

CHIEF WP2 Deliverable 2.1

National/Federal Curricula Review Report

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report presents a discussion of the secondary education curriculum in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia, with regard to three particular areas of interest of the CHIEF project: European cultural heritage, cultural knowledge, and participation. The analysis is based on four documents elaborated by the Spanish and the Catalan governments, since the management of the educational system is shared between the Central government and the Autonomous Communities. The Central government first develops a general frame of the school curriculum, then the Catalan government specifies it. Each educational institution further develops the curriculum according to its own pedagogical methods and following the basic criteria and rules set out in the preceding documents. The methodology employed during the analysis of the documents is qualitative content analysis, specifically – inductive coding using NVivo software.

It should be pointed out that the secondary education curriculum in Spain is centred on the development of competencies, and no longer focuses exclusively on the content of subjects, though these continue to feature in it. In compulsory secondary education, the presence of competencies in the curriculum is quite evident, whereas in post-compulsory stages (Vocational Training and *Bachillerato*) it is not so consolidated. Higher importance is given to digital learning and communication skills (including reading habits), the personal and social competences are understood as cross-cutting areas.

In terms of content, with regard to the European dimension and Europe's cultural heritage, Europe is rarely mentioned in the curriculum, mostly – in relation to the Greco-Roman tradition, European art and historical evolution, the social, economic and political systems within the European framework, or the great conflagrations and wars of the twentieth century. The values of tolerance and respect for human rights are also cited as European values to be taught to the pupils. The subjects where references to Europe and its cultural heritage are more present are History and Geography, Citizenship and Values, and Art History (elective in post-compulsory stage). On various occasions, both in compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education, the importance for students to know and internalize the values laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is mentioned.

Culture is understood as both local and global phenomena (in the case of Art History, European) that helps to understand the present through the understanding of the past. The relevance of museums as heritage sites, and the need to promote historical memory in order to gain better knowledge of one's own culture, are also mentioned. The value of learning culture and its roots appears often in the curriculum. The notion of “cultural knowledge” appears in many subjects, as well as during the acquisition of several competencies.

As regards cultural identity, the curriculum stresses the need for students to learn about the local Catalan identity that demonstrates itself in the language, traditions, and symbolic references, and, to a lesser extent, also about the Spanish identity (although the curriculum of the Central government emphasizes more the Spanish identity and the Catalan curriculum, the local Catalan one), within the broader context of Europe, through its own specific referents and writers, artistic expressions, culture, history, or geography. Teaching the ability to understand diverse cultures is also explicitly

mentioned. The curriculum favours an intercultural approach. Specifically, references are often made about how knowledge and respect for identities and minorities that are different from pupils' own are to be acquired through mutual recognition, empathy and knowledge of their distinct characteristics and traditions.

As to the approach to participation, it is conceptualized as the need for students to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to be active citizens of a democratic and global society of XXI century.

An important consistency can be seen between the curriculum analysed in this report and policies analysed in Deliverable 1.2, probably because in many cases the same governments have been responsible for the development of these documents.

The conclusions we can draw is that the secondary education curriculum states the need for students to have a good knowledge of writing skills, critical capacity, digital competences, literary references, and knowledge of local and national history, though less so – European history. There are few allusions to creative cultural practices to be fostered in which students take an active role, and more mentions about engaging them in a relationship with culture (especially the more classical arts) as users and spectators.

Importantly, the educational institutions have the right to finalize the curricula based on the educational strategies they consider most relevant. This opens the door to an important variation between educational institutions, an aspect that it will be relevant while identifying CHIEF's fieldwork sites.

## 2. Formal Educational Context

In Spain, the management of the education system is decentralised. Administration is shared between the Central government (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports) and the authorities of the Autonomous Communities (Departments of Education). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports lays out the Government's general guidelines regarding the educational policy and regulates the basic aspects of the system. The regional education authorities develop the State regulations and have executive and administration competencies for managing the education system within their own territory. The city councils are involved in management of school enrolment and socio-educational activities. Schools have pedagogical, organisational and managerial autonomy to manage their resources and finalize and implement the curriculum. There is also involvement on the part of the educational community (for instance, parents' associations or school councils composed by teachers, administrators, local officials, and parents' representatives) in the schools' (mainly the public ones) organisation, governance, running, and evaluation.

The Spanish Constitution states that public education is to be provided by two kinds of schools: public schools, which depend entirely on public funding and are of public ownership, and so called "concerted" schools, which are property and managed by private institutions and families pay fees but receive some public funding. Many of the concerted schools are owned by Catholic institutions – even though an important part of the pupils do not come from practising Catholic families. There are also a few private schools with no public support whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> According to the Catalan Department of Education, the distribution of compulsory secondary education schools in Catalonia during the academic year 2017-2018 was the following: 580 public schools (52.8%), 489 "concerted" schools (44.5%), and 30 private schools (2.7%) (Catalan Department of Education website<sup>2</sup>). Existence of both public and concerted schools results in a dual school market situation, with a larger cultural diversity of the pupils of the public schools, while the concerted schools have more pupils coming from the middle and upper classes of Spanish/Catalan background (for instance, see Síndic de Greuges, 2016). Of course, this picture varies a lot depending on each school's characteristics, the public resources at each location, and the degree of demographic and social class diversity at the municipal level. In fact, in some cases, school segregation exists within public schools of a same location (Síndic de Greuges 2016).

The Spanish educational system is inclusive up until the end of compulsory secondary school (pupils finish this stage at the age of 16). There are schools (in the majority of cases, these are public schools) that have students with disabilities. There still remain a handful of religious concerted/private schools that offer single-gender education, but these are very few.

In Catalan schools, the main language of teaching and communication is Catalan. It is the language of oral and written activities, teaching materials, textbooks, and learning

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<sup>1</sup> These schools are completely private, receiving no public funding, and they have their own curricula. Many of them are international schools and, in some cases, schools that focus on promoting non-traditional educational methods such as the Waldorf system.

<sup>2</sup> Data available in the statistics section of the website of the Catalan Departement of Education: <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/departament/estadistiques/estadistiques-ensenyament/curs-actual/eso>.

and evaluation activities. Spanish is also taught, and pupils learn both languages perfectly. They also study a foreign language (English being the most common), but they usually don't learn it as well as Catalan or Spanish. In the case of children and teenagers of migrant origin (migration to Catalonia was very important during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), if they have no knowledge of the Catalan language, they will attend a 'host classroom' (*aula d'acollida*) for the first few months, learning as much Catalan as necessary to allow them to keep pace as quickly as possible.

School education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16, and it is free in publicly funded schools. For the children under the age of 6, there is Pre-primary education. Although this is not a compulsory educational stage, the second cycle (3 to 6 years of age) is offered by almost all schools, both public and private. First cycle of Pre-primary education (0 to 3 years) is offered through public or private kindergardens but it is a family option (some families prefer to take care of their children at home).

Secondary compulsory education is divided into two cycles: 1) 12 to 14 years of age (first cycle), and 2) 14 to 16 years of age (second cycle). During this stage, the average number of students in a class is around 30 in Spanish schools. The certificate given at the end of this stage is the Secondary Education Graduate, or *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO)* in Spanish. As said before, this stage is compulsory. Once the student finishes this stage, s/he can either continue studying the Baccalaureate (*Bachillerato*) cycle or go on to intermediate-level Vocational Training. Only those who finish Baccalaureate or Higher Vocational Training can apply to the university. Hence they have the following options:

- 1) Bachelor degree, lasting 2 years. The available subject categories are: Arts, Natural and Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Technology. It is the most popular path for those willing to continue their education at the university.
- 2) Vocational Training will allow a student to study only for specific jobs. It is often the choice for those who prefer a less academic path. This stage is known as *Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio* in Spanish (two years of duration). Upon obtaining this qualification, students are allowed to join the workforce in their field, or they can enrol in Higher Vocational Training programme. From the perspective of the CHIEF project, it is important to bear in mind that not all secondary public schools offer this educational option – in fact, many of the schools included in the CHIEF survey (WP3) do not offer Higher Vocational Training, while those who offer it, the offer is limited to a few fields of study.

The bodies responsible for providing schools with a curriculum are the Central and regional governments, but schools have autonomy in the processes of finalization and implementation of the curriculum (always under supervision by external educational inspectors). In Spain, lessons in secondary schools have been traditionally based on master classes for decades, and this is changin with the new competencies-based approach of the curriculum (explained in the next sections), as master classes are more passive than active and the role of the student is very different. There exists a list of textbooks approved by the educational authorities, of which schools can choose the texbooks, but, overall, texbooks are being used less and less in the last years. Teachers can use other educational materials (procured by themselves, or other types of books, audio-visual material, lab material, Internet resources, etc.). Thus, there is a lot of

diversity between and within schools. The development of new technologies, and an increasing tendency to work for projects, as well as pedagogical approaches in which the student has more active roles (for instance, the case of the network of schools *Escola Nova XXI*)<sup>3</sup>, can partially explain the trend of decreasing use of textbooks. Textbooks are used more in the *Bachillerato* courses, where students who want to go to the University must pass the Aptitude Test for University Access (*PAU*).

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<sup>3</sup> *Escola Nova XXI* is an alliance of schools and other public and civil society institutions for an advanced education system. It responds to UNESCO's call for the participation of all sectors in an inclusive process to improve education. In fact, the Department of Education of the Generalitat of Catalonia stated in December, 2018 that all schools should follow the path of teaching transformation led by the *Escola Nova XXI*. For more information on this experience see: <https://www.escolanova21.cat/english>.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Selection

We have selected 4 documents, shown in Appendix 1. Two of them are Central government-level documents (documents 1 and 4) and two are regional-level documents (documents 2 and 3). The *Generalitat*, the regional governing institution, in accordance with the provisions of article 131.3.c of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, shares a competency for establishing the study programmes for secondary education, including how the curriculum is arranged. The curriculum attains its most developed stage at the regional level, but we have thought it necessary to include the Central-level documents as well, as they establish the common framework for all Spanish regions.

The documents have been accessed from the websites of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the Catalan Education Department. Since we are considering interviewing during our fieldwork students of the ages 16 to 18 who are attending vocational training, we have also considered documents related to this stage. However, the vocational education curriculum is very technical. There are no longer such subjects as history, literature, civic education, philosophy, or arts. Hence, we have decided only to include the general framework at the Spanish level (Document 4).

Within the context of our reality, a multidimensional understanding of the curriculum is quite in order. The definition of curriculum used by the educational authorities was established by the Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3rd on Education (*LOE*). This law defined a curriculum as “the set of objectives, basic competencies, contents, pedagogical methods, and evaluation criteria for each of the different cycles” (art. 6). It is the same definition that the Catalan government used in 2008 in Document 3. Later on, in 2014, the Spanish authorities used a much vaguer definition of curriculum: “the regulation of the elements that determine the teaching and learning processes for each of the educational stages” (Document 1). In view of this complexity, we have decided to focus exclusively on competencies and contents for our analysis of the curriculum, instead of on the evaluation process, for example.

As regards grades, we concentrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades of ESO, *Bachillerato*, and Vocational Training. It should be kept in mind that teachers in each school and course have to follow the legal prescriptions set by the Central and regional laws (the documents that we have analysed), but they are free to arrange the contents and select the types of material to use.

#### 3.2 Review

We used NVivo software for the content analysis of the curricula presented in the four sources mentioned above. The coding was carried out mainly by one person although another person of the CHIEF team coded, at the beginning of the process, some parts of the documents of the Catalan curriculum to ensure consistency. The two researchers regularly discussed the coding process. The approach involved looking at the curriculum as looking mainly for references on participation, European and local cultural heritages, cultural knowledge, cultural literacy, identity, and citizenship. We analysed the data inductively. Finally, it should be noted that among the four sources analysed, as

was expected, the two texts that offer more information relevant to the purpose of this report are the *ESO* and *Bachillerato* curricula developed by the Catalan government (Documents 2 and 3 of Appendix 1). The other two documents elaborated by the Central government are much shorter and define only a few general points. The document that adds almost no information to the analysis is the one that deals with Vocational Training (Document 4).



## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

In this section we present the results of our analysis of the secondary education curriculum in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia, in keeping with the research objectives of the CHIEF project. The analysis focuses on interpreting how the curriculum makes references to three dimensions or areas of interest: first, the European cultural heritage and its relationship with the Catalan and Spanish local cultural heritages, centring on cultural identity and diversity; secondly, how cultural knowledge and the dominant concept of culture are understood and presented in the curriculum; and, finally, how participation and learning-by-doing is considered among students.

Before presenting the main results, it is important to bear in mind that the curriculum in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia, is based on competencies. In other words, rather than emphasising the contents and their memorisation, the proposal favours the learning of competencies. This approach is much more evident in compulsory secondary education (known as *ESO*) than in Vocational Training or in *Bachillerato*, the latter two being post-compulsory secondary educational studies, as was explained in Section 2. In the case of *ESO*, it is explicitly stated that the curriculum should contribute to the achievement of key competencies, and it is for this purpose that the *ESO* curriculum includes all of the basic competencies of the subjects grouped by areas of knowledge, contents, pedagogical methods, and evaluation criteria related to this stage. In this approach, basic competencies become end-of-stage learning objectives. Consequently, the curricula of different courses are structured according to the following structure: the basic competences, the content and the criteria of evaluation. The fields of knowledge are groupings of subjects that share basic competences, contents and methodological orientations.

In all analysed texts, it is expected that key competencies will develop the ability to use knowledge and skills associated with different kinds of knowledge, in an interactive way, which implies a distinct understanding, reflection, and discernment with regard to each contextualized situation. This understanding, once students attain it, can be applied to other life situations. There are several competencies that are to be understood as cross-cutting. First, there is the communicative competency as a basic factor in the development and acquisition of key competencies in all subjects. In this context—and closely related to cultural literacy mechanisms—reading and consolidating a reading habit is a shared responsibility related to every subject in secondary education. Secondly, there is the acquisition of digital competency and the consequent responsible exercise of citizenship, which involves awareness of their own digital identity and that of others, safeguarding personal data, and the use of images. Lastly, several competencies in the personal and social spheres are referred to as cross-cutting, such as working in groups cooperatively, initiative, creativity, critical thinking, empathy and understanding of the others, tolerance, and so forth.

The example of secondary compulsory education (*ESO*) helps understand the approach of the curriculum. The *ESO* curriculum groups the various subjects into areas of knowledge that are expected to achieve certain competencies, as shown in Table 1. In the last column, the relevance of different subjects to the CHIEF's research questions

has been assessed considering the amount of nodes and quotes results of the coding using the following categories: no relevance; little relevance, fair relevance and high relevance.

**Table 1. Subjects and areas of knowledge of the *ESO* curriculum in Catalonia**

Areas	Subjects	Proximity to 'cultural literacy'/ CHIEF interests
1.Linguistic	Literature and Catalan language Literature and Spanish language Aranès language Foreign languages Latin	Fair relevance
2.Mathematics	Mathematics Applied academic mathematics	No relevance
3.Science-technology	Natural sciences: physics and chemistry Natural sciences: biology and geology Natural sciences: applied to professional activity Technology Information and communication technologies (computer science) Scientific culture Physics and chemistry, and sciences applied to professional activity Biology and geology, and sciences applied to professional activity Information and communication technologies and other technologies (information technology)	Little relevance
4.Social	Social sciences: geography and history Classical culture Entrepreneurship Economy Economy and entrepreneurship	High relevance
5.Artistic	Music Visual and plastic arts education Performing arts and dance	Fair relevance
6.Physical education	Physical education	No relevance
7.Culture and values	Culture and ethical values Philosophy Religion	Fair relevance
8.Digital	Cross-curricular in all subjects	Fair relevance
9. Individual and social	Cross-curricular in all subjects	High relevance

The analysis of the curricula will be presented below focusing on CHIEF project's three main areas of interest: European cultural heritage, cultural knowledge and participation.

#### 4.2. European cultural heritage

Explicit references to Europe as a cultural reference and to its cultural heritage are not very abundant in comparison with the weight given to local history and cultural heritage in the curriculum. However, there are several findings that are worth highlighting. In the first place, the subject matters in which the curriculum states that students should

acquire a certain depth of knowledge about Europe and its cultural heritage are History and Geography, Art History (optional in *Bachillerato*), and Classical Culture (optional in *Bachillerato*). In the curriculum sections corresponding to Literature, Foreign languages, Culture, and Ethical Values (compulsory secondary education) there are also explicit references to Europe as a cultural basis, but in a more residuary way.

Secondly, the concept of cultural heritage as included in the secondary compulsory education curriculum is explicitly defined as follows: “Cultural heritage is a collective heritage and a valuable resource that extends from the past to the future, building relations between the different generations and helping to configure identities. In addition, it is as an anchor for memory. Every element that becomes a cultural heritage must turn into a profitable economic resource in order to be able to guarantee its conservation, preservation, and dissemination and to foster the economic development of the area.” A concept that is related to historical memory, and also, somehow unexpectedly, to economic development, is thus presented. Moreover, the pedagogical use of the heritage (for an example see the next quotation), as it appears in the curriculum has the additional goal of helping pupils understand current societies as a historical process. Cultural heritage is understood as a non-static and dynamic concept (in other words, cultural heritage is interpreted depending on the current context and not as a part of the past history) in which pupils should learn “to value the cultural heritage as an inheritance received from the past, to defend its preservation, and to encourage future generations to make it their own.” It is also mentioned that it can help strengthen the culture and values of democratic citizenship, promote the role of cohesion and consensus in the construction of identity, and be used as an instrument for cultural renewal. Finally, the curriculum mentions the need for working on the defence, protection, and dissemination of the historical and artistic heritage, in reference to the local level, where museums are presented as the main institutions in the field.

In the third place, how European cultural heritage is understood and presented in these documents and what connections are found to exist with the local one (in particular, Spanish/Catalan cultural references and heritages) has to do with a positive understanding not only of the closer cultural environment, but also of the reference represented by Europe at the historic, geographic, political, economic, or social levels. Europe is presented as reference framework for the development of Catalan and Spanish democratic political and economic systems. There is a lack of critical vision of the role of Europe in history. In several cases, the mention of a specific learning topic (for instance, in the geographical, political, or economic areas) appears within an ordered framework that goes from the smaller to the bigger areas: Catalonia, Spain, Europe, and the world. This may imply a sense of integration for students. Catalonia and Spain is studied as a part of Europe and the world. Hence, Catalonia and Spain are part of the European heritage, as is mentioned several times more or less explicitly, although this implies a combined focus on the local and particular Catalan cultural heritage (in the Catalan documents). For instance, in the *ESO* curriculum (for History and Geography) it is formulated that “students should analyse different models of political, economic and territorial organization, and the inequalities that they generate, in order to assess how they affect people's lives and make proposals for taking action. To achieve this, they must have basic and relevant knowledge about the model of political and economic organization of our country, the countries within our broader sphere (European Union), and the models of other countries and international organizations.”

Coherently with the above, Geography in *Bachillerato* adopts the working perspective of a regional geography where Catalonia and Spain are part of Europe and of the world. To quote its words, “today, places and regions can no longer be considered as unique, nor unique realities, and cannot be studied in isolation: the globalization and cosmopolitanism that characterize today's society make it necessary for a recurring game of combining multiple scales in order to understand and interpret the complex combination of geographical factors.” Catalonia and Spain are seen as integrated inside an increasingly globalized world, and numerous political, economic, financial, social, and cultural decisions are taken on a supranational scale, often within the framework of the European Union, of which the Spanish State is a member.

As to the topics studied, the History curriculum (in both *ESO* and *Bachillerato*) includes the following in relation to the European historical and cultural legacy: the social, political, and economic evolution of Europe in the Modern Era; the evolution of the different monarchies; the Protestant Reform and the Counter-Reformation; the religious conflicts and the understanding of the world economy, and of Europe in particular; other historical processes such as the transition from feudalism to liberalism in Western Europe; the Industrial Revolution in England and its impact on the rest of Europe; the liberal revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and the workers’ movements. Moreover, in the last year of compulsory education, and more extensively during *Bachillerato*, the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the main events in Europe during that period are studied in depth: the First and Second World Wars; the interwar period (1918-1939); the Russian Revolution; the causes and consequences of World War II and the Holocaust; the Cold War and the process of decolonization. Finally, the European Union and its institutions are studied, almost as the final part of the common history, giving particular stress to the incorporation of Spain in the EU (1986). A common approach is to understand history by looking at the existing links between the past and the present, as well as the changes and continuities from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Europe.

#### 4. 3. Cultural knowledge

Several mentions are made in the curriculum about the learning of culture and its roots. Cultural knowledge appears in many subject areas, as well as in the acquisition process of several competencies. More specifically, regarding the socio-cultural dimension, in *ESO* it is said that pupils should “understand and value our world according to the cultural roots that have shaped it, and configure the way of living in and understanding the world according to the system of values and the major stories that penetrate the diverse fields of culture: language, science, law, religion, the arts, etc.” Some of the key contents mentioned in this field bear relation to the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian and the Enlightenment period worldviews of: a) the world, b) human beings, c) history, and d) the divinity. Although there are references to other cultures or worldviews (Buddhism and Islam, for instance), Euro-centrism is quite noticeable.

As regards the artistic and cultural dimension, in Social Sciences (History and Geography) and the Arts we see that an understanding of culture is being developed with relation to a sense of belonging and the cultural heritage: “Learning that relates to the cultural dimension has the objective of making known, understanding, interpreting and critically evaluating different cultural and artistic manifestations, using them as a

source of enrichment and enjoyment, and considering them as part of the cultural heritage of the people.” This dimension encompasses the understanding and analysis of the cultural fact embodied by Spain and Catalonia, the contributions from other societies and civilizations, the educational value of the cultural heritage, and the enrichment that has paved the way to exchanges with different realities and worldviews.

The curriculum also raises the need for pupils to look on cultural and religious diversity as a wealth for societies, and to adopt a certain cultural relativism. In Geography and History, the study of the demographic, economic, social, political, and cultural features of the Catalan, Spanish, European, and world societies is mentioned as forming part of this way of thinking. Students should learn not only what migrations are, but also how they should be understood. Within this framework, concepts such as personal and collective identities and belonging and social cohesion are worked upon. The conceptualisation of cultural identity and diversity under an intercultural approach appears relatively often in the curriculum. Cultural studies and intercultural education have their origin precisely in a vindication of cultural diversity in the face of the systematic deprivation of rights affecting cultural minorities. Intercultural education “is based on diversity as a positive value, not centred on the difference and the static nature of cultural identities, but on the process of permanent dialogue between individuals and groups” (Carbó, 2015: 15). For instance, in compulsory secondary education (*ESO*), it is said that cultural diversity and identity should be taught with the purpose of making pupils learn “to live and inhabit in a complex and plural world, (...) it is necessary to create cohesive communities where it is possible to respect one’s own identity and value diversity as a general wealth. This objective is only possible if students are trained to identify and reject irrational and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes against people and groups, if they overcome stereotypes and prejudices, and if civic attitudes are adopted in social life.” Within this framework is argued the importance of paying special attention to gender discrimination and cultural, religious, and social minorities.

In order to develop attitudes of active respect towards cultural and other diversities, the curriculum focuses, among other aspects, on the development of an interpersonal dimension. Specifically, the need for promoting attitudes of active respect and tolerance towards other people, cultures, options, and beliefs should be worked upon in the classroom. Key contents in this area are: human dignity and respect; considerations on equality; cultural, political, religious and other pluralities; diversity of identities; differences and their contexts; universal values and shared values; the areas of action of power and violence; and attitudes of tolerance, solidarity and commitment, as well as their external manifestations. Apart from this, the competencies as regards the geographical dimension “must make it possible for citizens to adapt to the spaces where their daily lives are carried out and to appreciate landscapes and cultures that are different from their own.”

This intercultural approach that is present in the curriculum makes combined references to the formation of one’s own thoughts, the historical conscience, and the construction of one’s own identity. As mentioned several times in History and Geography, “the fact of historical thinking implies knowing the members of a group with whom a history, a territory, traditions, and a certain vision of the world are shared, open to others.” This competency also implies understanding of and respect for plurality and social and cultural diversity within the framework of democratic institutions.

The curriculum also makes explicit references to the artistic and cultural dimensions as competencies to be learnt. The artistic dimension must be taught because “it also implies an attitude of appreciation of creativity in the expression of ideas, experiences or feelings through different artistic media, or criticism against power, as well as a recognition of the different forms acquired by the so-called popular traditional arts, which provide the best knowledge about what were once the most widespread customs, values, and beliefs and have become a sign of a collective identity.” Students should be able to develop a competency for understanding cultural manifestations and actions and relate them to their creators and their age, and to interpret the various worldviews and their purpose. Such competency “refers to the knowledge of the different cultural manifestations and the abilities that must be developed in order to be able to interpret, appreciate, and enjoy them.”

Despite this, a focus on local identity is still noticeable. In the process of learning cultural competencies, it is said, pupils must learn to “value their own cultural expressions, to promote the construction of personal identity in a global and diverse world, and to value the cultural manifestations of Catalan identity in the framework of a global and interrelated world.” This competency is intended to promote an attitude that will encourage the implicit creativity involved in the expression of ideas, experiences or feelings through different means, languages, and resources, such as music, literature, cinema, the plastic and scenic arts, or the different forms acquired by popular culture.

According to the curriculum, the learning of foreign languages during secondary education has two main objectives, which have to do with cultural knowledge and learning. First, students should be able to critically value different arts and cultural expressions pertaining to other social and linguistic communities, in order to gain a better understanding of other cultures. And second, students should appreciate the richness of the world’s multilingual and multicultural reality, as well as the consequences that this language diversity has on business, trade, sciences, personal relationships, and so forth.

With respect to the subject of Literature (particularly at *Bachillerato* level), what is highlighted is the consolidation of autonomy in reading and the appreciation of literature as a discipline that can be part of the future daily life of pupils as adults. In *Bachillerato*, students should get acquainted with literary texts from other worlds, times, and cultures by reading complete works and fragments representative of the production of different authors, movements, and periods. In our case in point, there are abundant references to foreign classical literature (most of the European literature) from Classical Greek to medieval, and from Renaissance to contemporary literature. In the curriculum are explicitly mentioned the following authors (writers of novels, poetry, or drama), many of whom populate the European context: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Montaigne, Voltaire, Rousseau, Schiller, Goethe, Hölderlin, Leopardi, Baudelaire, Stendhal, Balzac, Zola, Flaubert, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Dickens, Stevenson, E. Brontë, H. James, Poe, Melville, Conrad, Mark Twain, Valéry, Rilke, T. S. Eliot, Pessoa, Kavafis, Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Th. Mann, Faulkner, V. Woolf, Ibsen, Chekhov, Brecht, and Beckett.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Latin and Greek are optional subjects in non-compulsory secondary education (*Bachillerato*), and nowadays few students take them. In any case, beyond all lexical and grammatical knowledge, in the curriculum there are

no explicit references to aspects we might associate with cultural literacy or cultural knowledge.

#### 4.4. Participation

The concept of participation, and of all that it entails as a learning process among students, appears very often in the curriculum, especially under the competencies approach. However, it features more evidently in the curricula of *ESO* and *Bachillerato*, and much less so in the general framework document intended for Vocational Training. Our main interest lies in cultural participation, given the CHIEF's research questions, but here we discuss how participation is dealt with in general –that is, how it shows up in the curriculum–, since cultural participation can be understood as a specific dimension of a broader way of understanding participation. The elements of participation that appear most frequently in our analysis of the curricula are the following.

First, a conceptualization of participation in which students have to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become active citizens of a democratic and global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The *ESO* curriculum states: “The exercise of citizenship means having the skills to live in society by exercising, in an autonomous manner, the rights and duties that belong to a democratic society and undertake its defence in order to help generate such values as cooperation, solidarity, commitment, and participation. Thus, initiatives for planning, decision-making, organization, and assumption of responsibilities are fostered, assuming progressively and reflectively the exercise of their freedom, rights, and individual and collective duties in a climate of respect towards other people.” As regards contents, the students should learn about how the democratic system works; citizen participation mechanisms; the challenges of current democracies; human rights; situations of inequality and discrimination; and peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. In fact, references to peace culture as a learning subject appear on many occasions in the curriculum.

Moreover, the learning of participation is also linked to what is needed in order to be a critical and active citizen, as well as the development of personal identity and belonging. In the part about citizenship as a value for students to learn in *ESO* we find the following: “The competencies pertaining to this dimension contribute to the formation of a democratic, critical, and committed citizenry through the improvement of society and the environment, insofar as this favours the exercise of the rights, duties, and responsibilities that derive from the human rights. Democratic awareness is enhanced by the development of critical, creative, and alternative thinking in social action and commitment; and this is also the case with personal identity and the feeling of belonging.” It should be noted that much mention is made, both in compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education, about the need for students to know and internalize the values laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Secondly, in order to be able to participate in society, we know that certain attitudes and skills must be acquired. There are two groups of skills that appear consistently in the curriculum regarding various competencies and subject matters. On the one hand, students have to learn critical thinking and deliberation. In this context, the curriculum raises the need for students to form themselves proper criteria for relevant social problems in order to develop critical thinking. More specifically, the *ESO* curriculum

states that “21<sup>st</sup> century citizens must be able to respond to the problems of a complex society, and for this reason an essential part of their training must contribute to constructing a critical thinking that allows them, based on the knowledge acquired and information from different sources, to analyse systematically, critically, and reflectively the facts and the social phenomena, and thus form their own well-founded opinions and become responsible and committed citizens, both individually and collectively.” To that purpose, interpretation, argumentation, a rich vocabulary, communication skills, deliberation, capacity to critically analyse several sources and so forth, should be learnt by pupils. On the other hand, it is stated several times that students should be able to work in teams and in a cooperative and creative way, for the purpose, among other things, of promoting their active participation as citizens with a civic-commitment attitude, in order to improve the democratic quality of our society.

Thirdly, participation is also mentioned in the curriculum in relation to the promotion of certain values and attitudes of openness to dialogue, of respect and listening to others, of empathy and assertiveness, and of anti-discrimination attitudes. Specific examples are the study of women’s reality and their presence in history, and the existence of gender inequality, and also the understanding of collective and personal identities and of other identities, as well as the sense of belonging. In the case of *Bachillerato*, the subject matters of philosophy and citizenship (the latter a subject that it was introduced in the curriculum in the last decade and students can optionally study it) are intended to develop the social and civic competencies that relate to participation and the social dimension of human behaviour, “namely, living in a globalized society, to be understanding towards others in a world where the exchange and mobility of people involves contact with people of different physical condition, both mental and cultural, to receive training in the democratic values and to exercise these constantly in practice.”



## 5. Discussion

After having analysed how the topics of European/local cultural heritage, cultural knowledge, and participation feature in the curriculum for secondary education in Catalonia and Spain, in this section we will discuss the findings as considered from two main perspectives. On the one hand, the competencies-centred approach of the curriculum and its main goals in terms of learning life-relevant skills, attitudes, and behaviours useful for living in society, thinking critically and become an engaged citizen. On the other hand, we will compare these findings with the main findings of the Catalan/Spanish cultural and educational policies presented in D1.2, and find out any (in)consistency between them.

To start with, one first reflexion is that the curriculum is quite ambitious and full of good intentions with respect to the development of pupils' social, cultural, and digital competencies, as well as values of and also in certain areas such as interculturalism, participation, respect, empathy, tolerance, and so forth. Achievement of these life-learning goals is very challenging if we consider our social reality and the experiences and resources of many teachers. Competency in the fields of communication, digital knowledge, cooperation between students, fostering of creativity, and critical thinking requires a lot of effort (and knowledge and experience) on the teachers' part, as well as support in the form of different kinds of resources. As was mentioned before, lessons in secondary schools have been traditionally based on master classes for decades, and this will all change with the new competencies-based approach, as master classes are more passive than active and the role of the student changes.

In the aspects such as the promotion of participation and the learning of the skills and values for shaping future critical and participatory citizens, as well as intercultural learning and tolerance towards minorities, the curriculum appears to be progressive and very ambitious in scope. Here again, the application of the curriculum to the educational reality is much more complex. Catalan/Spanish society is not that much engaged (see, for instance, Ferrer-Fons, 2005; Morales and Mota 2006), nor are the teachers accustomed to work in the way proposed by the curriculum. In fact, master classes continue to be very frequent in many schools, although there is an ongoing process of pedagogical transformation, with examples of good practices cropping up, such as Catalonia's *Escola Nova XXI*.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, it must also be taken into account that the secondary compulsory education curriculum is relatively new, especially the approach that focuses on competencies; and research about how this approach may impact the acquisition of values and shaping behaviour of the students is still scarce. The inclusion of key competencies in the curriculum for general education in Spain was an important novelty brought about by the 2006 Education Act. Although the term had already been in use in the field of vocational training for a long time, only in the last decade was it gradually transferred to the vocabulary of general education. The concerns expressed by the international organisations in charge of evaluating educational results was one of the prominent factors that explain such a development. In 2006, the European Union recommended to its member states the incorporation of key competencies into their curriculum for

general education. Once they were incorporated in the curriculum for primary and secondary education following the requirement of the Education Act, the main regulations that shaped the national core curriculum were developed define them. Through this process, they indeed became an integral part of the common core curriculum for Spanish schools. The focus on key competencies implies a revision of other components of the curriculum, namely that of teaching and learning methodologies and students' assessment. Moreover, it forces to pay special attention to non-formal learning and to the impact of school organisation and climate (Tiana Ferrer, 2011). In this sense, it is important to notice that in the Spanish and Catalan case, the educational institutions develop the curriculum which forms part of its educational project. The organization of classroom activities and the operation of schools, the forms of relationship and communication established among the educational community, and also the relationship with the environment, all these may or may not contribute to the acquisition of key competencies.

Having said that, it is true that the competencies approach can be an opportunity for engaging in more practical ways of learning, and for developing skills that can be useful for increasing cultural literacy. In this respect, we may quote the PhD dissertation of Carbó (2015). She posits that the focus on competencies in the new school curriculum opens an opportunity for cultural education. The competencies defined as cross-sectional are those that are directly related to cultural diversity and education. They include, among others, artistic and cultural competencies, as well as communication competencies. This represents a change, since cultural education did not use to be understood in a cross-sectional way in Spain and Catalonia, where it had often been strictly associated with purely artistic competency.

We turn now to recounting the main findings presented in section 4, in comparison with the Catalan/Spanish cultural and educational policies discussed in D1.2, so that we may analyse the degree of (in)consistency between them. In this regard, the two sets of documents are consistent in many of the fields that we have discussed, particularly in the curriculum's intercultural education approach and the policies related to the preservation of historical memory and cultural legacy.

The strong emphasis on intercultural diversity and the acceptance of minority groups and other cultures in the curriculum is in coherence with some policy actions in these issues. For instance, as mentioned in the D1.2 for the Spanish/Catalan case, on the one hand, the policy documents highlight the importance attached to promoting the Spanish/Catalan culture. This is outlined in the Spanish Constitution and reflected in projects that promote the Catalan language and culture. At the same time, the need for an "intercultural framework" is highlighted and many documents advocate the importance of community cohesion among people from diverse backgrounds.

In the policy texts (especially those of the Catalan government), national identity is the dominant paradigm. It is true that the need to respect and integrate students from diverse cultural backgrounds is considered, but it is difficult to see how this can be operationalized within the classroom, beyond a theoretical discourse about respect for different cultures. With regard to the cultural content imparted by the school, there is not clear commitment to culture as a field of creation for the young people themselves. In the Catalan policy documents analysed culture is seen very unidirectionally, based on

very ethereal principles and very general values: democracy, freedom, solidarity, respect. This, again, is reflected in the curriculum.

The official Catalan documents define the Catalan culture as a national culture, with its own symbolic references approved by the Parliament of Catalonia (the flag, the hymn, and the national day), which are under the same legal protection as the national symbols of Spain. Cultural heritage is understood, then, as one that belongs to a national culture with its own language and its own symbols. At the same time, there is a recognition of the cultural diversity of Catalan society, which includes the Spanish language and culture, preserved by the institutional framework of the State. There is no specific policy for the Spanish language in Catalonia, as it is understood that this is to be developed by the State itself, insofar as it is the official language of Spain, known by all citizens. In the analysis of the curriculum, the educational discourse combines the affirmation of the Catalan national identity (and to lesser extent, the Spanish culture) with a respect towards cultural diversity and non-Catalan national identities.

In the period under study, new communication technologies have been incorporated into the the tools that are likely to be used at schools as part of the learning processes and training for self-expression. According to the Catalan Law on Education: “Apart from their specific treatment in some of the subject areas of the cycle, reading comprehension, oral and written expression, audio-visual communication, Information Technology and Communication, entrepreneurship, and civic and constitutional education will be cross-sectional in all of the subjects”.<sup>5</sup> The new communication technologies and the need for pupils to learn cross-sectional digital competencies are clearly mentioned in the four curricula documents analysed. In the official Catalan policy texts, emphasis is placed on learning communication and information technologies, which are considered fundamental for training people in today's society and for their future employment. This is one of the goals of the curriculum, and is mentioned several times in the introductory part when referring to the general goals of secondary education.

Another aspect that has been incorporated since 2007 into education is the memory of the recent past, understood as a collective heritage. Following the 2007 Law on the Democratic Memorial (Law 13/2007, of October 31, on the Democratic Memorial), history and memory became a relevant part of cultural literacy education. The Democratic Memorial is an institution that works for the recovery and historical reparation of the victims of the Civil War and Francoism, and promotes the knowledge about the Political Transition in Catalonia. The organization's work has important educational aspects at schools. In Catalonia, pupils visit many exhibitions organised by the Democratic Memorial.

As mentioned in the Deliverable 1.2, reading is one of the instruments for the cultural socialization of the population in Spain, especially of children and young people. In the Reading Plan of Catalonia 2020, reading is placed within the context of the “shock waves” of the European cultural transformations. According to the findings of the PISA report (mentioned in the Reading Plan of Catalonia 2020), compared to 2012, reading comprehension of the Catalan students has diminished in 2015. The Reading Plan's goal is to help increase the reading comprehension of the Catalan students. The laws and

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<sup>5</sup> See the Organic Law 8, 2013, for the Improvement of Educational Quality.

plans for the promotion of reading emphasize the role of schools, holding them responsible for the attainment of the objectives that involve the promotion of reading habits through their libraries and curricula. The importance of reading and the consolidation of a reading habit is also mentioned in introductory parts of all of the documents analysed for this report.

The policy documents also mention that museums are among the institutions that “extend” culture beyond the school, or just accompany formal education as a complement. A local museum is understood to be a resource at the service of a community, by means of which the latter can express itself culturally. Museums are conceived as active spaces of culture and education, which at the same time serve to preserve “the heritage and memory of the country” (Plan of Museums of Catalonia 2030). Museums are considered under a similar light in the curriculum, and presented as reference institutions.

Last but not least, the principle of taking part in the cultural life is also mentioned in the policy documents, and it can be considered that a highly inclusive component is expressed in the measure that promotes the inclusion of those specific sectors of the population that, for different reasons (age, social class), have been excluded from access to culture or are not being recognized, as is the case with women. While the curriculum often mentions that students should learn about participation to become engaged citizens, it has no references to participation in the cultural life. Students should be familiar with various artworks and be able to understand those, but the approach found in the curriculum focuses more on their role as cultural consumers than as participants or creators.

## 6. Conclusion

In this report we have offered an analysis of the curricula for secondary education in Catalonia with special emphasis on how three broad aspects are presented: the European cultural heritage, and how it relates to local heritage and history; the references to the role of culture and the cultural knowledge that students have to acquire; and the importance of cultural and civic participation and related skills. The first conclusion is that the competencies-centred approach of the curriculum and its ambitions in terms of life-learning skills, attitudes, and behaviours present a challenge in its practical application, but this is also an opportunity. It is an important shift of paradigm in the Catalan secondary education, and there are yet no studies that can evaluate its effect on the pupils.

Secondly, Europe is studied as a cultural, geographical, political, and economic referent, leading to the curriculum's Eurocentrism. However, Europe, and the areas of it that are studied, is shown almost always in relation to Catalonia (and to a lesser extent, Spain), and not so much as an entity on its own – the main exceptions being a few historical events and processes, and major writers. The subject areas that have the most references to Europe's cultural heritage are History, Geography, History of Art, Classical Culture, and Catalan and Spanish Literatures.

Thirdly, there are several mentions in the curriculum about the learning of culture and its roots. Cultural knowledge appears in many subject areas, as well as in the process of acquisition of several competencies. Moreover, the curriculum states that students must be familiar with the community in which they live – the Catalan one in our case, – and be able to integrate in this community's life, but this is combined with a strong plea for intercultural education and respect towards other communities and identities.

In terms of the relationship between the curriculum and the policies analysed in D1.2 at the cultural and educational level, there is an important consistency between the approaches, probably because in many cases the same governments have been responsible for the development of these documents. Importantly, the educational institutions have the autonomy to develop the curriculum further, based on the educational strategies they consider most relevant, and this is something that opens the door to an important variation between the schools, an aspect that it will be relevant to identify schools for CHIEF's fieldwork.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the fact that the curriculum does establish the framework for the teaching approaches and the contents used for secondary education, but there are other factors affecting the implementation of the curriculum in the classrooms. To mention some of these factors: the social and economic context in which each school operates, the tension between public-oriented education and private education the Spanish model, and the characteristics of each educational institution having an influence on how the curriculum prescriptions are implemented in the given school.

The overall conclusion we can draw is that the Catalan secondary education curriculum states the need for students to have a good writing skills, strong reading habits, critical capacity, a digital literacy, literary references, and knowledge of regional and national (Spanish) history, though less so – the European one. There are few allusions to creative cultural practices to be fostered in which students take an active role, and more expectations of their cultural engagement (especially when it comes to classical arts) as users and spectators.

## 7. References

### Deliverable 1.2. CHIEF HOW IS QUOTED?

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Tiana Ferrer, A. (2011) “Análisis de las competencias básicas como núcleo curricular en la educación obligatoria española.” *Bordón* 63 (1): 63-75.

Appendix 1: Summary of Reviewed Documents

<b>Partner: UPF</b> Barcelona (Spain/Catalonia)				
<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type</b>
1.	Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato	2014	Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry of Culture, Education and Sports)	Spanish State, curriculum, <i>ESO</i> and <i>Bachillerato</i> , ages 12-18
2.	Decret 187/2015, de 25 d'agost, d'ordenació dels ensenyaments de l'educació secundària obligatòria	2015	Departament d'ensenyament, XTEC-Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya <a href="http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/">http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/</a> (Catalan Education Department)	Catalan government, curriculum, <i>ESO</i> , ages 12-15
3.	Decret 142/2008, de 15 de juliol, pel qual s'estableix l'ordenació dels ensenyaments de batxillerat.	2008	Departament d'ensenyament, XTEC-Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya <a href="http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/">http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/</a> (Catalan Education Department)	Catalan government, curriculum, <i>Bachillerato</i> , ages 16-18
4.	Real Decreto 1147/2011, de 29 de julio, por el que se establece la ordenación general de la formación profesional del sistema educativo	2011	Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry of Culture, Education and Sports)	Spanish State, Vocational Training (age 16 and over)