

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

THE EUROPEAN  
WERGELAND  
CENTRE



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# BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

**At the beginning of 2024, the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) continued celebrating its 15th anniversary. Milestones like this provide an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments and the dedication that brought us here.**

Since its founding, EWC has worked with committed partners and a talented team, all united by the vision that led to the Centre's creation by Norway in partnership with the Council of Europe in 2008: that education is key to promoting democratic citizenship, human rights, and intercultural understanding across Europe.

## Key Achievements in 2024

Building on a decade of efforts, we continued to support Ukrainian schools and kindergartens through the *Schools for Democracy* programme. Under wartime conditions, EWC adapted to the evolving needs of the Ukrainian educational sector and provided teachers and school staff with professional development and stress management.

The *Schools for All* programme in Greece concluded with a final conference in Lesbos. Over nearly five years, we reached 125 schools, fostering inclusive and democratic learning environments, particularly for students with refugee backgrounds.



**Ana Perona-Fjeldstad**  
Executive Director

Building on long-standing partnerships, this year also saw the launch of several bilateral projects in Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, which we will expand and develop.

In Norway, our *Together Against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech* project led to the creation of the *Democratic Checklist Against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech*. This resource is now part of Norway's *Government Action Plan Against Hate Speech and Discrimination of the Sámi (2025–2030)* and will provide municipalities with tools to address negative attitudes toward the Sámi minority.

## Facing Europe's Challenges

Democracy in Europe faces mounting threats: the rise of populism and authoritarianism, attacks on human rights, and increasing societal fragmentation. Economic uncertainty, digital misinformation, and

political inaction on the climate crisis contribute to disillusionment and distrust in democracy's ability to improve people's lives.

This year, we have focused on preparing EWC for these challenges. Together with our dedicated staff, partners, and board members, we have developed a strategy that will ensure the Centre's continued relevance and resilience in the years to come. This strategy is the result of a collective effort – one that lays the foundation for the next five years based on a shared vision of our role in protecting democratic values and human rights in Europe.

We have also laid the groundwork for several exciting new projects which I look forward to follow from the sidelines.

For as we bid farewell to 2024, it is also time for me to say goodbye to the European Wergeland Centre and our incredible partners. Over the past 16 years, the Centre has been my life, and it has been an immense privilege to help build it from the ground up into the experienced, resourceful, and dynamic institution it is today.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff and partners, I leave EWC in the hands of my eventual successor, confident that the Centre is stronger and more relevant than ever before.

18 228

teachers, teacher students,  
teacher trainers and  
CSO representatives trained

23

high quality materials and  
learning resources  
developed

43

Universities and In-Service  
Teacher Training Institutions  
reached

12 614

young people  
directly involved



# THE EUROPEAN WERGELAND CENTRE

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) was established in 2008 by Norway in close cooperation with the Council of Europe. Based on the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the European Wergeland Centre promote democracy and human rights across Europe through education. Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of children and young people, educators, educational institutions, and educational systems to build and defend a culture of democracy and human rights.

We serve as an international resource centre and a meeting place for people working in education, training and research. We lift insights from practice, encompassing both formal and non-formal settings, and convey them into the authorities' policymaking. At the same time, we facilitate the implementation of policy in practice. Via this two-way street, we support human rights and democracy through education in Norway and throughout Europe.

We are also active in research, employing the same two-way approach to contribute our experience to research efforts and convey results back into practice. Fostering networks of engaged professionals, we continually develop quality learning materials that are relevant and freely accessible.

This report showcases examples of our activities and achievements over the past year. It does not constitute a full and comprehensive coverage of our efforts.

## EWC identified four strategic priorities for 2021 – 2024:

1. Strengthen young people's confidence and trust in shared values and democratic institutions.
2. Build safe, democratic and inclusive learning environments in formal and non-formal education settings.
3. Provide free and easy access to practical educational resources and relevant research findings.
4. Serve as an innovative, trusted, and competent partner responsive to emerging issues.

## 21 projects in 16 countries in 2024

**Bulgaria:** Building Capacity for Educational and Social Inclusion

**Bulgaria:** Promoting Inclusion in Local Communities in Bulgaria

**Greece:** AIEdU

**Greece:** Schools for All

**Greece:** CAB - Classrooms Against Bullying

**Greece:** MA Programme “Identity, Education and Competences for Democratic Culture”

**Lithuania:** MA Programme “Education Policy and Leadership for School Principals”

**Norway:** 22 July and Democratic Citizenship

**Norway:** 22 July Online Resources

**Norway:** Youth who Change the World

**Norway:** Together Against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech

**Norway, Germany, Finland, UK, Czech Republic, Poland,**

**Turkey, Spain, Ukraine, Malta:** YOUROPE

**Norway, Poland:** Fighting Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Racism Now!

**Norway, Poland:** Youth for the City, City for Youth

**Norway, Ukraine, Poland:** MUCIT: Museums as Sites of Citizenship

**Romania:** Promoting Inclusion and Quality Education in Romania

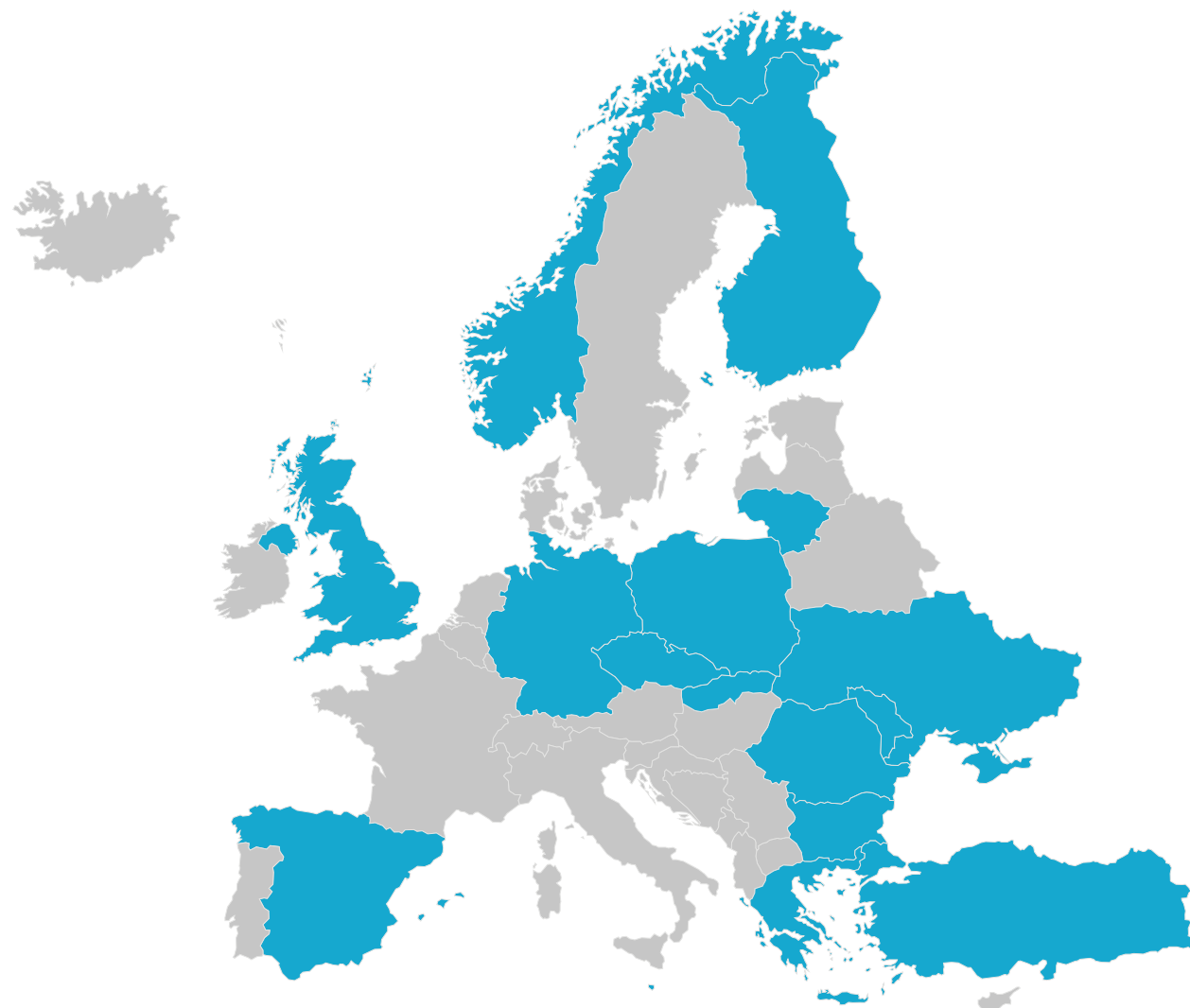
**Slovakia:** Promoting Inclusive Schools

**Slovakia:** Together with Roma, We Will Achieve More

**Slovakia, Czech Republic:** IncluRoma

**Ukraine and Moldova:** Schools for Democracy

**International:** Practicing Citizenship



# YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Supporting youth to actively engage in democratic processes is key to preserving and further developing democracy. Political efficacy – the trust in one’s ability to influence political processes – is the catalyst for meaningful participation. We know that political efficacy is strengthened through real life experiences with democratic processes. This includes participating in educational activities addressing elements of democratic life, such as practicing how to discuss controversial issues or standing up to hate speech online.

In 2024, young people from Norway, Poland and Ukraine have participated in our projects. They have been invited to practice democratic competences, as well as planning and carrying out their own activities with peers in schools and local communities. In addition, we have given youth leaders and educators from a variety of countries training opportunities and access to free learning and teaching materials on how democracy learning can be more practical.

## Gaming for Democracy

**Gaming can help build democratic competences among youth.**

“If You Could Build Your Ideal Society, What Would it Look Like?” This was the question posed to students from 25 schools in Norway, Poland, and Ukraine. On November 19, 185 students sat down to build their ideal society in Minecraft as part of the project *Youth for the City, City for Youth*. Teachers received resources to use in the classroom before and after the event.

Norway’s designs featured skyscrapers and ski cabins. Poland focused on churches and courts, while Ukraine prioritised schools, hospitals, and urban spaces. Despite differences, all students aimed to create spaces for people to connect, including homes, roads, basketball courts, factories and even a fully functioning rollercoaster.



A team of 11 people, mainly teenagers from the association Spillkultur, gathered at Spillhuset Bergen to ensure everything went smoothly.  
PHOTO: Spillkultur.no

*“This was our most important, and perhaps coolest, project so far.”*

– Kenneth Flage,  
manager of Spillkultur

“It was amazing to see young people from all three countries express their wishes for their society through gaming! Participating in democracy is about being involved, having opinions, and shaping the future we want. Giving young people a platform to be heard, whether it’s from a podium or through gaming, is an important piece in educating active citizens,” says Ida Berge, advisor at the European Wergeland Centre.

In October, a three-day democracy workshop for gamers was held at Utøya within the project *Youth who Change the World*. Eighteen young gamers met to explore the challenges and opportunities for democracy in the digital world. The youth used interactive methods to understand the threats of online extremism, xenophobia, antifeminism, exclusion, and discrimination. They also explored ways of creating inclusive spaces online through gaming.

“I think the young people left with strong impressions after seeing and learning about the events on Utøya. For some, it was emotionally challenging, but it also

led to important reflections on how we behave in both the digital and the real world,” says Theo Melaas, Club Council Coordinator at Porsgrunn municipality.

**“Youth for the City, City for Youth”** is funded by the EEA and Norway Grants  
**EWC role:** Project partner  
**Partners:** The city of Lublin/Lublin Municipal Office (Poland), Sempre al Frente (Poland)



In their ideal society, Ukrainian youth prioritized schools, hospitals, and urban spaces.



## “Democracy Doesn’t Happen by Itself”

**Fredrikstad in Norway uses the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture to strengthen democratic resilience among the city’s youth.**

Fredrikstad was singled out as one of three Norwegian cities, the European Wergeland Centre wanted to work with in the project *Youth who Change the World*, the other two being Horten and Drammen. The cities were selected because of their commitment to youth participation.

Since 2016, Fredrikstad’s Demos program has offered workshops, summer camps, and events for young people in the city. As part of the programme, youth from Fredrikstad participated in the Democracy Workshop on Utøya. Using the terror attack in Norway on 22 July 2011 as a starting point, the workshops give young people tools to create a democratic culture and stand up against discrimination, hate speech and extremism.

“It has been natural for us to collaborate with a municipality that has chosen to work so comprehensively on democratic citizenship,” Ingrid Aspelund, Head of the Wergeland Centre Youth Section, states.



For years, Fredrikstad has engaged actively and purposefully in preventive work to counter radicalisation and exclusion among the municipality’s children and young people. PHOTO: Demos



The Wergeland Centre has also provided tips and advice on using the Council of Europe's competence framework in developing Demos. This framework emphasises the interaction between values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge in democracy learning.

"It's inspiring to see how Demos has dared to think big and holistically about democracy learning, using this important international framework locally in Fredrikstad," says Aspelund.

The Council of Europe's framework provides teachers and educators with knowledge on teaching democracy and participating in its development, protecting human rights, and finding non-violent solutions to conflicts.

*"Young people get involved in volunteering, youth politics, writing op-eds, organising activity days for children, and challenging teachers, fellow pupils, and politicians when they disagree with something."*

- Ellen Reiss,  
Leader of Demos



Leader of Demos Ellen Reiss with colleague and one of the programme initiators, SLT coordinator Erik Kruse.

**"Young People who Change the World"** is  
funded by The Savings Bank Foundation DNB  
**EWC Role:** Project leader  
**Partner:** Utøya AS (Norway)

# Active Citizenship Trainings in the Midst of War

**Using the Council of Europe Compass manual, youth workers and teachers in Ukraine organised workshops to encourage youth participation.**

Twenty-five youth workers and teachers from different regions of Ukraine gathered in Lviv for a National Training Course on Human Rights Education in July. Some of the participants were displaced from the territories temporarily occupied by the Russian army.

The course taught them how to encourage youth participation by using the Council of Europe's Compass manual. The participants held six follow-up initiatives in their local communities.

Participant Khrystyna Hataliak organised a human rights event for children that incorporated the exercises from the Compass manual. In Sumy, a similar event took place at the Romantika Youth Centre. In Dnipro, trainer Anastasia Netrobytska made use of the Compass manual when discussing participation at a workshop which attracted youth as far away as Zaporizhzhia.

"It was incredibly cool that the training was organised through activities," said a participant. "They helped us to quickly understand the training, the topics presented and the work of the exercises themselves."



Some of the participants were teachers, others youth workers working outside of the school system. PHOTO: Centre for Education Initiatives

Each training exercise had a practical and interactive component where the participants would get down on the floor to learn how they in simple and engaging ways can teach their students how to be active democratic citizens. The exercises were followed by a debriefing and an evaluation phase, letting the participants reflect on the exercises and learn from other peoples' perspectives.

*"It is critically important to work with youth so that young people do not follow the path of alienation and radicalisation, but continue to participate in democratic processes and contribute to recovering local communities"*

*- Iryna Sabor,  
Head of Early Childhood and School Section*

The course was organized by the European Wergeland Centre alongside the Council of Europe, the Ukrainian Ministry for Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, as well as the Center for Educational Initiatives in Lviv.

Schools for Democracy is funded by the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine



Since its inception in 2015, the Schools for Democracy (SfD) Programme has been central in promoting democratic reforms in Ukraine's education system, fostering citizenship education and a culture of democracy in schools and preschools across the country.

2024 marked the third year of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The SfD Programme has continued to respond flexibly to the challenging wartime conditions in the country – adapting to new realities, while addressing both immediate needs and long-term goals. Key initiatives have included continued implementation of the New Ukrainian School reform, development of innovative educational materials, and support of professional learning communities.

During the Programme's 2021-2024 cycle, more than 140 000 participants enrolled on our online platform. The European Wergeland Centre developed eleven new courses that reflected the ongoing wartime conditions in Ukraine. More than 7700 children joined the Programme's youth work trainings, and six youth-centred school community projects were carried out. In addition, 8 policy documents were adopted.

In the autumn of 2024, the SfD Programme was renewed for a new three-year period, with funding from the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine. This new cycle will work to strengthen democratic resilience among children and young people in Ukraine and Moldova through education, equipping

the next generation with the skills and competencies necessary for civic engagement and democratic development. The new Programme will expand its geographic reach to include underserved and conflict-affected areas and will play a vital role in reconstruction and recovery.



The training seminar was made up of a diverse group of people, the youngest being 18 and the oldest 54 years old.  
PHOTO: Centre for Education Initiatives



# DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Inclusive and democratic learning environments in educational institutions are crucial for shaping engaged, responsible citizens who uphold human rights and embrace diversity.

In order to safeguard democracy, educational institutions must serve as places to learn and practice inclusion and participation. Every classroom, playground and other learning spaces in formal and non-formal settings should foster a culture where every voice is heard and respected.

In 2024, EWC focused particularly on inclusion of marginalised groups like Roma and refugees. We also worked with teacher education institutions, including higher education and in-service teacher training institutions, and supported them to integrate diversity, democracy and active citizenship into their courses and programs. Moreover, we worked with museums to become non-formal learning spaces to enhance civic engagement and inclusion among the wider public.

## Teachers, Mayors, and Principals Unite

**To promote inclusivity and improve educational quality, ten schools in the disadvantaged and dropout-prone regions of Călărași and Suceava joined forces with the Romanian Social Development Fund and the European Wergeland Centre.**

The pilot initiative, *Promoting Inclusion and Quality Education in Romania*, brought together teachers, principals, mayors, and local officials to build inclusive schools that offer high-quality education in a safe and democratic environment.

During a series of three-day workshops in Oslo, a total of 40 principals and local administrators from Suceava and Călărași gained insights into inclusion, Roma history and culture, and democratic competencies. They also visited local institutions to exchange ideas and learn from best practices.

As the Wergeland Centre depends on a dynamic pool of competent trainers in education for democracy and human rights, the project also offered a five-day intensive training course in Oslo to 12 professionals from the two counties. All of them were given a mentor and tasked with developing their own training courses and activities.

Upon returning to their regions, principals and teachers continued their training, guided by a team of experienced and new trainers. Participants were expected to share their newly acquired knowledge with colleagues and develop projects based on the five-day training they had attended.

Cristina Bianca Istrate, an English teacher at the Modelu Secondary School in Călărași, appreciated the new ideas and approaches she learned during the training. After sharing these lessons with her colleagues, the school applied the exercises, particularly during the Christmas season, when traditions from different communities across Romania were discussed and celebrated.

*“These kinds of courses allow us to keep in touch with fellow teachers and find solutions to different problems we face in our line of work.”*

- Cristina Bianca Istrate,  
English teacher



EWC trainings are immersive experiences with many interactive exercises. Participants often forge friendships and professional partnerships along the way.

“Promoting inclusion and quality education in Romania is about more than addressing current challenges. Educators hold the power to transform the lives of those they teach. By uniting schools, local authorities, and higher education institutions, we aim to build a network of collaboration and innovation”, says EWC Senior Advisor Larisa Leganger Bronder.

*“It is wonderful to get to spend a week together with the school staff, to improve the relationship between the teachers at the school and the municipality. I have so many ideas that I’m taking home with me!”*

*- Magdalena Rusu, municipality representative, working on introducing Council of Europe policy in Suceava*

**“Promoting Inclusion and Quality Education in Romania”** is funded by the EEA and Norway Grants  
**EWC role:** Project partner  
**Partners:** Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF)

## Learning During Extreme Adversity

**In June 2024, a special school reached out to the European Wergeland Centre for help with inclusive and participatory pedagogic approaches to address war-related stress and trauma.**

Founded in 2016 by the Ukrainian NGO Small Heart with Art, the “Superheroes Schools” network provides education to children undergoing long-term treatment in hospitals. The first school was established at Okhmatdyt, Ukraine’s largest children’s hospital.

The school’s goal is to keep children engaged in learning, provide socialisation opportunities, and distract them from their illness. Seeking international expertise in inclusive education, the Superheroes Schools reached out to the Ukrainian Embassy in Norway, which connected them to EWC.

Since 2022, EWC has expanded its *Schools for Democracy* programme in Ukraine to include trainings which address the psychological effects of war. EWC eagerly supported the Superheroes Schools, offering professional development and helping teachers introduce inclusive and participatory methods while managing stress and fatigue.

With EWC’s help, the Superheroes Schools staff attended the *Democratic Kindergarten: Psycho-social Support* course, learning stress resilience, inclusive communication, and burnout management.

In July 2024, a missile attack destroyed the Superheroes Schools’ classrooms at Okhmatdyt, but fortunately no pupils were harmed. Despite the destruction, the school resumed classes the next day in temporary accommodation and quickly raised funds to rebuild.

*“Now when so many children in Ukraine suffer injuries from Russian aggression, it is even more important to provide meaningful education opportunities for those staying in hospitals over longer periods of time, so that these children do not fall behind, but continue to pursue their interests and dreams, and one day shape the future of Ukraine.”*

– Iryna Sabor,  
EWC’s Head of Early Childhood and School Section



5-year-old Dima receiving treatment for a leg injury after a Russian attack on his hometown of Chernihiv. PHOTO: Okhmatdyt

Iryna Sabor, Head of Early Childhood and School Section at EWC, praises the project’s ambition and innovation, noting shared values and the involvement of EWC trainers. She emphasises the importance of supporting Superheroes Schools to ensure quality education for disadvantaged children, highlighting EWC’s commitment to inclusion. She stresses the need for meaningful education opportunities for hospitalised children, enabling them to pursue their dreams and shape Ukraine’s future.





Equipped with modern technology and engaging activities, the Superheroes Schools' staff hopes every child feels like a superhero when entering the school. PHOTO: Superheroes School

# 11 000

enrolled in Massive Open Online Courses

# 4600

enrolled in Blended Courses

**"Schools for Democracy"** is funded by the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine  
**EWC role:** Project leader  
**Partners:** Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Center for Education Initiatives, Ukrainian Step by step Foundation, SavEd, Step by Step Moldova

# Refugee Education: Investing in People, Investing in the Future

**In March, over 100 teachers, education authorities, and NGO representatives attended the final School for All Academy conference “Refugee Education: Investing in People, Investing in the Future,” in Lesbos, Greece. The island has long hosted millions of refugees and migrants from North Africa and Asia, and the inclusion of children in education remains a significant challenge.**

Hosted by the *Schools for All* team, in collaboration with the Independent Department for the Monitoring and Coordination of Refugee Education and the Regional Directorate for Education of North Aegean, the conference marked the end of the successful *Schools for All* project (2019-2024).

During its nearly five-year duration period, a comprehensive school-based learning program was carried out by 45 trainers for the entire community at 125 schools, including school heads and staff, students, parents, and local community representatives. The program consisted of intensive training courses on democracy and human rights, as well as support throughout the academic year.

The Secretary General of Primary, Secondary and Special Education, local authorities, education officials, and representatives from various organisations discussed the challenges refugee children face in Greek schools and reflected on best practices for creating inclusive educational environments.

Through experiential learning activities, group discussions, and collaborative work, attendees were introduced to the Handbook “31 Basic Activities,” a resource designed to help educators manage diverse classrooms. The conference also highlighted relevant activities from the *Schools for All* project network on Lesbos.

## 46

schools worked to become  
more inclusive

## 1922

teachers, education coordinators,  
students and parents trained

**“Schools for All – Integration of Refugee Children in Greek Schools”** was funded by the EEA and Norway Grants

**EWC role:** Project promoter

**Partners:** The Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the National Institute for Educational Policy, Leeds Beckett University (UK)





The final School for All Academy conference "Refugee Education: Investing in People, Investing in the Future," took place in Lesbos, Greece.



# CAPACITY BUILDING OF EDUCATORS

Education is under pressure to provide adequate responses in times of multiple crises. We are facing a renewed sense of urgency for democratic societies to defend and safeguard our values, as well as to provide quality education for all children, to strengthen their democratic competences, their trust in shared values and democratic institutions, as well as their capacity to make a difference in shaping a better future – a future they should be able to choose freely.

Teachers stand at the core of this mission. They need encouragement and support if they shall succeed. They need training in the latest methods and practices within education for democracy and human rights. Teacher education and in-service training of teachers is therefore a focus area of EWC activities.

In 2024 we trained and empowered over 15.000 teachers and educators across Europe to strengthen inclusive and democratic practices in schools and other institutions.

*“Teaching is completely different afterwards”*

**After attending teacher courses on 22 July and Democratic Citizenship, middle school teacher Elisabeth Halle Steinum noticed a significant change in how she led classroom discussions.**

Halle Steinum first attended a mini-course in Stavanger. This inspired her to attend the full course in Oslo and Utøya. She was initially anxious about visiting the site of the 2011 terror attack but found the experience profoundly moving, especially hearing stories from survivors and relatives.

“The most powerful moment was reading messages on the wall at Hegnhuset on Utøya,” she recalls.

The course taught her how to lead discussions on difficult topics like extremism and radicalisation. Later, she shared what she learned with her colleagues at Kristianlyst Middle School. She noticed a significant improvement in how she and her students engaged with these topics.

“I felt incredibly lucky to be able to participate in these courses. Teaching in the classroom is completely different afterwards,” says Halle Steinum.

Norwegian school curricula require students to learn about the terror attack in the context of enhancing democratic competences while preventing extremism and radicalisation.



The European Wergeland Centre offers the national learning programme ‘22 July and Democratic Citizenship,’ which aims to strengthen young people’s democratic resilience. It consists of democracy workshops for teachers and their students, teacher training for teachers and teacher students, and the development of free learning resources.

In 2024, EWC joined the 22 July Center to offer local mini-courses for teachers and students. This year, courses were held in Stavanger and Tromsø, with more planned for 2025. As a consequence, a record high of 186 teachers were trained.

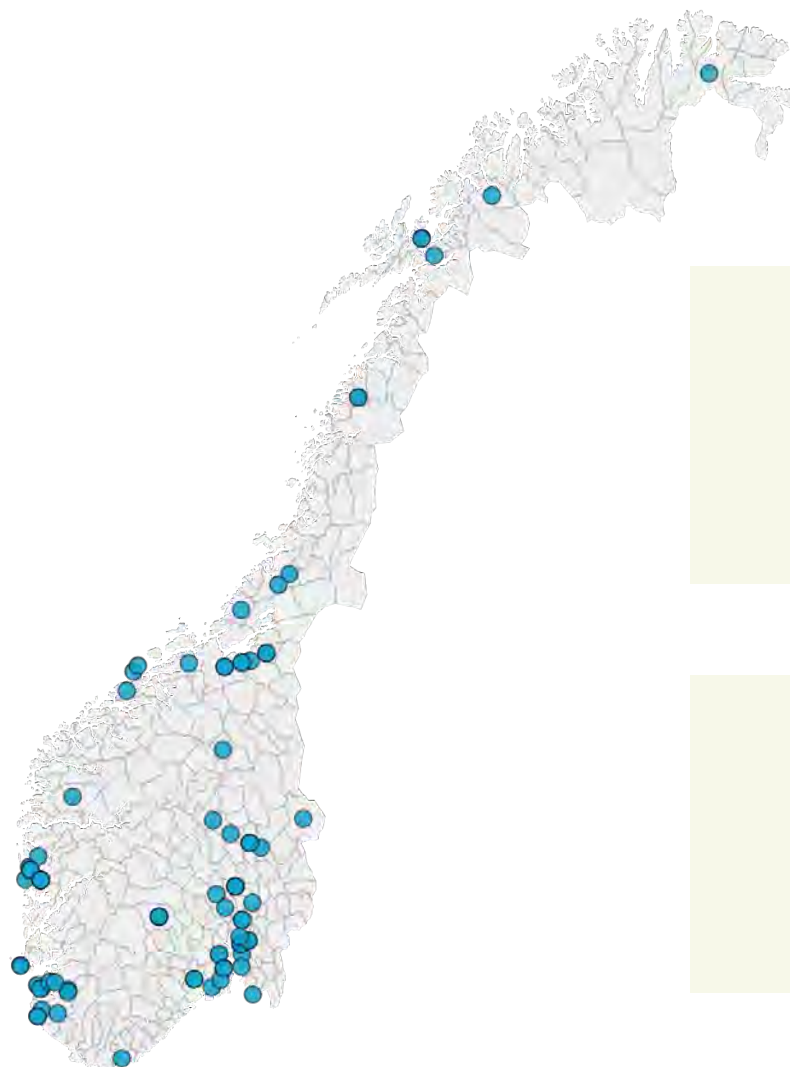
*“Teachers aren’t spoiled with courses, so the opportunity for professional development is much appreciated. And when the content maintains such a high standard – professionally from start to finish – it’s truly impressive.”*

- Elisabeth Halle Steinum

The national learning programme “22 July and Democratic Citizenship” aims to strengthen young people’s democratic resilience. We cooperate with the learning centre at Utøya and the 22 July Center in Oslo. The programme has three main components: (1) Democracy workshop at Utøya for students and teachers, (2) Trainings for Teachers and Teacher Students and (3) Learning Resources.

The main component is our democracy workshops. Student groups accompanied by a teacher participate in a three-day learning programme at Utøya. At the end of the programme, students have increased knowledge, confidence, and commitment to act as multipliers with their peers – passing on knowledge about the terror attack 22 July 2011 and promoting a democratic culture in schools and local communities.

The map shows the geographical spread of our participants in 2024.



**88**  
schools

**4**  
courses for teachers  
and teacher students

**11 580**  
students reached

**“The National Learning Programme “22 July and Democratic Citizenship”** is financed by the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway  
**EWC role:** Project leader  
**Partners:** The 22 July Center, Utøya AS and the Rafto Foundation

# A Master Programme in the Cradle of Democracy

**In Athens, 183 students have enrolled in the Master's programme "Identity, Education, and Competences for Democratic Culture," which combines the academic standards of the university with the practical experiences of the European Wergeland Centre (EWC).**

The programme is a collaboration between EWC and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and offers three specialisation:

- Religion, Education & Democratic Culture
- Language, History & Literature in Education & Democratic Culture
- Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE)

The aim is to train teachers and other professionals in Competences for Democratic Culture, placing human rights and identity formation at the centre of the educational process at all levels.

"In the 'Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture' a crucial point is that they should be taught at universities," says Angelos Vallianatos, EWC's Head Programme Coordinator in Greece. "But had anybody done it? Not in this way. We realized that we had the people, the reputation and the teaching resource to do it."

"Everything is online, but we are not talking about passive lectures. It is cooperative," continues Vallianatos, who teaches one of the obligatory subjects. "All the students must have their cameras and microphones on. Some were shocked by this. People are not used to being treated as living creatures online."

The ERASMUS+ project "Step-Up – Student Teachers' Practice for Democratic Culture" serves as the programme's foundation, but it is also based on many other former EWC projects and long-term partnerships.



Angelos Vallianatos, EWC's Head Programme Coordinator in Greece

The programme awards successful students 75 ECTS. During the academic year 2024/25, it is only offered in Greek, but from September 2025 it will also be available in English, welcoming international students.

A screenshot of the website for the 'Identity, Education and Competences for Democratic Culture Online Master' program. The header features the program title in blue and the logos of the Hellenic Republic National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the European Wergeland Centre, and the Council of Europe. The main image shows a smiling woman with glasses and curly hair, wearing an orange sweater, looking at a laptop. Overlaid text reads: 'Identity, Education and Competences for Democratic Culture Online Master', 'JOINT MA PROGRAM', 'OUR VISION: DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION AND THE WORLD'. On the right side, there are navigation buttons: 'APPLY' and 'QUICK OVERVIEW'.



# Building Capacity for Educational and Social Inclusion

**In Bulgaria, the European Wergeland Centre works with teachers, educators, and mediators of Roma origin to increase the educational and social inclusion of the Roma community.**

In January 2024, the Wergeland Centre held its second training and study visit for Bulgarian educators. The participants included school principals, teachers, representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Programme Operator for EEA Norway Grants, as well as mediators.

The aim was to strengthen the participants' knowledge about the Council of Europe's approaches, discuss principles of inclusion, develop competencies for a safe and inclusive learning environment, and engage with diversity. They also learned about Norwegian policies and practices in educational and social inclusion of students of minority background.

**The project “Building Capacity for Educational and Social Inclusion” is funded by the EEA and Norway Grants**

**EWC role:** Project partner

**Partner:** The Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM), under the Ministry of Education

## Strengthening Teacher Education in Romania

**Romania's recent reforms aim to improve quality and equity in schools, focusing on enhancing teachers' practical skills, student-centered approaches, and fostering a democratic, inclusive school culture. With support of the EEA and Norway Grants, we are enhancing efforts to support implementation of the reform through the pilot initiative *Promoting Inclusion and Quality Education in Romania*.**

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in realizing these reforms. In 2024, EWC and the

Romanian Social Development Fund began collaborating to strengthen the capacity of 13 higher education institutions, focusing on addressing minority inclusion, democracy, and human rights when preparing future teachers, as well as to work on possible curricula modifications.

The pilot project will continue in 2025, with the aim of providing evidence of 'what works' in order to improve and scale up our programming in future.



Representatives from Romanian Universities and other experts took part in a 2-day workshop on Integration of the Competencies of Democratic Culture in initial teacher education in Romania in Strasbourg. The workshop was jointly organised by the Council of Europe, the Romanian Social Development Fund and EWC

## Let Us Talk About Kindergarten

**Every Thursday at 19:00, kindergarten teachers from all over Ukraine meet on Zoom through EWC's "Let's Talk About Kindergarten" – a weekly online meeting that supports pre-school teachers and helps them maintain a professional network.**

On November 28th, Russian bombers attacked power plants, causing power outages across Ukraine. During the Zoom meeting, participants were barely visible.

"I don't have power, but I have candlelight, tea, and a warm blanket, and I can enjoy your company," said Oksana, one participant.

The European Wergeland Centre launched its first blended course for pre-school teachers in 2022, with two more following. These courses offer online and personal training.

"Pre-school teachers were new territory for us. We built step by step, listening to their needs," says Marta Melnykevych-Chorna, Senior Advisor at EWC.

The courses, developed by EWC trainers in Ukraine, include modules on psychology and trauma due to the invasion. Teachers learn to regulate emotions, talk to children about the war, and manage burnout.

Some are surprised they need to care for their own psychological conditions.

*"As a pre-school teacher, you meet children going through many things. You need to regulate yourself first to help them."*

- Marta Melnykevych-Chorna  
Senior Advisor

Since 2022, 9,000 pre-school teachers applied for the courses, with 3,300 completing them. Marta and her colleagues wanted to maintain their network, so they started online meetings in May 2023. Topics include cooperation with parents, conflicts, music, and learning through play, but also how to deal with loss.

"This is a difficult topic, affecting almost every family in Ukraine," Melnykevych-Chorna notes.

Due to the project's success, EWC plans to expand the programme. A fourth course will launch in 2025, financed by the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine managed by NORAD.



Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure causes frequent power outages all over Ukraine



EWC Senior Advisor Marta Melnykevych-Chorna heads the kindergarten initiative

# Master Course on Democratic School Development

**Together with partners in Lithuania, the European Wergeland Centre created and helped implement the module “Democratic School Development: Theory and Practice” which is part of the Vilnius University Master programme “Education Policy and Leadership for School Principals”.**

“The type of school we have will determine the type of society we create, and the leader is the key person in organising the proper culture of a democratic school”, explains Lilija Duoblienė, professor at Vilnius University.

The development of the module was led by the National Network of Education NGOs, and aims to provide practical tools for creating a democratic culture in schools. In addition to the more traditional lectures, the course included field visits to learn from practice.

EWC Senior Advisor Valentina Papeikiene, together with Indre Augutienė from Global Citizen Academy, challenged the students to consider the various

facets of a democratic school and their practical implication for school practice. The participants were also introduced to the EWC tool for democratic and inclusive school development which the students used to evaluate the situation in their schools and plan for further development of democratic culture, as part of their course assignment. The participants were also introduced to the competence model for democratic culture and engaged in a discussion on the meaning of democratic culture through the Council of Europe *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*.

*“Raising questions and engaging in discussions is the most significant part of learning in a democratic school because it reveals the underlying needs of the students.”*

*- Gintė Marija Ivanauskienė,  
doctoral candidate with the Institute  
of Educational Sciences at Vilnius University*

# 18 228

teachers, teacher students, teacher trainers and CSO representatives trained

# 29

In-Service Teacher Training  
Institutions participated

# 103

Face-to-face workshops



# Exiled, not Silenced

**Russian civic actors shared educational initiatives at final conference.**

In November, fifty participants in the “Practicing Citizenship” project gathered one final time in Norway to share ideas on how to spread democratic competences to Russian-speaking communities in Europe.

Launched in 2012, the project aimed to help educators and stakeholders from the Russian Federation apply the Council of Europe’s approaches to citizenship and human rights education. It equipped thousands of educators and students with the competences needed to live as democratic citizens in diverse societies.

“It has been a long journey,” said EWC Executive Director Ana Perona-Fjeldstad.

*“We hoped to strengthen democracy in Russia through democratic learning. Despite the challenges, we continued until Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.”*

- Ana Perona-Fjeldstad  
Executive Director



Senior researcher Helge Blakkisrud presents his research on education in the Russian Federation at the “Practicing Citizenship” final conference

After the invasion, the project was put on hold but relaunched in autumn 2022, focusing on Russian civic educators in exile.

The project reached 200 diaspora representatives, creating open formats to discuss the role of the diaspora in promoting democracy. At the closing conference, participants shared stories on their achievements and lessons learned.

Vladimir Shmelev used the whole-school approach for his civic education initiatives in Montenegro. Lydia, working at a Russian-language school in

Georgia, learned to organise school activities using the Council of Europe COMPASS manual. Aidar, a former journalist, created a podcast in exile to bridge the gap with those remaining in Russia.

**“The Practicing Citizenship” project** was financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**EWC role:** Project leader  
**Partner:** School of Civic Education (UK)

# Artificial Intelligence in Education

**Young teachers and other educators developed new approaches and teaching practices by focusing on the social impact artificial intelligence has on education.**

The AIEdu project targeted educators in both formal and non-formal education. Project activities were based on the Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship Education model and the *"Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture,"* helping educators use AI responsibly and respectfully.

The AIEdu project included both research and awareness components. The research question posed was: "How does AI influence teaching and

learning?" A questionnaire was completed by 137 teachers and educators across Europe.

Following this, a three-part webinar series was held on 'Myths & Realities of AI in Education,' 'Teaching with AI,' and 'Ethics in AI & Democratic Education.' These webinars can be accessed at <https://theewc.org/projects/aiedu/>.

**"AIEdu" was funded by the Civic Innovation Fund (CIF)**

**EWC role: Project partner**

**Partner: The National Center for Scientific Research "Demokritos" (NCSR-D)**



The Myths and Realities about AI and Education



Teaching with AI



Ethics in AI and Democratic Education



AI in Education: Threats or Possibilities?

## Digital Citizenship Education with the Council of Europe

**The European Wergeland Centre and the Council of Europe jointly launched a series of courses and seminars on Digital Citizenship Education.**

During 2024, the collaboration resulted in five new online courses. A sixth course was developed and launched in 2023.

### List of courses:

- What is Digital Citizenship Education? (2023)
- Disinformation (2024)
- Controversial Issues (2024)
- Hate Speech (2024)
- Access and Inclusion (2024)
- Cyberbullying (2024)

In connection with the launch of the courses, the Council of Europe also invited participants to meet the course designers online and share their experiences with other participants. All the courses are freely available on the EWC online learning portal.

# POLICY WORK

Based on the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law,, we bring policy recommendations to practitioners and relay evidence and lessons learned back to policymakers.

In 2024 we shared our expertise through publications, in working groups, during seminars, and at parliamentary hearings. We partnered with national and local authorities on several projects and initiatives in eight different countries. Our collaborations involved the Hellenic Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the City of Lublin, and the Ministry of Education in Slovakia.

With war still raging in Europe and democratic setbacks in many countries, we have continued our efforts to promote education as one of the main tools for defending and sustaining our democracies. We have done this through public events, political outreach, and media work.

## Education for Democracy on the Agenda in Strasbourg

**How can education build civic preparedness? This question was raised at a joint breakfast seminar in Strasbourg with the Norwegian Permanent Delegation to the Council of Europe and Liechtenstein's presidency of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers.**

To mark the 15th anniversary of the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) and the International Day of Education, a seminar titled "Education as Civic Preparedness: Bridging Policy and Practice" was organised. The event highlighted lessons from Ukraine and other European countries, focusing on how schools that foster democratic culture, curriculum, and community are better prepared for crises. Examples from the EWC's work in Ukraine illustrated how policies and tools can ensure resilience and civic preparedness.

These examples align with the Reykjavik Declaration and the Council of Europe's education strategy 'Learners First,' which emphasises the importance of educators' responsiveness to changing needs and making learners resilient to crises.

Dominique Hasler, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education, and Sports of Liechtenstein, emphasised the role of children, youth, and education as priorities under its presidency. "Our Presidency is an opportunity to deepen curriculum objectives in

politics, democracy, and human rights. Education is the cornerstone of building informed, engaged, and responsible citizens," said Hasler.

The seminar noted that since Russia's war against Ukraine began, many of the 400 Ukrainian schools in the EWC's network have become local humanitarian hubs while continuing to educate children as active, democratic citizens.

*"Helping member states equip young people to build a better, democratic future is what we mean by education as an investment in our democracy."*

*- Bjørn Berge  
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe*

State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Varteressian, underlined: "Democratic values are universal. Fulfillment of the right to education is key to realizing all human rights and democratic freedoms. We need better approaches to protect education in crises and conflict."

The seminar was part of the series marking EWC's 15th Anniversary from November 2023 through February 2024. The last seminar in the series



“Inclusion and Diversity in European Classrooms: Creating Schools for All” took place at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, February 15. The seminar showcased examples from practice in Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Norway.



13

expert groups on policy  
development joined

9

study visits

8

countries where EWC partners  
with national and local authorities

# A Democratic Checklist against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech

Five youth councils in Norway have taken up the fight against anti-Sámi hate speech. They hope that a democratic checklist will help Norwegian national and local authorities prevent hatred towards the Sámi minority and make it easier for members of the Sámi community to reclaim their identity.

The European Wergeland Centre and the Narvik War & Peace Centre launched the project “Together Against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech” in the fall of 2023.

Funding from the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs (Bufdir) made it possible to bring together youth councils from Nordland, Troms, Finnmark, Trøndelag, and Innlandet. About 30 delegates received training in democracy, dialogue techniques, human rights, and Sámi culture and history.

During a workshop in Narvik in April 2024, the youth councils developed a democratic checklist outlining actions they believe municipalities and local governments across Norway should take to address prejudice and negative attitudes toward the Sámi minority.



Youth delegate from Innlandet, Thea Moldstad, and deputy leader of Noereh, Anja Jernsletten, pose with the democratic checklist against anti-Sámi hate speech



The democratic checklist was presented to State Secretary Even Aleksander Hagen by youth delegate Thea Moldstad during the Norwegian political festival Arendalsuka in August.

*“We need to get the entire population on board.”*

*- Even Aleksander Hagen,  
State Secretary*

In an interview with NRK Sápmi, State Secretary Hagen praised the checklist initiative:

“We need an action plan against anti-Sámi discrimination to implement measures that raise the knowledge level in the population. I don’t think people understand how deeply this affects them and how unacceptable it is, the things people say and do,” Hagen said.

After the event, Sara-Elvira Kuhmunen, the mayor of Sweden’s Saminuorra, expressed her wish that Swedish municipalities should have their own democratic checklist. The checklist has also been included in the Government Action Plan against Hate Speech and Discrimination of the Sámi 2025-2030.



There was great interest in the democratic checklist.  
Here, State Secretary Even Aleksander Hagen is interviewed by NRK.

**"Together Against Anti-Sámi Hate Speech"**  
is funded by The Norwegian Directorate for  
Children, Youth and Family Affairs  
**EWC Role:** Project leader  
**Partner:** The Narvik War & Peace Centre

## Contributions to White Papers and policy recommendations

EWC contributed to the following White Papers and Policy Recommendations in Norway in 2024:

- The hearing on the Recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The committee investigated the Norwegianisation Policy and Injustice against the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns. EWC highlighted the need for strengthening knowledge and critical understanding of the history and culture of the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns and increased support for education for democracy and human rights.
- The Recommendations from the Extremism Commission. EWC pointed out that the 22 July and Democratic Citizenship programme is a good example of an educational programme targeting young people with the aim of strengthening democratic values and preventing extremism, which could be further developed.
- The Action Plan Against Anti-Muslim Sentiment 2025–2030. One of EWC recommendations was to increase the grants for measures against racism, discrimination and hate speech under the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir).



## A Roma Centre in Slovakia?

A delegation of Slovak policymakers and stakeholders visited The European Wergeland Centre in March to learn from Norway's approaches to educational and social inclusion of Roma communities. The group included representatives from the Slovak Ministry of Education, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, the Slovak Council of Parents' Associations (SRRZ), the Norwegian Embassy, and the National Institute for Education and Youth.

During their stay, the delegation visited several institutions in Oslo. One visit was to Romano kher – Roma Resource and Culture Centre, which focuses on preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Norwegian Roma. The centre aims to foster a sense of pride, identity, and belonging among community members.

Workshops and discussions were held to develop recommendations on supporting inclusive education, promoting the cultural and linguistic identity of Roma children, and reducing prejudice and stereotypes. A key outcome was the proposal to establish the Center for Romani Language, Culture, and Intercultural Understanding in Slovakia. This initiative aims to address historical injustices faced by the Roma community.



[A visit to Romano kher proved inspirational for the Slovak delegation](#)

Following this recommendation, the Wergeland Centre launched a bilateral initiative with the Slovak Ministry of Education, to conduct a feasibility study and identify further steps for advocating the establishment of the Center for Romani Language, Culture, and Intercultural Understanding in Slovakia.

# Contributions to Expert Groups

## **Democratic Engagement Through Mathematics**

EWC contributes with our expertise and experiences on how to engage young people in democratic issues in the research project ‘Developing Human Rights Values in Mathematics Teacher Education: Education with and by Youth’ (ViMTE) at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN).

The project will develop theory and pedagogical methods to strengthen knowledge about ethics, human dignity, and democratic participation in mathematics education. It is funded by the Research Council of Norway (NFR).

## **Gender Empowerment Through Politics in the Classroom**

‘Gender Empowerment Through Politics in the Classroom’ (G-EPIC) is a three-year, six-country project to co-design, trial, refine, and scale up interventions that support the development of political self-confidence of girls who are experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage. The project manager is the University of Roehampton (UK).

EWC is part of the European Advisory Board that provides support on Citizenship Education and related subject teaching practices, teacher training, and empowering political engagement of disadvantaged girls more broadly.

Supported by the European Commission and the UK Research and Innovation.

## **Piloting Blue Education to Deliver Sustainability in Europe**

BlueLightS is an EU Horizon Europe project that brings together 16 partners from across Europe to strengthen the skills and competencies of European children and youth to deliver “blue” (river and seas) resilience and sustainability. The project is directly aligned with and contributing to the EU Mission ‘Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030’. EWC is represented in the advisory panel. Project manager: “Ciencia Viva” National Agency for Scientific Culture and Technology (Portugal).

## **YOUROPE**

YOUROPE is a research project which aims to transform European citizenship and democracy by enhancing youth involvement, while creating a more inclusive democratic process and developing policies that align with the different needs, perspectives, and ambitions of European youth – especially those who are currently underrepresented.

YOUROPE addresses the traditionally low political participation rates among youth, particularly those from underrepresented groups, by tapping into their potential and aspirations through innovative approaches.

EWC contributes to developing a training and a manual for young researchers and local community members involved in the project. The training will focus on how to interpret and understand European and local policies and strengthen their understanding of how to participate in democratic processes. The project is funded through the EU Horizon Programme.

## **Stride**

EWC is a member of the reference group in the EU Horizon project ‘Strategies for Achieving Equity and Inclusion in Education, Training and Learning in Democratic Europe’ (STRIDE). STRIDE aims to provide a new, comprehensive and comparative knowledge base on effective education reforms, policy initiatives and interventions that aim to reduce inequalities in education, training and learning outcomes in Europe. The project is led by Oslo Metropolitan University’s NOVA – Norwegian Social Research and the Faculty of Education and International Studies (LUI).

## **The Council of Europe Working Group on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and Education for Sustainable Development**

EWC’s Khrystyna Chushak and Valentina Papeikiene represent Ukraine and Norway respectively in the Council of Europe Working Group on the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and Education for Sustainable Development*.

# RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

EWC uses the latest research to ensure activities are evidence-based, and we contribute with practical expertise to research projects. Collaborating with experts and users to ensure relevance, we develop high-quality learning resources for educators and policymakers. These resources are freely available online and through capacity-building activities. EWC also conducts systematic monitoring and evaluation to provide up-to-date knowledge on effective educational practices, and analyses research findings to inform policies and practice across Europe.

## A new Curriculum on Sustainable Development

**Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is set to become a strategic priority until 2030 for the European Wergeland Centre. We believe that all learners should understand the concepts of climate change and sustainable development, and acquire the skills needed to take individual and collective actions to support a low-carbon transition and other aspects of environmental sustainability.**

As a first step, the Wergeland Centre began the development of 10-12 lessons on ESD for secondary school teachers that can be used with students between the ages 13 to 18. To support us in this effort, we partnered with Dr. Felisa Tibbits who stayed with the Centre during the autumn of 2024 as a Fullbright Specialist.

“There is an urgent imperative to address both climate change and sustainability,” says Dr. Tibbits.

*“We wish to embed education for sustainable development within citizenship education, with an emphasis on democratic processes and human rights.”*

- Dr. Felisa Tibbits

The lessons will continue to be developed by a Curriculum Working Group, and will focus on many aspects of environmental sustainability, including youth activism and climate justice. They will also reflect the Council of Europe recent developments in the field of sustainable development, as well as their *Reference Framework for Competencies for Democratic Culture*.

*“Climate change poses an unprecedented challenge to the global community. (...) ESD is an integral element of SDG Target 4.7, through the Education 2030 Framework for Action. It empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and agency to make informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society.”*

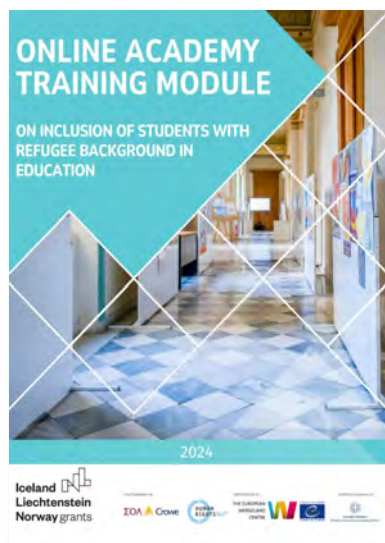
- UNESCO – Greening curriculum guidance:  
Teaching and learning for climate action





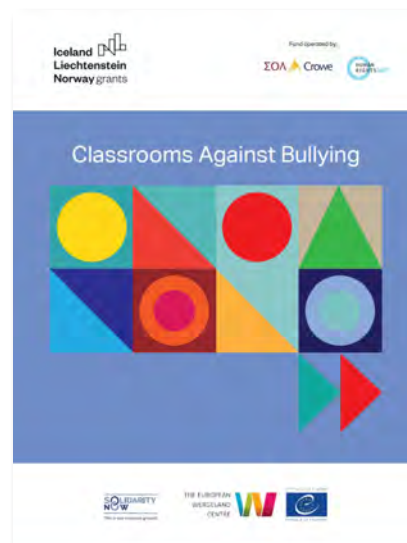
Dr. Felisa Tibbits has worked with the European Wergeland Centre since its founding in 2008. "Felisa is one of EWC's longest-standing friends," EWC Executive Director, Ana Perona Fjeldstad said about the cooperation.

## Resources



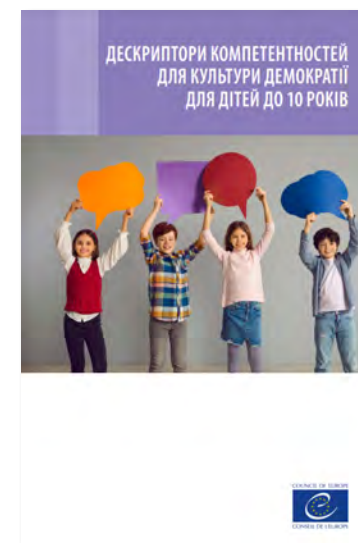
### Online Academy Training Module: On Inclusion of Students with Refugee Background in Education

This module is designed for policymakers, educators, trainers, NGOs, and volunteers, promoting equitable education. It gives guidance on developing a comprehensive online training programme or shorter workshops, based on the experience of the “Schools for All” Project in Greece.



### Classrooms against Bullying

This guidebook is a collection of tools for teachers and others to combat bullying and create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all. The guidebook was developed by EWC in partnership with SolidarityNow within the project “Classrooms Against Bullying”.



### Descriptors of Competences for Democratic Culture for Young Learners

This Council of Europe publication provides a separate set of 166 descriptors of competences for democratic culture for work with children under 10 years old. It was developed based on the Council of Europe’s *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC).

The European Wergeland Centre has translated and published a Ukrainian version to be used in our work with preschool teachers. The descriptors are important tools for curriculum planning, teaching and learning, as well as assessment.



### New Online Resources for Norwegian Teachers

The European Wergeland Centre launched new Norwegian resources for teachers and student teachers on democracy and citizenship, as schools have a significant mission: To prevent extremism and radicalisation by teaching about the events of the 22nd July terrorist attack.

The tips and resources are available on the Norwegian home page [wergelandsenteret.no](http://wergelandsenteret.no) and focus on the following three themes:

- Learning about Democracy
- Political Self-Efficacy
- Lessons from 22nd July

5

working groups on educational resources led

5

Blended and Massive Open Online Courses developed

4

Translations of learning resources into local languages

8

new printed learning resources launched



# NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIPS

To meet needs and demands successfully, we actively establish and strengthen partnerships throughout Europe. Our aim is to serve as a trustworthy partner based on experience, reliability, and professional integrity.

We collaborate with key actors in education, such as ministries, educational institutions from kindergarten to universities, local authorities, museums and NGOs. While continually learning from each other, we ensure that our work is relevant, up-to-date, and informed by the top available expertise.

For many educators, peer-to-peer learning is the preferred form of learning. By supporting networks across its projects, EWC facilitates a prolific exchange of knowledge among those who face similar challenges. This opportunity enables educators to exchange experiences, disseminate resources, and cooperate in creating and implementing solutions.

## Network of Peace and Human Rights Centres

**In 2024, the collaboration between the Peace and Human Rights Centres in Norway was further strengthened. Norway now has eight Peace and Human Rights Centres, with the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) being one of them. Together, we reach over 60,000 students and teachers every year across the country, strengthening their skills to stand for democracy and human rights in their everyday lives.**

It has become an annual tradition to join forces in the Human Rights Tent during the political gathering Arendalsuka in August. Exciting and engaging conversations take place in the tent. Among the highlights this year was a discussion on the school as an arena to build democratic preparedness, with the Norwegian Minister of Education, Kari Nessa Nordtun, among others. This event was organised by the Wergeland Centre in partnership with the

Union of Education Norway. The network also met with Nordtun earlier in the year to brief her on the Centre's activities.

Earlier in the year opposition members Grete Wold and Jan Tore Sanner invited the network to hold the seminar "What do we do when international conflicts impact schools and society?" for Norwegian parliamentarians.

The Peace and Human Rights Centres in Norway are financed by the Ministry of Education through the state budget. The network consists of EWC, the Rafto Foundation, the Narvik War & Peace Centre, the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue, the Falstad Centre, the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities, ARKIVET Peace and Human Rights Centre, and the August 10th Foundation.



Director Øyvind Skogvold, the Falstad Centre, Executive Director Jostein Hole Kobbeltvedt, the Rafto Foundation, Kristine Storesletten Sjødal, ARKIVET Peace and Human Rights Center, Executive Director Ana Perona-Fjeldstad, the European Wergeland Centre, Norwegian Minister of Education Kari Nessa Nordtun, Director Knut Leikvam, Narvik War & Peace Centre, Director Anita Rapp-Ødegaard, Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue, and Director Jan Heiret, the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies

# Partnerships

1. **Council of Europe**
2. **Arkivet Peace and Human Rights Centre** (Norway)
3. **Center for Citizenship Education** (Poland)
4. **Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities** (Bulgaria)
5. **Centre for Education Initiatives** (Ukraine)
6. **Euroclio** (The Netherlands)
7. **Falstad Centre** (Norway)
8. **Institute of Educational Policy** (Greece)
9. **IRIM - Institute for Youth Development and Innovation/Croatian Makers** (Croatia)
10. **Karlova University (Charles University)**, the Czech Republic
11. **Kyiv Borys Grinchenko Metropolitan University** (Ukraine)
12. **Leeds Beckett University** (United Kingdom)
13. **Lithuanian Agency for Non-Formal Education** (Lithuania)
14. **Lublin Municipality** (Poland)
15. **Lørenskog kommune**
16. **Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece** (Greece)
17. **Ministry of Education and Science** (Bulgaria)
18. **Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine** (Ukraine)
19. **Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic**
20. **Nansen Peace Centre** (Norway)
21. **Narvik War and Peace Centre** (Norway)
22. **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** (Greece)
23. **National Centre For Scientific Research Demokritos** (Greece)
24. **National Institute for Education and Youth** (Slovakia)
25. **National Museum of the Revolution of Dignity - Maidan Museum** (Ukraine)
26. **National Network of Education NGOs** (Lithuania)
27. **NIVAM - National Institute of Education and Youth** (Slovakia)
28. **Nordic Safe Cities** (Denmark)
29. **Norwegian University of Science and Technology** (Norway)
30. **Office of the Public Defender of Rights** (CR)
31. **Open Lithuania Foundation** (Lithuania)
32. **Oslo Metropolitan University** (Norway)
33. **POLIN - Museum of the History of Polish Jews** (Poland)
34. **Prometheus** (Ukraine)
35. **Rafto Foundation** (Norway)
36. **Romanian Social Development Fund** (Romania)
37. **Romano Kher, Roma Culture and Resource Centre**
38. **SavED** (Ukraine)
39. **School of Civic Education** (UK)
40. **Sempre al Frente** (Poland)
41. **Smart Osvita** (Ukraine)
42. **SolidarityNow!** (Greece)
43. **Spillkultur** (Norway)
44. **Step by Step** (Moldova)
45. **The 22 July Centre** (Norway)
46. **The Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine** (Ukraine)
47. **The Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities** (KS)
48. **The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies** (Norway)
49. **Ukrainian Institute for Education Development** (Ukraine)
50. **Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation** (Ukraine)
51. **University of Oslo** (Norway)
52. **University of Rijeka** (Croatia)
53. **University of Thessaly** (Greece)
54. **Utøya AS** (Norway)
55. **Youth Councils in Finnmark, Troms, Nordland, Trøndelag and Innlandet county** (Norway)
56. **Youth Work Norway** (Norway)

# A Network of Museums to Defend Democracy through Education

**56 museum educators from 10 European countries gathered in Oslo for the EWC seminar “Education and Museums’ Response to Threats to Democracy.” How can museums address threats to democracy and help young citizens develop democratic resilience?**

Participants from 20 institutions from ten countries across Europe exchanged experiences on education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

Key discussions included how museums can handle controversial and sensitive issues to develop democratic competences in youth, as recommended by the Council of Europe. This allows students to engage in open and respectful dialogue, fostering inclusion and participation in their communities.

Recognising that many teachers outsource teaching of sensitive topics to museums, EWC emphasised the need for museum educators to be equipped with tools to facilitate such dialogues. Consequently, EWC will continue its efforts working with museums within the new project “MUCIT: Museums as Sites of Citizenship”. This project aims to empower Ukrainian museums to foster democracy, civic engagement, and cultural resilience – particularly for young people – during wartime and post-

war recovery. It is carried out in partnership with the Maidan Museum in Ukraine, Utøya in Norway, and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

The seminar took place March 21-22 and was part of the “Fighting Antisemitism, Xenophobia, and Racism Now!” project, funded by the EEA and Norway grants.



Acknowledging the key role museum educators play in fostering democratic resilience, EWC plans further cooperation with the European museum sector in the future



# How Educators Can Foster Democratic Engagement Among Young People

**Educators, youth workers and researchers gathered at Utøya to explore what role schools can play in fostering democratic engagement among young people.**

Erfaringskonferansen, (“the Experience Conference”) was the first of its kind: A forum where professionals passionate about democracy education could come together to share experiences and discuss strategies for strengthening democratic values in the classroom.

With a diverse lineup of speakers, the full-day conference in September included lectures, panel discussions, and networking opportunities. A “market square” in the library showcased the work of various organisations, including The Nobel Peace Center and Save the Children, allowing them to present their initiatives and exchange ideas with participants.

Planning on making this an annual event, the main topics of the 2024 conference were what opportunities and pitfalls lie in using artificial intelligence, and whether the young still believe in democracies’ ability to solve the climate crisis.

Some of the speakers highlighted the growing sense of disillusionment among young people, particularly regarding the lack of political action on climate change. Others emphasised the potential

of artificial intelligence as a valuable educational tool, especially for underprivileged children, but cautioned that its use must be paired with a strong emphasis on critical thinking.

*“For a long time, we’ve wanted to bring together those who work with democracy learning to share experiences. We have many of the same goals, and they become more achievable if we work together.”*

*- Kristin Flacké  
EWC Senior Advisor*

*“Bring your students outside! Open their senses! Talk about which birds you could hear in the past. Only older people can do this, because young people can never miss something they’ve never experienced. Should a motorway be built here? Should a hotel be built here? This can lead to engagement.”*

*- Professor Arne Johan Vetlesen,  
key speaker at Erfaringskonferansen*

**“Erfaringskonferansen”** was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and the Savings Bank Foundation DNB  
**EWC role:** Project promoter  
**Partner:** UiO: Demokrati, Utøya and the 22 July Center



Participants at “Erfaringskonferansen” were several times asked to show their opinions by show of hands

# FINANCES

**The total income for 2024 amounts to 38 427 858 NOK (3 294 420 EUR).**

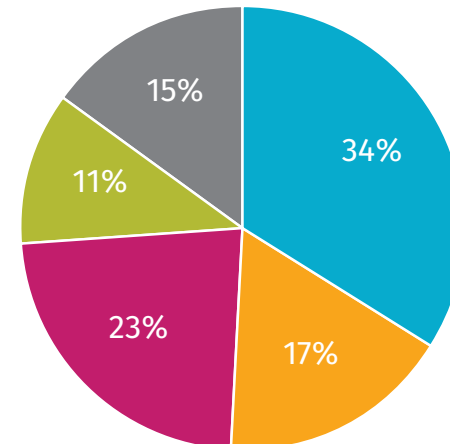
The core funding from the Ministry of Education and Research constitutes 13 247 000 NOK (34 %) of the total income and covers parts of the EWC staff as well as operational costs.

In addition to the core funding, EWC's income comes from projects funded by Norwegian and international donors/sources, covering both project activities and staff. Since 2018, this additional funding has exceeded the core funding, with main donors being the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and EEA and Norway Grants.

We recognise the importance and value of stable and predictable funding over time. It provides the necessary resources to plan effectively, execute projects efficiently, and adapt to changing circumstances. Like before, we value the collaboration with our partners and donors.

## Income in numbers

|  | NOK        | EUR       | % of total |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|
| Ministry of Education and Research core funding    | 13 247 000 | 1 135 665 | 34 %       |
| Ministry of Education and Research project funding | 6 500 000  | 557 245   | 17 %       |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs                        | 8 846 220  | 758 386   | 23 %       |
| EEA and Norway Grants                              | 4 118 003  | 353 036   | 11 %       |
| Other*   | 5 716 635  | 490 087   | 15 %       |
| Total  | 38 427 858 | 3 294 420 | 100 %      |



*\*The Savings Bank Foundation DNB, The Civics Innovation Hub, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs*

# GOVERNING BOARD

EWC is governed by a board appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway.

The board is comprised of members nominated by the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.



## Board members

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Inga Bostad - Chair          | Norway   |
| Matjaz Gruden - Deputy Chair | Slovenia |
| Mette Volland                | Norway   |
| Rose Anne Cuschieri          | Malta    |
| Knut Christian Clausen       | Norway   |
| Claus Neukirch               | Germany  |
| Sofie Høgestøl               | Norway   |

## Deputy Board members

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Nanna Paaske              | Norway   |
| Øystein Skotheim          | Norway   |
| Snježana Prijić Samaržija | Croatia  |
| Luisa de Bivar Black      | Portugal |



# EWG TEAM



**Ana Perona-Fjeldstad**  
Executive Director



**Luvisa Hansen**  
Head of Finance



**Øystein Sassebo Bryhni**  
Head of Communications



**Hege Knudsen**  
Advisor, HR



**Veslemøy Maria Svartdal**  
Advisor, Communications



**Mali Kristine Lunde**  
Project Officer, Finance

## Early Childhood and School Section



**Iryna Sabor**  
Head of Early Childhood  
and School Section



**Marta Melnykevich-Chorna**  
Senior Advisor, Early Childhood  
and School Section



**Nataliya Yeremeyeva**  
Senior Advisor, Early Childhood  
and School Section



**Tetiana Zaichko**  
Advisor, Early Childhood  
and School Section



**Angelos Vallianatos**  
Head Programme Coordinator  
(Greece)



**Dimitra Skempi**  
Communications Officer  
(Greece)



**Dora Katsamori**  
Project Coordinator  
(Greece)



**Andriy Donets**  
Programme Coordinator  
(Ukraine)



**Olena Shynarovska**  
Programme Coordinator  
(Ukraine)



**Khrystyna Chushak**  
Head Programme Coordinator  
(Ukraine)



**Marianthi Antoniou**  
Project Officer, Early Childhood  
and School Section

## Youth Section



**Ingrid Aspelund**  
Head of Youth Section



**Kristin Flacké**  
Senior Advisor, Youth Section



**Ole Mathias Rustad**  
Project Officer, Youth Section



**Mahira Karim**  
Advisor, Youth Section



**Ida Berge**  
Advisor, Youth Section

## Teacher Education and Civil Society Section



**Caroline Gebara**  
Head of Teacher Education  
and Civil Society Section



**Larisa Leganger Bronder**  
Senior Advisor, Teacher  
Education and Civil Society Section



**Valentina Papeikiene**  
Senior Advisor, Teacher Education  
and Civil Society Section



**Bojana Dujkovic Blagojevic**  
Education Specialist, Teacher  
Education and Civil Society Section

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