



Parliamentary Assembly  
Assemblée parlementaire

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## STANDING COMMITTEE

Vilnius, Lithuania

24 May 2024

## TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY

**Provisional versions**

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Recommendations  
2275 to 2278





## Recommendation 2275 (2024)<sup>1</sup>

Provisional version

# Ending the detention of “socially maladjusted” persons

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The right to liberty is one of the most fundamental human rights. It is guaranteed in Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, “the Convention”). However, the Convention includes a limitation to the right to liberty specifically on the basis of mental impairment, drug or alcohol use, or not having a fixed abode. With the formulation in Article 5 (1) (e), reportedly stemming from the eugenics movement, “persons of unsound mind, alcoholics or drug addicts or vagrants” can be lawfully detained. These persons have been referred to as “socially maladjusted”, including in the past by the European Court of Human Rights, an approach that is considered discriminatory and stigmatising in the human rights community.

2. The Convention is the only international human rights treaty that excludes these groups from the full enjoyment of the right to liberty. This is problematic as detaining such vulnerable persons effectively puts them at higher risk of systematic rights violations, on the sole ground that they might hypothetically pose a danger to others or that their own interest may necessitate their detention. The initial draft of the Convention did not contain a reference to “socially maladjusted” persons – indeed, the Parliamentary Assembly, in 1949, had recommended a text closer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. In the last 70 years, there has been a worldwide paradigm shift to a human rights-based approach, as exemplified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by all member States of the Council of Europe except Liechtenstein. The United Nations interpretation of the rights of persons with disabilities and the interpretation given by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities do not allow for the deprivation of liberty based on an actual or perceived disability. The interpretation provided by the United Nations is, however, very seldom applied in the context of the European Court of Human Rights, since the formulation of Article 5 (1) (e) does not oblige it to.

4. The idea of social control – whether of persons with psychosocial disabilities, of persons who use drugs or alcohol, or of persons without a fixed abode – is not compatible with our 21st century understanding of human rights. The Assembly underlines the urgent need for the Council of Europe, as the leading regional human rights organisation, to fully integrate the worldwide paradigm shift to a modern human rights-based approach in its work. The time has come to move away from the discriminatory concept of excluding certain groups from human rights protection. The Assembly thus recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

4.1. support member States in taking the necessary steps for the full enjoyment of the right to liberty by the groups referred to in Article 5 (1) (e) of the Convention, in co-operation with the European Union, the United Nations and its agencies (in particular, the World Health Organization), non-governmental organisations and organisations of persons with lived experience, *inter alia*:

4.1.1. in removing discriminatory limitations on the full enjoyment of the right to liberty of the groups referred to from their constitutions, their legislation and their policies;

4.1.2. in developing adequately funded, human rights-compliant strategies for deinstitutionalisation with clear time frames and benchmarks with a view to a genuine transition to independent living for persons with disabilities, mental health problems, and for persons who use drugs or alcohol;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15983](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Stefan Schennach).



- 4.1.3. in running public awareness-raising campaigns, in order to overcome stereotypes and prejudice surrounding persons with disabilities, with mental health problems, persons who use drugs or alcohol or who do not have a fixed abode, and promote the full inclusion in society of these persons;
- 4.2. call on the Council of Europe Development Bank, the World Bank and other social development funds such as the European Structural and Investment Funds to support member States to allocate adequate resources for support services that avoid the detention and/or institutionalisation of persons with disabilities, mental health problems, or persons who use drugs or alcohol – such as the strengthening, creating and maintaining of community-based services (including drug consumption rooms, therapeutic communities and supportive living arrangements);
- 4.3. in line with the unanimously adopted [Recommendation 2158 \(2019\)](#) “Ending coercion in mental health: the need for a human rights-based approach” and with [Recommendation 2227 \(2022\)](#) “Deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities”, adopt guidance to member States promoting voluntary measures in mental healthcare services and pay due attention, in its further consideration of the draft additional protocol to the Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS No. 164, “Oviedo Convention”) concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment within mental healthcare services, to ensuring that any Council of Europe guidance is fully in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the guidance of the United Nations and its agencies and the widely-accepted best practice.



**Recommendation 2276 (2024)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## Children in the world of work: eradicating harmful child labour

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2548 \(2024\)](#) “Children in the world of work: eradicating harmful child labour” highlighting the need for more effective action to end child labour by 2025 in line with the commitment of member States of the Council of Europe under target 8.7 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Urgent and co-ordinated action by member States is necessary at national, European and international levels to meet this ambitious objective, using, amongst other, relevant Council of Europe instruments that provide a protective legal framework for children. The Assembly moreover strongly supports the Durban Call to Action which was adopted on 20 May 2022 at the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour and considers that it should serve as a basis for member States’ action.

2. The Assembly therefore asks the Committee of Ministers to recommend to member and observer States of the Council of Europe to:

2.1. take urgent action under the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027, the European Social Charter (ETS Nos. 35 and 163), the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, Article 4 banning slavery and servitude), the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, Lanzarote Convention), the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185, Budapest Convention), the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention No. 182) of the International Labour Organization and the Durban Call to Action in order to address the root causes of child labour and effectively eradicate child labour, in particular the worst forms of exploitation of children through forced work in sweatshops, sex industry, armed forces or criminal networks;

2.2. accede to the above-mentioned legal instruments if they have not yet done so;

2.3. seize opportunities of co-operation with the European Union, the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Children’s Fund with a view to accelerating global action to eliminate child labour.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15982](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Eka Sepashvili).*









## Recommendation 2277 (2024)<sup>1</sup>

Provisional version

# Cultural heritage and climate change

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly referring to its [Resolution 2549 \(2024\)](#) “Cultural heritage and climate change”, underlines the compelling need for climate action and for a radical shift towards carbon neutrality by 2050 to meet the ambition of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change alongside the global aspiration for sustainable development embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both require a deep transformation of society and a fundamental change of mindset.
2. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the commitment of Heads of State and Government made at the Reykjavík Summit in May 2023 to strengthen the work of the Council of Europe on the human rights aspects of the environment based on the political recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, as well as the decision to integrate a youth perspective in the work of the Council of Europe.
3. In line with this global political agenda, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (ETS No. 199, “Faro Convention”) and Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), place cultural and natural heritage and culture in general at the centre of a new vision for sustainable development.
4. For the Assembly, it is essential that all member States of the Council of Europe include cultural heritage concerns in national strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe should assist this process when required.
5. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 5.1. encourage transversal co-operation of the culture, heritage, education and youth sectors in the field of sustainability and climate action, to support the implementation of:
    - 5.1.1. guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management;
    - 5.1.2. participatory governance models to involve the public, and especially young people, to engage in climate action and climate-related decision-making processes, and build community resilience to climate change;
  - 5.2. develop further synergies with the European Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and international heritage institutions on evaluating the impact of climate change on cultural heritage.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15926](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Andries Gryffroy).*







**Recommendation 2278 (2024)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## Quality education for children with special education needs: challenges of the pandemic, war and digitalisation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its [Resolution 2550 \(2024\)](#) “Quality education for children with special education needs: challenges of the pandemic, war and digitalisation”, considers that valuable lessons could be learned from emergency situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine, to develop new guidelines on inclusive education, digital transformation and democratic citizenship and support member States in building more resilient and responsive education systems.
2. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the decision of the Ministers of Education to set new priorities and actions to implement the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy by adopting five resolutions and endorsing the Council of Europe education strategy “Learners First” 2024-2030. Well-being of learners is considered essential for their holistic, long-term development and academic success through a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Children with special educational needs must be an integral part of this strategy.
3. A human rights-based approach to education must be promoted to ensure access, participation, representation, equity, and fairness in everyday practice across the different settings where children with special educational needs study and learn, either in regular or special schools, at home, in digital, social, and physical learning spaces.
4. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers develops Council of Europe guiding principles for a learner-centred and human rights-based approach to education of children with special educational needs, to make their education accessible, adaptable and acceptable to these children, considering *inter alia*:
  - 4.1. teaching and learning strategies tailored to the specific needs of individuals and groups, to strengthen motivation, self-esteem, competencies, sense of autonomy and belonging, which would move away from educational programmes based on normative expectations that discriminate against children with special education needs
  - 4.2. the interconnection between physical, social, and digital learning spaces, which should share a common vision of inclusion and learning;
  - 4.3. training and practical guidance for teachers, and co-operation with professionals who work with children with disabilities and learning difficulties outside school, in order to develop well-adapted individual educational plans;
  - 4.4. flexible curriculum as a key factor to promote inclusive education, allowing teachers to adapt content and respond to different needs;
  - 4.5. innovative learning environments to provide opportunities for changes in beliefs, values, policies, and practices in inclusive education as alternatives to overcome the current restrictions imposed by rigid curricula, pedagogy, and assessment strategies;
  - 4.6. teacher collaboration and use of digital media to promote adaptive teaching;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15984](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Pavlo Sushko).*



4.7. digitalisation of education in line with the principles of the Council of Europe Digital Citizenship Education Project, also seeking a co-ordinated improvement of accessibility, adaptability and acceptability of digital resources and platforms, and increased transparency of underpinning algorithms and premises on which the learning process is built, to ensure that these platforms include and do not discriminate against atypical learners or users with functional limitations; children with special education needs should be provided with special equipment which corresponds to their particular needs (for visual or hearing impairment, for autism, etc.).

5. The Assembly also urges the Committee of Ministers to co-operate with relevant international organisations including UNICEF, the World Health Organisation and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, to redesign disability assessments with the aim of avoiding discrimination and labelling, and preventing educational achievements from falling short of children's potential due to low expectations, discouragement and demotivation. In this respect, a social and contextual assessment of disabilities should be used as a future key component of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, to identify barriers to participation in different educational settings rather than to unilaterally identify a child as having a problem. Disability assessments should be mutually recognised across national borders.

Resolutions  
2548 to 2550





**Resolution 2548 (2024)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## Children in the world of work: eradicating harmful child labour

Parliamentary Assembly

1. As the 2025 deadline for achieving target 8.7 on ending modern slavery, trafficking and child labour of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Union's corollary commitment to ending child labour in all its forms approaches, the latest figures show a worsening global situation, exacerbated by the impact of recent socio-economic crises, the Covid-19 pandemic and armed conflicts. The elimination of harmful child labour has become an important and urgent priority on the international agenda, which must be addressed more effectively. The Council of Europe member States must contribute to the global action in this area.

2. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour as “work that deprives children (any person under 18) of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and/or mental development”. The worst forms of child labour include all forms of slavery, sale and trafficking of children, recruitment and use of child soldiers, use of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography or unlawful activities such as drug trafficking.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly deplores the fact that, according to the ILO, worldwide 79 million children aged 5 to 17 years are working in hazardous conditions in agriculture, manufacturing, hotels, restaurants and domestic services. Alarming, this includes about 3.3 million children trapped into forced labour. In 2020, around 3.6 million children were employed in Europe, with half of them in hazardous work. While data collection on the scale of children in work and on their situation needs to be improved at international and national levels, it is clear that for a large number of children working in unsafe or insalubrious conditions, and certainly for those in forced labour situations, there are effects on their physical and mental development.

4. The Assembly notes that children and adolescents are more vulnerable to hazards than adults, in particular through work: they face a greater risk of exposure to certain diseases and toxic substances, injury, permanent disability, psychological damage and death, while being less aware of risks than adults and less capable of making informed judgements due to their lack of knowledge and experience.

5. The Assembly recalls that child labour has multiple root causes (such as poverty, unemployment of parents, insufficient educational opportunities, migration, traditional or cultural habits, employers' demand for cheap labour and income inequalities) and consequences (notably impacts on mental and physical health, capacity to complete a normal educational path and develop a skills base conducive to better paid and more secure jobs and higher social status) which require the sustained and holistic attention of member States.

6. The Assembly refers to the existing international and European legal instruments that set the regulatory framework for States to follow in order to protect children's well-being and eradicate harmful child labour. It highlights in this context the importance, for the global action, of two universally ratified legal instruments: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (except for the United States of America) and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention No. 182).

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15982](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Eka Sepashvili).

See also [Recommendation 2276 \(2024\)](#).



7. At the European level, several Council of Europe instruments provide a protective legal framework for children. These include the European Social Charter (ETS Nos. 35 and 163, notably Article 7 requiring States Parties “to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education”), the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, Article 4 banning slavery and servitude), the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, Lanzarote Convention), the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185, Budapest Convention), the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197) and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027.

8. The Assembly welcomes the European Union’s commitment to eradicate child labour through the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024), the European Child Guarantee and the new legal initiatives aimed at ensuring corporate sustainability due diligence through trade. The EU Action Plan supports free and easily accessible compulsory education for children until they reach the minimum age for work, while extending social welfare programmes to help lift families out of poverty in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child envisages a set of key actions such as dedicating 10% of overall funding under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument outside the European Union to education, technical assistance to strengthen labour inspections systems for monitoring and enforcement of child labour laws, and working towards making global supply chains of EU companies free of child labour.

9. The Assembly also welcomes a series of national laws in European countries that require enterprises to conduct due diligence to ensure compliance with international conventions regarding human rights and child labour in global supply chains. It believes that further improvements in legislation may be needed to further secure conditions of decent work, support life-long learning and cover the new forms of work resulting from technological progress and changes in the labour market, in order to ensure an appropriate level of child protection in the future.

10. The Assembly is concerned with the gaps between law and practice, as well as the lack of attention to addressing the root causes of child labour. It strongly supports the Durban Call to Action which was adopted on 20 May 2022 at the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour and which sets out a comprehensive framework with six commitment areas aimed at accelerating action to eradicate child labour. This framework lays out a multi-stakeholder approach to promote decent work for adults and young persons above the minimum age of work, policy reforms to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour and human trafficking, efforts to end child labour in agriculture, effective protection of children's right to education, universal access to social protection, and stronger international co-operation to enforce laws against child labour and forced labour.

11. The Assembly underscores the pivotal role of public authorities in ensuring effective collective action on ending child labour in all its forms by 2025 and calls on the Council of Europe member and observer States, and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly to:

11.1. put in place national action plans for the elimination of child labour in general and harmful child labour in particular;

11.2. implement measures proposed in the Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour adopted in May 2022 by involving all relevant national stakeholders (employers, trade unions, governmental agencies, parliaments, local authorities, community groups, schools, media, NGOs, faith-based organisations) and engaging in international co-operation;

11.3. clarify and strengthen the responsibilities and obligations of enterprises for ensuring respect for human rights and effectively eliminating child labour in global supply chains and public procurement, in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;

11.4. strengthen the implementation of national laws, regulations and policies to eliminate child labour, in particular forced labour, and to reduce the informal sector of economy by enhancing the capacity of law enforcement bodies, labour inspectorates and child protection services to detect and eradicate harmful practices;

11.5. make full use of the Council of Europe legal instruments, the European Union initiatives and the ILO conventions with a view to eliminating forced labour and human trafficking;

11.6. address the root causes of child labour by ensuring adequate social protection of children and their families or caregivers;



11.7. enhance aid for development aimed at capacity building in developing countries to eliminate child labour and improve access of the population to social services and benefits;

11.8. improve data collection and conduct research on emerging patterns of child labour for better informed policies and decisions.

12. The Assembly calls on national parliaments to monitor the implementation of national measures for eradicating child labour, in particular the worst forms of child labour, and to keep governments to account on their commitment to achieve by 2025 target 8.7 on modern slavery, trafficking and child labour of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.





## Resolution 2549 (2024)<sup>1</sup>

Provisional version

# Cultural heritage and climate change

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In 2021, the Parliamentary Assembly called for an ambitious new legal framework, both at national and European levels, to anchor “the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment” to the European system of human rights. At the Reykjavik Summit in May 2023, a forward-looking agenda was set out for the Council of Europe, whereby the Heads of State and Government have committed to strengthening the work on the human rights aspects of the environment. In line with this newly set political agenda, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, “Faro Convention”) asserts cultural heritage and culture in general at the centre of a new vision for sustainable development.

2. The Assembly is concerned that all forms of cultural heritage – tangible and intangible – are now directly and indirectly threatened by the consequences of climate change. Increased temperatures, extended heatwaves, violent storms, floods, drought, landslides and wildfires affect monuments, archaeological sites, historic cities, stately homes and vernacular buildings, cultural landscapes and historic gardens, museum collections, archives, and libraries.

3. Similarly, climate change is seriously threatening the values, lives and practices of heritage communities whose livelihoods are intricately linked to nature, such as Sami communities in northern parts of Europe. Their traditions and way of life are now at risk, not only through climate change but also through governmental and economic development actions in the fields of forestry, mining, and energy supply, some of which are themselves designed to combat the effects of climate change and to diversify and expand energy sources within Europe. The Assembly therefore considers that a broader trans-national European land-use plan for Sami rights is needed to deal with this European cross-border problem. This could be a two-way process in view of the Sami’s thorough traditional knowledge of landscape and climate that would be valuable for scientific research, preservation of the natural world and climate adaptation in times of crisis.

4. Only a few member States of the Council of Europe include cultural heritage in climate change policies and there is generally little coordination between ministries that are overseeing different issues related to climate change. The challenges posed by climate change to cultural heritage require adequate political responses at national, regional, local, as well as European levels, a radical change of mindset and institutional behaviour, and a review of current methods and processes.

5. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Council of Europe member States:

5.1. sign and ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and accede to the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), if they have not done so yet;

5.2. where applicable, sign and ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO);

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15926](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Andries Gryffroy).*

See also [Recommendation 2277 \(2024\)](#).



- 5.3. pursue the effective implementation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 on human rights and the protection of the environment.
6. The Assembly also calls on national, regional, and local authorities of the Council of Europe member States, each within their competences and in coordination with each other, to include cultural heritage preservation in their strategies designed to address climate change and its impact, and in particular:
- 6.1. value cultural heritage that is iconic and visible to the public as an asset to raise awareness about the impact of climate change and stress the urgency of climate action;
  - 6.2. learn about and make use of historic adaptation and mitigation strategies inherent in cultural heritage – such as water, fire and risk management; traditional land use and biodiversity; interconnections between the built and natural environment; energy efficiency, natural ventilation and cooling; local building materials, maintenance and re-use in circular economy; transmission of acquired knowledge, skills and craftsmanship;
  - 6.3. integrate cultural heritage and climate science to combine scientific findings and research with human experience acquired over centuries or millennia that is inherent in tangible and intangible heritage, such as climate related evidence gathered from archaeological sites or knowledge of local ecosystems, climate conditions and changes that are perpetuated within heritage communities;
  - 6.4. undertake heritage assessment to consider the impacts of climate change on different categories of cultural heritage and in particular develop better understanding of root causes and cumulative effects, monitor and map heritage vulnerabilities and establish comparative data and indicators at national and European levels.
7. As key elements of these strategies, member States should also:
- 7.1. build institutional capacity, platforms and co-operation processes for climate governance, which pay due attention to threats to cultural heritage, in order to work transversally, reinforce coherence between sectors, broaden partnerships and develop innovative business models;
  - 7.2. develop participatory governance models to involve the public, and especially young people, in monitoring and recording of heritage at risk (photogrammetry, digital inventories and mapping initiatives) to raise awareness, gather knowledge, engage citizens in climate action and build community resilience to climate change;
  - 7.3. rethink planning of urban and rural areas to minimise climate change impacts on different categories of cultural heritage;
  - 7.4. use life cycle assessment tools and review technical standards and energy efficiency requirements to adapt them to specific needs in the heritage sector, also to preserve authenticity and integrity of heritage sites;
  - 7.5. foster efficient resource and energy management, and invest in research, seeking to combine high tech with low tech solutions, also learning from traditional sustainable solutions that are part of cultural heritage;
  - 7.6. provide financial incentives, such as earmarked subsidies or tax incentives, to stimulate circular economy and reuse of building materials in cultural heritage preservation, as well as retrofitting and upgrading of historic buildings, and their regular maintenance and repair.
8. The Assembly invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to assist local and regional authorities in the member States to play an active role in this process, and to include cultural heritage concerns in local or regional strategies to counter climate change.
9. In the framework of the European Green Deal and to honour the ambitions of the Paris Agreement, the Assembly invites the European Commission to build synergies with the Council of Europe, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and international heritage organisations with a view to:
- 9.1. develop guidance for assessing the impact of climate change on different categories of cultural heritage;
  - 9.2. provide a framework to harmonise monitoring and mapping of heritage vulnerabilities, gathering comparative data and indicators at European level, also considering threats triggered or amplified by climate change;
  - 9.3. review technical standards and energy efficiency requirements at the level of the European Union to adapt them to the specific needs in the heritage sector.



**Resolution 2550 (2024)<sup>1</sup>**

Provisional version

## **Quality education for children with special education needs: challenges of the pandemic, war and digitalisation**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Covid-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine have raised awareness of the price that children pay when they are exposed to inaccessible and fragmented learning environments, both physical and digital. Such extreme situations created a challenging environment for everyone, and it is often children with severe disabilities and children with learning difficulties and their families who have suffered the most.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that inclusion is a core principle of the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Regrettably, this principle is not always properly interpreted and implemented. The crises that Europe has experienced in recent years have exposed the weakness of a narrow understanding of inclusive education which resulted in sending children with complex needs to unprepared regular schools or exposing them to digital environments which were not appropriate for them.
3. Inclusive education is a much broader concept embracing quality of education, participation, learning opportunities and support measures for children with special educational needs in all types of learning spaces, including digital learning environments.
4. The Assembly emphasises that inclusive education should be based on respect for human rights, dignity, diversity, and social cohesion. Governments should not only set standards for their curricula, teacher competences, service provision and eligibility criteria, but also for responsiveness to the diverse situations of children with special education needs and for the flexibility to accommodate learning spaces across physical and digital environments to respond appropriately to their needs. Education systems and schools need to develop truly inclusive approaches that promote the potential of children with special education needs and respect their dignity and sense of identity.
5. The Assembly considers that there is a need to redefine curricula and assessments of learners' progress, by adopting a learner-centred and human rights-based approach to the education of children with special education needs, by focusing on their abilities, talents, and interests, rather than their perceived limitations. Respecting and ensuring children's rights is a precondition to inclusive education, not its outcome.
6. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that Council of Europe member States:
  - 6.1. adopt a learner-centred and human rights-based approach to the education of children with special education needs which should be established as mandatory and enforceable by law; this should be done by broadening the concept of inclusive education to focus on their individual needs, talents, abilities and interests, rather than on their perceived limitations, with a view to enhancing their well-being, motivation and self-esteem and to ensure that all learners have access to quality education tailored to their needs and according to their best interests;

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 24 May 2024 (see [Doc. 15984](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Pavlo Sushko).  
See also [Recommendation 2278 \(2024\)](#).



- 6.2. assess gaps in accessibility and equity in remote learning, and assess the impact of learning deficits and the exclusion of children with special education needs during the Covid-19 pandemic or other emergency situations, such as the war in Ukraine, and gather lessons from successful innovative solutions in order to use this analysis to build more resilient and responsive education systems;
  - 6.3. develop contingency plans to ensure continuity of support services, including access to counselling, therapy and other forms of assistance during distance learning periods; provide paid leave for parents of children with special education needs in the event of an emergency situation necessitating a switch to distance learning, to enable parents to fill in for the absence of support from teachers and assistants for children with special education needs, in order to help their children continue learning at home;
  - 6.4. implement the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health in accordance with its underpinning principle of universality, focusing on situations rather than on the limitations of the individuals in those situations, and use it as a human rights tool to provide an interactive and situational understanding of a disability or learning difficulties rather than focusing on a medical model of disability; facilitate international recognition of disability assessments for migrant and refugee children;
  - 6.5. build capacity of schools to reach out to all children, whether physically present or not; build bridges between different learning spaces such as regular schools, special schools, homes, hospitals, and other physical or digital learning spaces to ensure coherence between different support systems with smooth transitions between support structures, based for example on shared individual educational plans;
  - 6.6. invest in infrastructure (including digital infrastructure), in teacher competences and flexibility of methods, and in accessible learning materials, in order to allow for innovative approaches which fully meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities and learning difficulties; support collaborative working methods between teachers and the use of digital media to promote adaptive teaching.
7. As regards the very difficult situation of Ukrainian children with disabilities or learning difficulties, the Assembly calls on member States to:
- 7.1. integrate access to quality education for children with special education needs in their humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including financial support for the provision of training materials and psychological support services;
  - 7.2. mobilise resources to improve internet connectivity within Ukraine, and provide the necessary devices and special equipment for distance learning, especially in rural areas and for families with limited financial capacities to mitigate disruptions and ensure continuity of education;
  - 7.3. facilitate psychological support services including counselling, mental health services and trauma recovery support for children and families affected by the conflict and displacement in Ukraine and in host countries;
  - 7.4. ensure education of displaced children with disabilities and learning difficulties who temporarily fled with their families from Ukraine, addressing their specific educational needs and possibilities to maintain their native language and culture to facilitate their future return to Ukraine; organise training programmes and professional development for teachers in host countries, to address those specific needs;
  - 7.5. co-operate across borders to share best practices and resources in supporting education of children with special educational needs in crisis situations through funding mechanisms, collaborative research and learning initiatives;
  - 7.6. commit to long-term support for the reconstruction and reform of the education system in Ukraine to rebuild infrastructure, institutional capacity, and support education of children with special educational needs.