

Sarajevo Declaration on Role of Higher Education and Civil Society in Education for Peace

Relying on:

European Convention on Human Rights¹, UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for The twenty-first century², For Lifelong Learning In Europe Programme³, Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe Without Dividing Lines⁴, Warsaw Declaration: Toward a Community of Democracies⁵ and The Talloires Declaration on the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education⁶;

We, the participants to the conference “Role of Universities in Peacebuilding”, aware of the fact that higher education plays an exceptional role of in post-conflict, often divided, societies such as Western Balkan ones, wish to point out to the importance of the education for peace, and of enhancing the cooperation in this field between the higher education and non-governmental sector in local communities and societies of the region.

Education and Civic Mission

Higher education institutions in the region are encouraged to:

- Determine Education for Peace and Civic Mission⁷ as the mainstay of academic profession and to undertake actions needed to integrate it into academic work. Thus, the market oriented approach of the higher education institutions must not be to the detriment of education for peace and their civic mission.
- Provide education and knowledge that is depoliticised, de-ideologised, and de-ethnicised, and the culture of reflection and engagement of both teachers and students at their university.
- Work on introducing new thematic fields⁸, thematic modules⁹, and lectures and units (within the individual modules) that enhance the culture of peace.

¹ http://www.hrcr.org/docs/Eur_Convention/euroconv.html

² http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llep_en.htm

⁴ <http://www.internationalconsortium.org/about/budapest-declaration>

⁵ http://ccd21.org/articles/warsaw_declaration.htm

⁶ <http://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/TalloiresReport.pdf>

⁷ The Civic Mission at University Concept articulates the set of values and principles to direct core activities of a university and various advocacy activities of university teachers and students in a community, towards educating socially responsible and active citizens, civil society development and democracy, and even improving the quality of life in the community.

⁸ Culture of Peace, Human Rights, Intercultural Understanding, Transitional justice, and Reconciliation

⁹ History teaching at post-conflict and/or divided societies, Culture of Remembrance, and Facing the Past after heavy violations of human rights.

- Identify the knowledge, attitudes and skills of university teachers who are ready and motivated to implement education for peace and the civic mission of higher education institutions.

Humanistic Approach in Education

Higher education institutions are encouraged to practice humanistic approach in education

- Where education of responsible citizens, aware of their rights and obligations within society where they live, serves as a tool that creates “**a whole, complete person**”, and incorporates social and emotional growth of all the participants in the learning process.
- So that all the differences, the needs, and the experiences that students bring are accepted and respected and every individual student is provided with understanding based upon his/her own premises.
- That is built upon participatory teaching¹⁰

The Cooperation between Higher Education and Civil Society

We invite higher education institutions and civil society sector to:

- Take responsibility and actively participate in democratic processes in order to develop citizenry at local, national and global level, to contribute to the social transformation, the building of trust, transitional justice, and reconciliation.
- Build a social capital based upon trust, cooperation, networking, volunteerism and the participation of students and their teachers in social processes.
- Set and implement programmes that enhance civic engagement and social responsibility.
- Build institutional frameworks to support students, teachers, and non-governmental sector to encourage, recognise and value good examples of cooperation between civil society and higher education institutions.

¹⁰ Participatory teaching is an approach in education that relies upon communication and participation more than it relies on one-way transmission of data. Learning process happens in a group interaction where the individuals, group members, exchange their experiences, because the experiences are valued as the relevant and beneficial ones. Knowledge, values, viewpoints, attitudes, and responsibility are built through cooperation and learning within the context in addition to individual acquisition/learning processes. Every student is a person, both in an activity and in a situation. This approach creates so called “positive mutual addiction” with the participants, increases communication capacities, and trains the participants in individual and group responsibility. It also supports development of capacity for including others, better recognition of their needs, and the decision-making skills.

- Build partnership between higher education institutions and non-governmental sector, so as to through networking contribute to the development of individuals, groups, and communities, based on exchange of know-how and experiences.
- Establish cooperation with secondary and primary schools so as to utilise competencies existing in this field and ensure their application at the grass root levels in education.

We demand that

Local authorities, state authorities, countries of the region authorities and International Community to:

- Ban all aspects of discrimination from higher education and create conditions of equal opportunities in education, compliant to international documents.
- Provide the conditions and financial support for projects of cooperation between higher education and civil society, both on national and regional level.
- Consider possibility of designing a state strategy for supporting cooperation between institutions of higher education and civil society.

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