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**Education for intercultural and interfaith dialogue**

**Addendum to the proposal for a new project**

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## Overview of Religious Education in Europe – an ongoing task

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Schematic presentations always have limitations and this is also the case for this overview of Religious Education in Europe.

The table includes all the members of the Council of Europe except Armenia and Azerbaijan, although they became member states of the Council in 2001. It raises the question of where Europe ends.

In most European countries encounter with religions, learning about religion and learning from religion is part of the syllabus of public schools (with the exceptions of Albania and France, at least outside the departments of Alsace and Lorraine, changes are being discussed). The detailed regulations of the subject differ from country to country.

The second column gives information about whether the approach to RE is predominantly confessional or non-confessional and about which religious communities offer RE. The variety of approaches ranges from catechetical instruction (e.g. in many east European countries), through confessional cooperative concepts (e.g. in Finland, Germany or Austria) and non-confessional cooperative concepts (e.g. in Great Britain) to concepts focused clearly on a religious studies model (e.g. in Denmark).

Another column gives information about the status of RE. It is usually a compulsory subject where RE is taught non-confessionally. If it is confessionally oriented there is often a range of different subjects, out of which pupils and/or parents can choose one, or sometimes RE is a voluntary subject. This also corresponds to the column about the responsibility for setting the syllabuses.

All models and approaches to RE have their own history and "biography" and result from complex developments, influenced by the religious landscape of the countries, the role and value of religion in society, the structure of the education system and the relationship between the state and religion. This has to be taken into account in order to understand the nature of RE in each country. The last column gives "remarks" referring to the specific situation of the country.

A comparative view of approaches to RE should understand these different contexts and should not try to harmonise the differences that exist. A motive for a comparative view can be seen in the fact, that the debate about religious education is more and more dominated by the international dimension which also shapes daily life.

Someone who knows about the situation in other countries can value in a much better way the different political decisions.

The blanks in the overview are caused by information that has not yet become available. In this respect all additional information and comments will be greatly appreciated by the author.

COUNTRY	APPROACH TO RE: CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS / OTHER RELIGIONS	OPTIONAL SUBJECT (O) COMPULSORY SUBJECT (C) OPT.-COMP. S. (OC)	SUBSTITUTE (S) OR ALTERNATIVE SUBJECT (A)	RESPONSIBILITY FOR SYLLABUSES	REMARKS
<b>Albania</b>	No Religious Education				Confessional RE in a few denominational private schools
<b>Austria</b>	Confessional: Religious communities, registered by the state (15)	<b>C</b>	No	Cooperation: state /religious communities	Mainly Confessional RE
<b>Belgium</b>	Confessional: Religious communities, registered by the state; regulations on local level	<b>OC</b> Religion/Ethics	Yes	Religious communities	52% catholic schools
<b>Belarus</b>					History of religion in some schools
<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	Confessional: Islamic, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Adventist	<b>O, C, O/C</b>		Different regulations in the cantons of the Federation and the Republic of Serbia	A new subject "Culture of Religions" is planned
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Confessional: Orthodox	<b>O</b>			Introduced in 1998 in primary school, 1999 in secondary school
<b>Croatia</b>	Confessional: Catholic, Islamic	<b>O</b>		Religious communities	76% Catholic
<b>Cyprus</b>	Confessional: Greek orthodox	<b>C</b>		Syllabuses from Greece	77% Greek-orthodox, 18% Muslims
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Confessional: all registered religious communities	<b>O</b>	No	Religious communities-	
<b>Denmark</b>	Non-Confessional: Prim. School mainly Ev.-luth., other religions must be included in sec. school	<b>C</b> in sixth form colleges opting out is not possible	No	Dept. of Education and local Education Authorities aided by RE teachers associations	No RE in form 7 or 8 due to preparation for confirmation. comp.subject defined as academic study of religion
<b>England and Wales</b>	Non-Confessional: Christian tradition and World Religions at all stages	<b>C</b> Parental right of withdrawal	No	LEA- committees with representatives of religious communities, teachers and politicians	Multi-religious approach

PAYS	APPROCHE DE L'INSTRUCTION RELIGIEUSE : CONFESSIONS CHRETIENNES / AUTRES RELIGIONS	MATIERE FACULTATIVE (F) MATIERE OBLIGATOIRE (O) MAT. OBLIG. A OPTION (OO)	MATIERE DE REMPLACEMENT (R) OU ALTERNATIVE (A)	RESPONSIBILITE DES PROGRAMMES	REMARQUES
<b>Estonia</b>	Non-Confessional	O	No	No clear legislative; mainly state in co-operation with the churches	Tradition of non-confessional RE since 1920es. RE officially again since 1991.
<b>Finland</b>	Confessional: Lutheran and orthodox	C	S: Humanistic Ethics	Cooperation state/churches	Mainly Lutheran RE (Participation 97%)
<b>France</b>	Only Alsace and Lorraine: Lutheran/reformed catholic/Jewish	No RE (except Alsace and Lorraine)		No regulation (responsibility of the churches)	Exception: Alsace and Lorraine 'Culture of religion' under development for the remainder of France
<b>Germany</b>	Confessional evangelical/catholic partly Jewish, Islamic religious instruction, Greek-orthodox,	C (exceptions)	S/A: Ethics/Norms and Values, Philosophy	Cooperation state/ churches	Exceptions: Berlin, Bremen, Brandenburg
<b>Georgia</b>	Confessional	O	?		The Georgian-orthodox church plans to start RE
<b>Greece</b>	Confessional: orthodox church/Islamic. community	C	Partly	Orthodox church/Islam. community	In principal: Greek-orthodox. ?RE
<b>Hungary</b>	Confessional	O	Planned	Churches	Compulsory subject in church schools
<b>Iceland</b>	Non-confessional: Christianity, religious science and ethics	C	No	State in cooperation with churches	93% Protestants
<b>Ireland</b>	Confessional: roman-catholic	C	No	Church	Domination of catholic school system
<b>Italy</b>	Confessional: roman-catholic	O Ethics/Religion	No	Church	Mainly roman-catholic RE, enrol for RE necessary
<b>Latvia</b>	Confessional: roman-catholic, Lutheran	O	Ethics		Partly Lutheran, partly roman-catholic

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Lithuania	Confessional	OC Moral education with RE or Ethics	Ethics	Religious communities	75% catholic
Luxembourg	Confessional	OC	Yes		Only cathol. RE
Macedonia					Mainly orthodox and Islamic population
Malta	Confessional roman-catholic	O			Only catholic RE, all schools are catholic schools
Moldova					Russian orthodox majority
Netherlands	Christian churches, Jewish and Islamic religious communities, humanists,	C (in all Christian schools)	No	Christian schools	2/3 of all schools = Christian schools. In Primary schools: obligatory teaching about spiritual streams;
Norway	Non-confessional: Christianity with Religion and Moral Philosophy	C	No	State	New syllabus since 1997
Poland	Confessional	O	S: Ethics?	Church	
Portugal	Confessional	OC	Yes		RE since 1986
Romania	Confessional		?		In principal Romanian-orthodox RE
Russian Federation	Partly confessional	Possible O	?	No regulations	RE since 1990, only on initiative of parents
Scotland	Mostly Non confessional, confessional only in Roman-catholic schools	C	No	State in non-denomination schools; state/- church coop. in denom. schools	Confessional RE only in denominational schools (30% of the schools)
Slovakia	Confessional	O	No	Churches	

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Slovenia					
Spain	Confessional: roman-catholic	O	Partly	Churches	Only catholic RE
Sweden	Non-confessional	C	No	Cooperation state/church.	99% take part in „objective RE“
Switzerland	In principal Confessional RE and Non-confessional Bible science	O/C		Churches / regional state	School regulations on canton level (26 cantons)
Turkey	Islamic instruction	C			Only Islamic instruction, opting out for Non-Muslims possible
Ukraine					Constitution of 1996 provides the right of independent schools with the right of free RE