

Doc. 11128

22 January 2007

Education for balanced development in school

Recommendation 1750 (2006)

Reply from the Committee of Ministers

adopted at the 984th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (17-18 January 2007)

1. The Committee of Ministers took note with interest of Recommendation 1750 (2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly on education for balanced development in school, which it brought to the attention of the governments of member states and forwarded to the Steering Committee for Education (CDED), the European Health Committee (CDSP) and the Public Health Committee (Partial Agreement) (CD-P-SP) for information and possible comments.
2. The Committee of Ministers fully endorses the point of view expressed by the Assembly in paragraph 1 of its recommendation that "schools should help in preserving and improving the health of pupils and promote health education and universal values". In this connection, it wishes to point out that, besides the other players responsible for the health of young people, such as parents, voluntary organisations, doctors and institutions, schools are the most appropriate structures for providing health education.
3. Indeed, the changes that have come about in Europe's social and economic situation and in related lifestyles sometimes have a worrying influence on health, particularly the health of young people. An appropriate response would be to adopt a "proactive" but, at the same time, comprehensive approach in which knowledge transmission is accompanied by the appropriate and "balanced" organisation of the school environment, educational activities and preventive work, together with appropriate teacher training. The Committee of Ministers wishes to draw attention in this context to Recommendation No. R (88) 7 on school health education and the role and training of teachers and to its Resolution ResAP(2005)3 on healthy eating in schools.
4. With regard to the measures advocated by the Assembly in paragraph 8 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers agrees that "high quality physical and sports education" should be provided, insofar as it is recognised that the provision of regular and adequate physical education and sport in the school curriculum for all age groups is highly beneficial for health. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers believes that lessons in physical education and sports also provide a context for teaching important values such as tolerance and fair play, experience in winning and losing, social cohesion, respect for the environment and education for democratic citizenship. In this connection, it underlines the importance of the principles and objectives promoted in the CDED's programme on education for democratic citizenship, such as the participation and involvement of pupils in discussion and decision-making processes relating to the organisation of school life.
5. The Committee of Ministers agrees with the Assembly that the media, particularly television, also exercise considerable influence on young people. The media should be involved as responsible actors in the discussions with civil society on dietary habits and their impact on health, by focusing on positive image building and raising awareness through educational efforts on the basis of food based dietary guidelines.
6. With regard to the Assembly's recommendations in paragraph 11, the Committee of Ministers acknowledges that it is important to ensure the balanced development of schoolchildren in all schools in member states. It cannot give priority to the proposal that specific projects concerning the aspects mentioned

in paragraphs 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4 of the recommendation be incorporated into the programme of activities of the relevant intergovernmental committees, but notes with interest the idea to carry out studies on the interdependence of education and health of the pupils in co-operation with UNICEF, WHO and other international organisations in the course of 2007-2008, provided that the funds for this purpose be submitted in the form of voluntary contributions.