UNESCO cultural conventions and the Council of Europe policy framework. Finally, the article delivers conclusions as to whether a synergy exists between the European Union's and the CoE's policies, and answers the question why this is so important in cultural heritage education.

Key words

Cultural heritage; Education; Council of Europe; Synergy; Conventions

Contacto:

Alicja Jagielska-Burduk <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6696-8004>

Piotr Stec <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3797-1321>

Patrimonio Cultural y Política Educativa del Consejo de Europa: ¿Preservando la identidad y buscando un núcleo central?

Resumen

Este artículo presenta la política en materia educativa del Consejo de Europa, indicando sus principales características e hitos, a la hora de tratar las cuestiones relativas al patrimonio cultural. En primer lugar, ofrece un análisis de los documentos estratégicos (como, por ejemplo, la Recomendación (98) 5 del Comité de Ministros a los Estados miembro, relativa a la Pedagogía del Patrimonio), con especial énfasis en Convenio marco del Consejo de Europa sobre el valor del patrimonio cultural para la sociedad (Convenio de Faro). La noción de un patrimonio cultural europeo común, como un recurso compartido y no renovado, es presentada en este trabajo, tomando como punto de vista la perspectiva de los derechos humanos. Además, en la investigación se presta especial atención al diálogo intercultural y su papel como sostenedor de la identidad cultural europea. La segunda parte estudia los vínculos existentes entre el Consejo de Europa y las políticas de la Unión Europea. Se dedica especial atención a los programas conjuntos con la Unión Europea, como los compartidos con la Comisión Europea DG GROW, DG-REGIO o Routes4U. Igualmente, se tratan los vínculos entre los convenios culturales de la UNESCO y la política estructural del Consejo de Europa en la materia. Finalmente, el artículo expone una serie de conclusiones relevantes en torno a las sinergias existentes entre las políticas de la Unión Europea y las del Consejo de Europa en la materia, contestando a la cuestión relativa a la razón de su importancia en el ámbito de la educación en materia de patrimonio cultural.

Palabras clave

Patrimonio cultural; Educación; Consejo de Europa; Sinergia, Convenios

Introduction

Cultural heritage is a non-renewable resource with an intrinsic value. It is however no longer perceived of as consisting of only tangible cultural objects or historic buildings. The holistic approach to cultural heritage offers a broader view of cultural heritage matters and includes both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Blake, Frigo), sometimes accompanied by natural heritage elements (Fincham). Cultural heritage is not only a resource of interest from the perspective of safeguarding it to be passed on to future generations. If wisely used and managed it also provides many opportunities for societies' economic development (Jagielska-Burduk & Szafranski). For example, cultural heritage was set out as one of four priorities in the 2015-18 Work Plan for Culture (European Council 2014), and it remains a pivotal part of the forthcoming New European Agenda for Culture (European Commission). Cultural heritage is supposed to stimulate creativity and job-growth and is considered as a development catalyst.

Moreover, building a democratic society enriched by its cultural diversity and cultural heritage is incorporated in the Agenda 2030 goals in the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly). Goal no. 4 of Agenda 2030 deals with the

education and its cultural element is inserted in target 4.7. It states the aim that: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.” The emphasis on education and culture-related issues confirms the crucial role of cultural heritage education at all levels in achieving sustainable development goals.

Study’s purpose and methodology

In acknowledging the role of international actors in creating frameworks for educational policies, the article shows the CoE’s position in this process and presents its role in shaping cultural heritage education and training. The first part introduces the CoE’s legal framework regarding cultural heritage education, with emphasis on the cultural heritage dimension in education. The next part offers an analysis of the synergies between the policies of the European Union and UNESCO, providing several relevant practical examples. The main objective of this study is to check if the CoE legislative initiatives provide an adequate toolbox for future harmonization of cultural heritage education and to show how such harmonization could be achieved with soft measures and without sacrificing or limiting CoE Member States freedom to shape their national educational policies.

This study employs black letter analysis together with critical analysis. In addition to the dogmatic-legal analysis, the comparative method is applied with respect to the CoE’s legal framework and those of non-Council of Europe organisations. The development of the CoE’s policy in the area of cultural heritage education is discussed on the basis of conventions, recommendations, declarations, and its actions undertaken so far. The results are confronted with the legislative measures of UNESCO and the European Union in order to show the need for synergy and the importance of cooperation on multiple levels.

Council of Europe legal framework in cultural heritage education

The Council of Europe [CoE] was established in 1949 in order to foster cooperation among European countries. Although, its most emblematic convention deals with the protection of human rights (Council of Europe 1950) the scope of the CoE’s activity clearly goes beyond this. It embraces other areas such as education, culture, the environment, health, protection of minorities, and social and economic issues. From the outset, the human rights approach has been at the centre of the CoE’s interests and legislative activities. The further realisation of human rights has an important role when it comes to education and cultural heritage. Hence, cultural rights in both their collective and individual dimensions (Jakubowski) are present in the learning about cultural heritage. The role of cultural heritage and education is visible in The Preamble of the Statute of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 1949) and refers to the common heritage regarding the “devotion to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples.” Article 1 encapsulates the aims of the Statute, which involve unity between

members. This goal is to be achieved by new agreements and actions undertaken in economic, social, cultural, scientific, legal, and administrative matters.

The European Cultural Convention could be considered the cornerstone for the cooperation in the area of culture and education (Council of Europe 1954). The convention seeks common areas of collaboration and encourages the strengthening of common values regarding culture, together with showing respect for cultural diversity and mutual understanding. The Convention obliges the signatory countries to undertake efforts to create measures to safeguard and encourage the development of their national input to the common cultural heritage of Europe. Although education is not literally mentioned in the convention, the references to studies, promotion, and exchange of persons clearly relate to training and education.

Heritage education was defined in the recommendation no. R (98) 5 of the [CoE's] Committee of Ministers to the Member States concerning Heritage Education (Committee of Ministers, 1998). According to the glossary given in Annex 1 of the recommendation, for the purposes of this document "heritage education means a teaching approach based on cultural heritage, incorporating active educational methods, cross-curricular approaches, a partnership between the fields of education and culture and employing the widest variety of modes of communication and expression." The recommendation emphasizes the fact that heritage education is multi-layered, making the cross-curricular approach inevitable. The recommendation suggests "adopting appropriate legislative, regulatory, administrative, financial and other measures to initiate and develop heritage education activities and to promote heritage awareness among the young." The Appendix to the recommendation presents details on the implementation of heritage education and points out appropriate trainings for teachers. Furthermore, in order to create an environment facilitating knowledge-sharing, it suggests that theoretical and practical training courses should be organised for teachers and cultural professionals (II b of Annex 1).

The most recent and essential CoE document concerning culture is the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) (Council of Europe, 2005). The Faro Convention is a framework convention with general objectives, which provide a so-called "road map" and give the state parties freedom in choosing the tools and measures used for implementation of the Convention. Even though the innovative approach to cultural heritage as a facilitator of democratic societies' cohesion (Thérond) and putting the individual in the centre of the cultural heritage definition (von Saint André – von Armin) was welcomed by researchers and government authorities, the ratification process has been slow. Five signatures have not been followed by ratification, and the total number of ratifications/accessions is 18 (<https://rm.coe.int/>). According to the Explanatory Report of the convention, cultural heritage education should be used as measure facilitating peace and inter-personal and inter-cultural dialogue. Furthermore, this could promote mutual understanding and prevent conflicts (Council of Europe 2005, Explanatory Report). The inclusion and integration of cultural heritage in education and training will enable an understanding of cultural heritages. The plural form of 'heritages' emphasizes the importance of multicultural communities (Council of Europe 2005, Explanatory Report, p. 5).

In comparison to other international conventions, it is worth stressing that one part of the Faro Convention is devoted to education as well as fostering training and research. Article 13 provides that countries should take measures in order to “facilitate the inclusion of the cultural heritage dimension at all levels of education, not necessarily as a subject of study in its own right, but as a fertile source for studies in other subjects.” This means that cultural heritage education is perceived as a vital part of many subjects and should be taken into consideration when preparing initial training for teachers of those subjects. What needs to be underlined is that the cultural heritage component should be present not only in “self-evident” areas of education, but included in a variety of areas (Council of Europe 2005, Explanatory Report, p. 12).

The postulate to strengthen the link between cultural heritage education and vocational training also shows the importance of cultural heritage issues in this particular area. The member states are advised to “encourage continuous professional training and the exchange of knowledge and skills, both within and outside the educational system.” In terms of teaching this seems to be crucial, as nowadays teachers have to be trained to deal with pupils representing different cultural traditions and coming from different cultural backgrounds. This situation occurs especially when different cultures co-exist in one region, so that mutual respect and acceptance of diversity is essential and needed at all levels of school education.

The definition of ‘cultural heritage education’ is provided in the Faro Convention Action Plan Handbook 2018-2019. According to this document, cultural heritage education “refers to the development and implementation of diverse and creative formal and non-formal educational activities, curricula, and games for children under 18 years old, in line with the principles of the Faro Convention. Such action is developed through active involvement and cooperation between the community members, artisans, children, parents, educators and administrators” (Council of Europe, 2018). The Handbook emphasises not only formal education matters but also the existence of many tools. It also assumes cooperation and the inclusion of stakeholders. The mention of creativity and diversity in educational activities shows the multitude of actors are involved. Nonetheless, the role of teachers remains crucial as they provide a foundation that can be supported by other forms of action and activities. At the same time, the Handbook suggests that formal education forms should be a result of cooperation and based on sharing knowledge and experiences.

Practical dimensions

There are a plethora of European initiatives aimed at giving heritage education a practical dimension. These initiatives vary from strategic initiatives to the down-to-earth tasks of preparing model curricula and lesson plans.

One of the strategic initiatives is a Final Declaration of the CoE Standing Conference, which stresses the need for international cooperation for the creation of a democratic culture through educational activities (Council of Europe, 2016). Another example of strategic level initiatives are the Council of Europe’s K1 component of its Strategy 21 – Knowledge and Education (Committee of Ministers, 2017), and the European Commission Initiative 2 – Heritage at the school of the 2018 European Year of Culture

(<https://ec.europa.eu/culture>). These strategic initiatives show how both institutions attempt to cater to the practical dimensions of heritage education.

The CoE initiative focuses on what can be called “outreach activities” - cooperation with external actors in order to share and promote heritage knowledge. In particular the K1 part of Strategy 21 focuses on the following education-related activities:

- Support for schools and teachers (preparation of model syllabi, teacher training and establishing a dialogue between educational institutions and institutions responsible for heritage protection and research);

- Promotion of cooperation between different constituencies engaged in heritage teaching and research;

- Making heritage knowledge more accessible both to specialists and the general public (digitalization of resources, outside activities, support for programmes organized by museums etc.).

The EU’s own initiative focuses on complementary measures, and on fostering European cooperation for heritage research and promotion. In particular it focuses on:

- Valourising ERASMUS + initiatives on various levels, starting from schools and ending with universities and vocational education institutes. This axis of heritage promotion may help to create a platform for the exchange of various perceptions of heritage and deepen intercultural understanding of heritage-related issues;

- Raising the awareness of intangible cultural heritage in cooperation with UNESCO. This action is aimed at schoolchildren and is a good example of a grassroots heritage policy;

- Activities for children within the framework of European Heritage Days, aimed not only at raising awareness, but also at creating a space where parents and children can share their experiences, and a place where a child can move on to more advanced levels of heritage awareness development;

- Strengthening Europe through heritage and culture: a set of activities for secondary school students. This component includes study visits to Brussels and a chance for students to play policymakers and express their views on heritage policy formulation. These initiatives have a dual objective: to increase cultural awareness and to develop civic engagement.

These policy initiatives are accompanied by more technical actions at both the European and national levels. As *pars pro toto* we can present three examples: the Europeana pro platform (<https://pro.europeana.eu/>); publication of a teachers’ aid with lesson scenarios, focusing on Kosovo’s tangible and intangible heritage (a top-down policy approach); and a programme of the National Heritage Board of Poland, which adopts a bottom-up policy approach. The National Heritage Board organizes lesson scenario writing competitions for teachers who run courses on raising heritage awareness. A list of such scenarios can be found on the Heritage Board website (www.nid.pl). The National Heritage Board publishes materials for museums preparing visits and exhibitions for schoolchildren and their parents (Grzonkowska et. al. 2015). It is supplemented by yearly awards for the best museum educational activities. It is worth mentioning that the “Sybilla competition”,

named after an 18th century educational and museum enterprise created by the countess Izabella Czartoryska, has been a very successful initiative. (<http://konkurssybilla.nimoz.pl/>).

We think that two other heritage educational initiatives also deserve more than just a mention: The Aqueduct Project – Acquiring Key Competencies through Heritage Education (Van Lakerveld & Gussen); and “Teaching remembrance through cultural heritage”.

The “Teaching remembrance” project was a ministerial seminar that took place at Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland in 2005. The uniqueness of this enterprise is that it was designed as both a governmental and educational activity. Ministers from the Council of Europe Member States attended, accompanied by young persons, in order to discuss and to experience Holocaust remembrance through art and heritage. Young people marched alongside the officials in the March of the Living to the Auschwitz Death Camp, and subsequently had an opportunity to express their feelings about what they had learned during their visit through art.

The Aqueduct project is an international initiative aimed at applying heritage education to acquire key lifelong learning competencies. The participants embraced European and UNESCO policies and transformed them into a working set of teaching aids, facilitating the acquisition of social skills, entrepreneurship, and social awareness. What is unique to this project is its international nature. The aids reflect various parts of European heritage and are prepared from respective national angles, while at the same time being sufficiently versatile that they can be adapted to serve the needs of various national educational systems.

CoE, EU and UNESCO educational policies regarding cultural heritage. Looking for synergies

The possible synergies between the CoE, EU, and UNESCO policies will be shown based on three examples. The first deals with a Council of Europe program that from its inception has foreseen cooperation with UNESCO and the EU. The second presents a joint grant program named the “Faro way”, which accords with the objectives of the European Cultural Heritage Year and is also a form of informally calling upon the EU Member States to ratify the Faro Convention. All these show different ways to create synergies, sometimes accompanied by financial subsidies.

Cultural Routes is an initiative that originates from the Council of Europe. It was established in 1987 (Council of Europe 1987). The roles of UNESCO and the Cultural Heritage List have been recognized in the Cultural Routes founding documents. Over time, the scope of the program has expanded (Committee of Ministers 2010 CM/Res(2010)53), and the rules regarding giving title have been updated (Committee of Ministers 2010 CM/Res(2010)52). The Cultural Routes can serve as an excellent example of a joint action with EU, which started in 2010. One of its successes has been the Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG GROW] 2015-2017. Currently, the Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG-REGIO] Routes4U 2018-2020 is pending (www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/eu-jp-2017-20). Although the actions are not directly related to heritage education and training, they are essential for the non-formal education path when it comes to raising awareness about history and regions among local communities, and they also support the

exchange of young Europeans. Education about cultural heritage is perceived not only as a tool supporting sustainable development, but above all supporting peace. Only in non-conflict situations can societies reach their fullest development.

The second example is the initiative for the European Year of Cultural Heritage. It refers to a participatory and intercultural approach to heritage policies and educational actions recommended by the European Council (European Parliament, 2017). Heritage education is positioned as a tool promoting social inclusion and intercultural dialogue. One of the specific objectives of the European Year of Cultural Heritage refers to education (“raise[ing] awareness of the importance of Europe's cultural heritage through education and lifelong learning, in particular by focusing on children, young and elderly people, local communities and hard-to-reach groups” (Article 2. 2 (j)). As an example of synergies, one can point to a newly signed agreement between the European Commission and the Council of Europe on establishing a grant to promote the principles of Faro Convention. The “Faro way” project is supposed to engage policymakers at all levels and therefore encourage the EU Member States to ratify the convention.

The third example is based on the premise that the only way to give heritage education a solid grounding is to incorporate it into the European Qualifications Framework (European Parliament 2008, European Council 2017). This will give the EU Member States a legal rationale to treat heritage education as an important part of their respective educational systems.

The EU competence to create a common educational framework can be derived from Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (“in defining and implementing its policies and actions, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of education and training”). One of the EU goals in this area is to promote equality, social cohesion, and active citizenship. Both the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education (Commission, 2017, COM/2017/0247), as well as the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on School development and excellent teaching for a great start in life (Commission, 2017, COM/2017/0248) stress the importance of civic competencies as pivotal factor in creating an educational model for future generations. These competencies require not only a good understanding of history, philosophy, and politics but also, or perhaps primarily, a high level of heritage awareness. Being an active citizen of Europe and of a Member State means being aware of the common European heritage and being able to use this knowledge for the benefit of the wider society. That is why this awareness should be recognized as one of the key civic competencies.

Conclusions

The Council of Europe provides a legal framework and shows the importance of cultural heritage education. In the aforementioned documents both the role of training and the need to have an interdisciplinary approach are stressed when it comes to the inclusion of a cultural heritage component in teachers’ training. The compartmentalised attitude

typical of many academic institutions is reversed in order to encourage building links between areas of studies.

The CoE's actions are not taking place in a vacuum, and there are clear linkages between the Council of Europe, the European Union, and UNESCO policies. This cooperation has various forms in the area of fostering training and education. Here one should mention the EU joint programmes regarding Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG GROW] and the Joint Programme with the European Commission [DG-REGIO] Routes4U). The EU's legislative support encouraging EU Member States to ratify the Faro convention is another example.

The Faro Convention promotes the inclusion of cultural heritage dimensions in all levels of education and stresses the role of training and sharing knowledge. It confirms the pivotal role of cultural heritage in intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity. Therefore, the more countries which are willing to ratify the Convention, the sooner meaningful results at national levels will appear.

Still, the greatest support needs to be given to national education and training policies. Many research projects and surveys conducted in various countries regarding the cultural heritage component in schools have shown worrying results. For instance, scientists are sounding the alarm about the lack of cultural heritage elements in teachers' training, although they are present in primary education in Spain (Fontal et. al.). This inconsistency should be resolved at the national level. Teaching about sensitive issues such as cultural space for migrants and the phenomenon of migration can be as problematic as teaching about current or past world problems (Woolley). Similar concerns arise with the above-mentioned problem of teaching Holocaust history and reveal the need for taking joint actions on this matter. Even the Greek project regarding the integration of tour maps encountered difficulties, although it showed the value of combining spatial linking and cultural recognition (Apostolopoulou et al.).

Policymakers have to take into consideration the CoE's recommendations and international standards. Some of these are based on principles derived from human rights, where the right to take part in cultural life has been recognised. The international programmes concentrating on training seem very useful, as they serve as model programmes and also make available publications on cultural heritage education problems.

Currently there is no legal basis for the harmonisation of heritage education in Europe, since both the Council of Europe and the European Union can only apply soft measures in this sphere. These soft measures can, however, be a starting point for establishing not only a common heritage education policy, but also for the creation of a uniform educational model for the participating countries. We do not promote the creation of a common educational core for levels 3 and 4 of the European Qualifications Framework at this moment, but rather a sort of Bologna system – an agreement on the place of heritage education in school curricula and a common system of themes to be included by school authorities. This is naturally a sensitive issue because even if we share common European values, when it comes to both history and heritage we tend to understand, interpret, and present them in different ways, marked by national perspectives.

Therefore, any attempt to harmonize heritage education will have to be an outcome of balancing the scales between a uniform model of education and the

preservation of national diversity. Thus it seems that the only viable way to ensure the proper functioning of such a system would be to consider the inclusion of heritage awareness in the European Qualification Framework as a standard competence for school graduates. This however would require profound legislative changes. So at this point of time an interim, yet effective method would be the introduction of a model curriculum adapted to national needs, offered as a gratuitous aid for teachers. So what we propose is moving away from establishing policies and toward the establishment of operational rules.

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