Intercultural awareness

The main top-level institution that aims to develop intercultural awareness and promote intercultural dialogue is the Ministry of Education and Culture [1].

Through the adoption of the intercultural model, the Ministry of Education and Culture has in recent years promoted a series of actions in the context of Intercultural Education and Education with the aim of mutual acceptance, confidence building and the elimination of negative stereotypes and prejudices among children. The existing educational policy seeks to smoothly integrate pupils with migrant biography into the Cypriot Educational System and to provide more effective communication by providing education through the provision of enhanced and diversified Greek language learning programs.

Thus, the Ministry of Education and Culture offers a website dedicated solely on Intercultural Education and Training [2]. The website targets school teachers and offers materials that can be used by teachers to respond more effectively to the needs of migrant students studying in public schools. These materials include books in other languages, guideline books and books with activities that can be done in schools to foster intercultural awareness. Schools are also encouraged to send material and / or other good practices that they consider useful and can be used by other teachers.

The website remains constantly available to teachers and its core aim is a democratic school that incorporates and does not exclude. This means equal opportunities for access, participation, success, respecting the diversity and multiculturalism of the student population as well as individual needs. The vision is a school system that fully recognizes and accepts diversity, pluralism (cultural, linguistic, religious) and multiple intelligence.

At the same time, the Youth Board of Cyprus which runs under the Ministry of Education and Culture,
encourages young people and their organised groups to take action enhancing intercultural awareness and respect through its main funding programme, the «Youth Initiatives Programme».[3] The Programme gives incentives to young people to develop an active role in cultural, sport, political and social activities in Cyprus. It aims at encouraging non-formal learning and active citizenship through volunteerism. One of the fields it covers under «Social Intervention Action» is «Social Discriminations». The objective of the field is to promote social cohesion, acceptance, tolerance, diversity, respect for human rights, as well as in fighting discrimination in general.

**Young people’s rights**

The main top-level initiatives taken in Cyprus to promote young people’s rights are the following:

1. **The activities of the Commissioner for Children’s Rights:**[4] The Commissioner has competence and responsibility (among others) to organise seminars and educational programs relevant to children’s rights as well as to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that the society will be mobilized and safeguard in practice children’s rights in the family, the school, the community where they live and the society in general. For carrying out her competences the Commissioner meets and talks with children in schools, child care institutions, youth centres, etc and gives information on the rights of the child through her webpage, publications, seminars, etc. The main target groups addressed are children (until the age of 18 years old) as well as the wider public.

2. **No hate speech movement:**[5] This is a youth campaign of the Council of Europe for human rights online, to reduce the levels of acceptance of hate speech and develop online youth participation and citizenship, including in Internet governance processes. Cyprus participates in this campaign through the Youth Board of Cyprus. The main target groups are young people.

3. The **Anti-Discrimination Body**[6] of the Office of the **Commissioner of Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman)**[7] organizes many educational workshops and seminars and makes presentations against racism and discrimination in primary and secondary schools and to policy members all over Cyprus.

4. The **2nd Pancyprian Student Forum on Diversity and Integration**[8] organized by the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Anti-Discrimination Body of the Office of the Commissioner of Administration and Protection of Human Rights and the Ministry of Education and Culture, with the support of the non-governmental organization **ACCEPT LGBT Cyprus**[9]. The event was held in Nicosia on March 20, 2017 and more than 120 high school students from all the provinces of Cyprus attended the Forum. The individual themes to be discussed were: (a) Refugees and asylum seekers; (b) Discrimination and racist incidents; (c) Sex stereotypes; (d) Homophobia and transphobia; (e) Religious freedom; and (f) Freedom of artistic expression. The main target group was students.

5. **“Code of conduct against racism and guide for management and recording of racist incidents”**[10] in schools. This manual is divided in two basic parts: (a) the Code of conduct to combat racism and (b) the Guide for managing and recoding racist incidents. In the first part, the necessity for the preparation of the Code is established and a relevant theoretical background is provided. This part includes the purpose and the objectives of the code as well as the responsibilities and commitments undertaken by all members of the school environment. The Guide, on the other hand, entails the steps that need to be taken in order to manage racist incidents as well as a Table of Sanctions. It includes the Self-reflection Document, the Document for the Registration of Racist Incidents and the Yearly Document of
Reference of Racist Incidents. The Code and the Guide have been prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and the Curriculum Development Unit, with the contribution of the Anti-Discrimination Authority.

The purpose of this manual is to identify any direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional reasons, procedures and processes that lead to negative discrimination for individuals based on their diversity. It also aims to action in order to prevent and tackle racist incidents, and take action in developing anti-racist culture. The main target groups are school students.

In addition, during the school year 2016-2017, the “Aware” Campaign [11] was introduced in secondary schools as described by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus [12]. It is an information and awareness-raising campaign for the respect and acceptance of migrants and refugees/asylum seekers who are beneficiaries of international protection. It is co-financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus and includes two-hour seminars for secondary school students. Seminars are interactive and include video viewing and an experiential workshop. Within the framework of the campaign, a photographic competition, a student conference and a youth conference will be organized under the auspices of the Minister of Education and Culture. The main target groups are school students.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus in an announcement on 11/03/2016 [13], stated that Cyprus has adopted a National Strategy for dealing with Terrorism where all necessary measures are taken to protect critical infrastructures and vulnerable targets, to implement effective border controls and to continuously upgrade technological equipment to enhance the exchange of information. However, there is not further information about it available.