# Strengthening Democratic Culture by Building Democratic Competences

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Democracy under pressure

- Interconnected global crisises
- Antidemocratic ideologies gaining ground
- Authoritarian rule being established
- Liberal democracies being attacked and undermined by desinformation and propaganda campaigns

➢ **What can make liberal democracies resilient?**
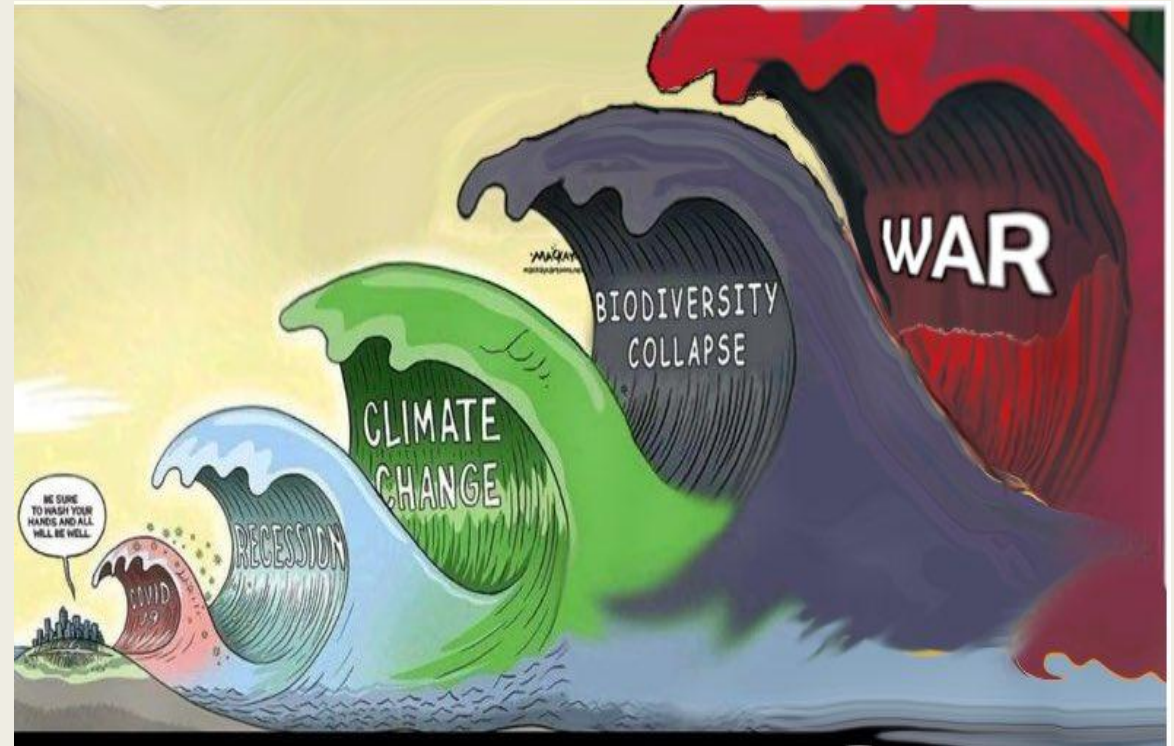
'Democratic culture'

- **Democracy cannot exist without democratic institutions** – e.g. free and fair parliamentary elections, rule of law, an independent judiciary

- However, these institutions will not work in practice unless citizens themselves are **able and willing** to engage in **democratic practices**

- A resilient **democracy requires citizens to have**:
    - A capacity and commitment to using the democratic processes that are available
    - A willingness to express their opinions to decision-makers
    - A willingness to listen to the opinions of others
    - A commitment to decisions being made by majorities
    - A commitment to the protection of minorities and their rights
    - A conviction that conflicts must be resolved peacefully

The Council of Europe project «Competences for Democratic Culture» (2013-2018)

➢ By developing a framework which describes the main **competences citizens require in order to participate effectively in a democratic society** the CoE wished to increase the focus on these competences in education systems and education practice.

➢ Strenghtening democratic culture in and through education

"Competence for democratic culture"

"the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources (namely values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding) in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic situations.»

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"Competence for democratic culture" (CDC)

"democratically and interculturally competent behaviour is viewed by the Framework as arising from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations."

Democratic and intercultural competence intersected:

Modern democratic societies are also diverse societies

The elements of the framework (RFCDC)

- ■ *A **conceptual model*** of the competences which citizens require to participate effectively in democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue

- ■ ***Behavioural descriptors*** for each individual competence that is specified in the model (What **shows** that someone has developed a certain competence?)

- ■ ***Guiding documents*** to explain how the competence model and the scaled descriptors can be used to assist curriculum design, the design of pedagogies, democratic school development, and the development of new forms of assessment

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Volume 1   Cont

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Volume 2   Descripto for demo

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Volume 3   Guidance for implementation

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The competence model

"Competence is the ability to mobilise and deploy **relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding** in order to **respond appropriately and effectively** to the demands, challenges and opportunities in the context of democratic participation".

- specifies **20 competence elements** in total
- Activated as **clusters** in specific contexts

Competence

Values

- ❖ Valuing human dignity and human rights
- ❖ Valuing cultural diversity
- ❖ Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes

- ❖ Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Civic-mindedness
- ❖ Responsibility
- ❖ Self-efficacy
- ❖ Tolerance of ambiguity

Skills

- ❖ Autonomous learning skills
- ❖ Analytical and critical thinking skills
- ❖ Skills of listening and observing
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Flexibility and adaptability
- ❖ Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- ❖ Cooperation skills
- ❖ Conflict-resolution skills

Knowledge and critical understanding

- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- ❖ Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

How can the development of these competences be recognized?

Competences are described by using **a set of descriptors –** that means through statements of **observable behaviours** which show that a person has developed a certain competence

Example «responsibility»

Shows that he/she accepts responsibility for his/her actions	Basic
Shows that he/she takes responsibility for own mistakes	Basic
If he/she hurts someone's feelings, he/she apologises	Intermediate
Submits required work on time	Intermediate
Consistently meets commitments to others	Advanced

CDC and pedagogy
Modelling democratic culture in educational processes

- Addressing learners as whole persons and engage them cognitively, emotionally and in their experience

- Encouraging learners to become actively involved in their own learning process and in cooperation with others

The crucial role of teachers

•Teachers' role as "significant others", role models and facilitators is crucial for building democratic culture in and through education

•Teachers themselves need to develop CDC and a democratic professional ethos in order to create supportive and empowering learning environments and processes

Thank you for your attention!

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*A continued introduction to working with RFCDC will be given in the workshop following this session