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Contents

	Page
Editorial	1
The Shoah: teaching the unspeakable	2
Bosnia - the way back	3
School exchanges – key to contact	4
Bringing young Europeans together - the "Europe at School" competition	5
Cross-frontier connections: the modern languages project	6
Modern languages «New-style» workshops	7
Higher education - giving everyone a chance	8
Human rights: respecting diversity	9
Civic education – the new priorities	10
Parliamentary Assembly: backing education and young people as part of the Middle East peace process	11
In brief	11
Education diary	12
Publications	12

Editorial

The theme of this number of the Newsletter is our work on the European dimension of education, in particular modern languages, civic education, history, school links and exchanges, and the Europe at School Activity.

In the past few years, there has been a sea-change in thinking about the European dimension of education. For a long time, it was seen as a simple "education for reconciliation and better understanding". It had little official recognition, and it interested only a few idealists and pioneers.

Today its importance is fully recognised by Ministries of Education and the European Institutions. It is a dynamic evolving concept which is concerned with the preparation of our young people for life in a democratic, multilingual, multicultural and increasingly complex Europe. The European dimension of education has significant implications not only for the content of curricula but also for school organisation, school-leaving examinations, guidance, extra-curricular activities, inter-university co-operation, the mobility of students and academics, and the sharing of educational research.

The importance of the European dimension for education policies is illustrated by the fact that the Council of Europe's Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education chose it as the main theme of one of its recent sessions.

Work, study and leisure in Europe, the Ministers pointed out, are increasingly characterised by mobility, interchange and communication. European contacts, partnerships and co-operation are now an integral part of the daily lives of governments, business people, trade unionists, professional groups and private citizens.

The Ministers recommended that, in these circumstances, education should:

- increase awareness of the growing unity between the countries and peoples of Europe and of the establishment of their relations on a new basis;
- foster understanding of the fact that, in many spheres of our lives, the European perspective applies and European decisions are necessary.

On the other hand, young people should not lose sight of their national, regional and local roots or of their global responsibilities. Schemes to develop the European dimension of education should not, in turn, promote selfish, inward-looking or Eurocentric attitudes. As the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has recommended, education systems should encourage young Europeans to "see themselves as citizens not only of their own region and country but also as citizens of Europe and of the wider world".

Maitland Stobart

The Shoah: teaching the unspeakable

Different countries – different needs and approaches

How should history teachers deal with the Shoah in countries where the Nazi occupation, the collaboration which often went with it and an anti-Semitism, which has not always disappeared, led to the systematic extermination of Jewish communities? Hard enough to answer in the countries of Western Europe, where it has at least been considered, the question is even more painful in Central and Eastern Europe.

From 16-20 September, the European Centre for Research and Action on Racism and Anti-Semitism (CERA) organised a seminar on the subject in Cracow and Warsaw for secondary school history teachers. The Council of Europe, which has long been alive to the problems of teaching history in Europe (forty-four countries are at present involved in its programmes in this area), was represented by Maitland Stobart, its Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport. Cracow, which once had a large Jewish community, hosted the "methods" part of the seminar, which was attended by teachers from ten Central and Eastern European countries. Visits to the extermination camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka were organised. CERA should shortly be holding a seminar on the same theme in Russia.

A necessary reform in the teaching of history

When communism lost its hold and liberalisation set in, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

launched sweeping reforms of their education systems. One of the first priorities was history teaching, long a prey to certain taboos. The Shoah, in particular, was hard to deal with under communism, as the different shapes and forms of collaboration made the study of the second world war a particularly delicate subject. The resurgence of anti-Semitism in new and insidious forms and, above all, the denial of past atrocities current in right-wing extremist circles (and even some universities) make it essential to explain this period as objectively as possible: confusion and a lack of hard facts play into the hands of the revisionists, who make young people their special target.

An out-of-school approach to the Shoah

The Shoah is covered, of course, in curricula and textbooks, but out-of-school initiatives – direct contact with survivors, visits to camps and museums of Jewish culture and history – seem a useful extra way of helping to ensure that the horror never gets a chance to repeat itself. The importance of promoting Jewish culture in Central and Eastern Europe was underlined in Recommendation 1291 on Yiddish culture, adopted by the Standing Committee of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on 20 March 1996. Television programmes (*Holocaust*) and films (*Night and Fog*, *Schindler's List*) can also be used to introduce the theme and start people thinking. Finally, official recognition by states of the atrocities and of complicity in the Shoah would seem an

essential prelude to facing up to the past collectively.

A practical guide to teaching the Shoah

The proposals made at the CERA seminar were taken up again at the conference on history textbooks in Central and Eastern Europe which the Council of Europe organised in Warsaw from 14-16 November. Curriculum planners and textbook publishers from twenty countries attended and drew up recommendations to the Council's Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, which will be meeting in Kristiansand (Norway) next June to discuss priorities for pan-European education. As a result of all this work, a practical guide to teaching the Shoah should be available early in 1997. ■

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Bosnia – the way back

After a trial run this summer, the Council of Europe's teacher training courses on human rights education and intercultural relations will be repeated in 1997.

From 17-28 July, 300 teachers from primary, but mainly secondary schools serving all the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina attended a summer university on human rights and civic education. There were seven courses in six cities: Bihac, Travnik, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Zenica and Mostar (where separate workshops were held in the eastern and western parts of the city). Seventeen teachers from Goradze also attended the Sarajevo workshop.

Priority to civic education at an international level

Organised by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport in co-operation with the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Centre for Civic Education (a non-governmental organisation based in California), the summer university was one practical outcome of a project launched by CIVITAS, the international civic education network set up at a Prague conference in June 1995 by the representatives of fifty-two countries to give civic education a more important place in the hierarchy of international priorities.

The summer university itself was the first full-scale field exercise, and it fully measured up to teachers' expectations, while amply confirming the need for training of this kind in Bosnia. The workshops attracted Bosnian teachers in large numbers, but pressure on places still forced the organisers to turn some away. The scheme's success makes one thing clear: there is a

very real demand for training of this kind, covering civic and human rights education, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and intercultural relations.

Different but complementary approaches to education

There were thirty instructors – fifteen from the United States and fifteen from five European countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) – and Albania and Hungary also helped to cover organisational costs and the translation and printing of materials in Bosnian and Croat.

The first session highlighted certain ways in which the approaches followed by the American and European partners differed, while remaining complementary.

At its meeting on 24-25 September, the Council of Europe's Education Committee decided to repeat the summer university in 1997. There are plans to open a liaison office in Sarajevo in January to help with preparations and send information to the federal authorities and the ten cantons responsible for education under the Dayton Agreements.

A second summer university for 1997

Due account will be taken of comments and suggestions made after the first summer university. For one

thing, separate courses will be provided for primary and secondary teachers. Highly practical materials will also be prepared, including a teachers' guide to the European Convention on Human Rights. Between 300 and 400 Bosnian teachers are expected to attend. ■

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School exchanges – key to contact

Long restricted to language teachers, school exchange schemes are now one of the main ways in which the forty-four members of the Council of Europe's Cultural Convention forge links and construct a genuine European community.

The "School links and exchanges" programme now covers a vast range of co-operative initiatives throughout Council of Europe member States. Children are no longer sent abroad simply to immerse themselves in another language, but to steep themselves in the culture and customs of other countries, near or far away. An exchange between Estonia and Portugal may improve the participants' command of English or French – the language used to communicate – but it allows them, above all, to compare two cultures, two histories and, in some cases, two visions of the same history. No better way of learning to be tolerant and to value the diversity which is Europe's greatest asset.

National correspondents

In running the programme, the Council relies on the help of national correspondents, who keep it in touch with local possibilities. Complete since September, the network now comprises one correspondent in every member state. Their job is a tough one and, to help them do it, the Council has issued a handbook, containing all the addresses and other information needed to set up exchanges with classes in other European countries.

The programme enables teachers to organise meetings centred on cultural or other issues. These can range from school systems and educational problems in other countries to questions of a more philosophical nature, such as democracy. "It can also help the new democracies," says Verena Taylor,

who runs the programme network. Domenico Ronconi, who heads the School and Out-of-School Education Section at the Council, makes the point that the "who-are-we?" questions can help participants to integrate in a Europe which does not try to iron out differences, but sees them as something positive.

As well as teaching participants to respect and apply certain values, the programme can help them to face up to crises and social problems, by emphasising contemporary history and encouraging them to think about ways of resolving conflicts.

Thanks to its network of correspondents, the Council is able to organise meetings like the one it ran in Dubrovnik this October. "What we want to do," says Verena Taylor, "is help countries in the East, too, to set up exchanges with countries in the West."

Teachers too

She adds: "A lot of exchanges start with personal contacts. We'd like every country to have a specialised agency, to give the whole thing a broader basis". All the existing agencies are listed in the handbook, an updated edition of which will be out in 1997.

School exchanges also benefit from the training grant scheme for teachers set up by the Council in 1969: the Council of Europe in-service training programme for teachers. The programme covers seminars at which they can learn about the ins and outs of school exchanges and also meet

colleagues from schools abroad – which means that they themselves are blazing a trail for their pupils in discovering new countries.

The grants scheme works very simply: member states provide accommodation for participants and the Cultural Fund covers travel. Courses are either specifically organised for Europeans or nationally run, but open to foreigners. "They tackle themes which are priorities for us, like human rights and democracy", says Verena Taylor. "At the moment, we have a lot of courses on cultural identity and history." Recently, for example, a meeting in Romania focused on regional identities around the Black Sea. The discussions were fascinating – and a network of forty-five schools in various parts of the region came out of them.

Teacher training, thus, forms the solid foundation on which school exchanges themselves are based. Their aim today remains what it always has been: to put young people in various European countries in touch – and so get them interested in helping to build a united Europe together. ■

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Bringing young Europeans together – the “Europe at School” competition

Every year, the Council of Europe helps to organise the “Europe at School” competition, which sets out to give primary and secondary schoolchildren – and their teachers – a real sense of belonging to Europe.

The competition centres on a new theme every time, and schoolchildren in the Council's 40 member states are invited to illustrate it in words or pictures. The Council's fortieth anniversary, human rights past and present, the third elections to the European Parliament, tourism and European citizenship, tomorrow's Europe, and environment and quality of life – these are just some of the subjects featured in the past. Always European, the themes are intended to give entrants a new feeling for all the many things that make Europe what it is – its national identities, its history, its languages, its principles and its commitment to the human rights championed by the Council itself.

Getting children to sit up and take an interest in other people and communities

“More and more, the competition's changing,” says Verena Taylor, who runs the Council's school links and exchange network. “Groups, whole schools, and even communities – families included – are

going in for it. We even get joint entries from schools in different countries.” This is only fitting, as the competition's real aim is not so much picking out winners as getting children to sit up and take an interest in other people and communities. “We want them to start thinking about their own history and other people's too, their own identity and that of others. Anything that makes for exchange and stops them turning in on themselves is positive.”

One way of bringing in the countries of the East

The competition started up in France in 1953 and became a joint scheme later. Today, it offers one way of bringing in the countries of new member States. Recently, for example, a meeting of prize-winners was organised in Budapest.

The Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Cultural Foundation all have a stake in the scheme, since they all realise that getting young people involved in building a democratic

Europe holds the key to success in the long term. The aim is to get those who will be running things tomorrow in on the process today. Children still get the European message from their schoolbooks, but nothing can replace the contacts that grow out of schemes like the competition. “The more young people know about the history, present situation, prospects, culture, outlook and social structures of their neighbours near and far, and the more they know about European co-operation and integration, the easier they'll find it to understand what Europe means and live consciously as Europeans,” says Verena Taylor.

Encouraging children to think about Europe and put their ideas into words and pictures, “Europe at School” and its network of national committees give the Council of Europe yet another way of bringing its message and ideals into the classroom. ■

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Death of Bernd Janssen

“Europe at School” has lost one of its most dedicated supporters – Bernd Janssen, Director of the Bonn Co-ordinating Unit, who died in September 1996. For all those who followed the scheme, his

name was synonymous with “Europe at School”. Bernd Janssen devoted his life to building a Europe based on human rights, mutual respect, tolerance and co-operation. He will be sadly missed.

Cross-frontier connections: the modern languages project

The Council of Europe's project, "Language learning for European citizenship", is teaching national programmes to speak the same language.

The Council is running an ambitious programme in the language-learning field. Its aims are threefold: to safeguard Europe's linguistic heritage and cultural diversity, to facilitate mobility of people and ideas, and to devise joint approaches to the teaching of languages. Recently, an important part of this programme has been the "Language learning for European citizenship" project, which will be winding up at an intergovernmental conference in Strasbourg from 15 - 18 April 1997.

This project, covering all the languages of Europe, has two main emphases: the development of concepts and instruments for language policy, and activities designed to promote a coherent approach to language learning, based on common principles and involving various partners (learners, teachers, methodologists, textbook authors, examiners, etc.) By facilitating international co-operation in this area, the Council of Europe is supporting member states in their efforts to give language learning a new impetus.

Defining threshold levels

The first major stage in the project was to pinpoint aims by defining "threshold levels" – basic communication targets which have been, or are being, worked out for twenty-one national, regional and minority languages. In recent

years, the "threshold level" concept has radically transformed approaches to language-teaching, the prime aim of which is now seen as communication. Several multimedia courses have been produced under Council of Europe auspices – "Follow Me" and "Look Ahead" for English, "Viaje al Español" for Spanish and "Digui, Digui" for Catalan.

A pan-European instrument for language policies

The "Common European framework for language teaching and learning", which is now being prepared, will permit international comparison of aims and qualifications. It is designed to provide a clear and consistent picture of aims, methods and results within individual countries and across a range of different countries. It will help all those involved in language learning and teaching to pinpoint and co-ordinate their efforts and exchange information, and also to arrive at options and explain them. Developed in co-operation with the European Union, the framework will provide a unique pan-European instrument for the planning and implementation of language policies.

A feasibility study is also under way for a "European language portfolio". Essentially, this will do two things: motivate learners to

increase their language skills and serve as a record of the progress they make and the qualifications (diplomas, etc.) they acquire. Learners themselves will complete the portfolio, which offers them a wholly new kind of learning aid, allowing them to assess their skills in various languages with reference to the European framework. Prompting users to think about the learning process and providing a check on their progress, the portfolio will be valid for all the member states and will also serve as a kind of international language passport.

Towards a "European Language Year"?

The portfolio will be presented with the framework at the final conference in April, when it should be given the green light for field-testing, in pilot project form, before being introduced generally in 2001, which may be "European Language Year".

In practical terms, the "Language learning for European citizenship" project has already generated a series of international workshops, mainly for people who can pass the message on in member states: education ministry officials, inspectors, teachers and teacher trainers, textbook authors, etc. These workshops (see opposite) help states to implement their language teaching priorities.

A special effort for Central and Eastern European countries

A special effort has been made to help the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe, which are having to reform their curricula at top speed. The language co-operation networks are also being extended in the West, particularly in connection with bilingual education, which is more developed in the East.

The Modern Languages Section is active on language policies too, and the Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport is working with the Directorate of Political Affairs on language legislation in multi-lingual countries, among other questions. In Latvia and Estonia, a programme is being run with the European Union to integrate communities of foreign origin, most of them Russian-speaking. This programme has the backing of experts on language policy and on assessment of the Estonian and Latvian language skills of people wanting to acquire those nationalities.

The final conference in Strasbourg next April should come up with recommendations advocating a carefully-planned language policy, based on the results of the current project and taking account of the European reference framework and the European language portfolio. A new project, carrying on from the present one, should be launched for the period 1997-2000. This will include implementation of these new instruments, and will be run in co-operation with the European Centre for Modern Languages

in Graz and the European Union, among other partners.

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"New-style" workshops

Practical fall-out from the Council of Europe's project, "Language learning for democratic citizenship", includes a series of discussion and study workshops, as well as action programmes. The workshops have covered various aspects of language teaching: early teaching in primary school, teaching at secondary level, vocational language courses and adult education (advanced level). The priority themes pinpointed by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of Europe have been tackled: specification of learning aims; use of the media and the new technologies; bilingual education; the role of educational links, visits and exchanges in language learning and teaching; approaches to making learners independent; evaluation; the basic and further training of teachers.

Thanks to support from member states, which host the meetings, thirty-one workshops, attended by a total of nearly 3 000 "multipliers", have been organised since the project started. Each has been jointly run by two host countries, and a new working method has been used for them. A first workshop (workshop A) identifies national and international problems relating to the selected theme and sector. A research and development phase, lasting some two years, then follows. During this phase, projects are carried out by a network of educationalists in the participating countries. Finally, a second workshop (workshop B) takes stock of the results, with a view to publicising them, and draws up recommendations, when appropriate. Ongoing personal contacts are part and parcel of this whole approach, and this makes it easier to secure "democratic consensus" of the participants.

The workshops also provide teacher training materials and give rise to specific reports. Some of them have already been summarised or discussed in the April and October issues of *Language Teaching*, the international review published by the Cambridge University Press. Their conclusions will be embodied in a series of thematic publications, some of which will be ready for the final conference in Strasbourg.

Higher education – giving everyone a chance

How can we get rid of the inequalities of access which keep certain people out of higher education? The recent Parma conference had some ideas.

On 18 September, President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro of Italy honoured the opening session of the Council of Europe's final conference on "Access to higher education in Europe" with his presence. Organised by the Council's Committee on Higher Education and Research, it attracted participants from forty-four countries.

Unequal access to higher education

Access to higher education, and the chances of completing it successfully, are still profoundly unequal across Europe, even if – officially – most of the legal restrictions on access have now disappeared. On the contrary, many countries rightly proclaim that they want to make higher education available to everyone. The work done in the last four years by the project group, and particularly its detailed study of the real situation in sixteen Council of Europe countries, have revealed the – sometimes hidden – obstacles which deprive large sections of the community of a really equal chance of getting into higher education and completing their studies successfully. In western Europe, for example, 70% to 80% of students come from business or professional backgrounds, and less than 10% from unskilled, working-class families.

While women's situation is improving overall, and female students are even tending to outnumber males in higher education, this apparently favourable picture has

its down-side. For one thing, the courses where women are numerically ahead are often those leading to the less prestigious or well-paid careers. Medicine, for example, counts as a "women's subject" in countries where doctors are poorly paid. In countries where they earn well and are otherwise highly regarded, most medical students are male. There are other significant obstacles making access hard for students from immigrant families or cultural or language minorities, not to mention the physically handicapped.

Seven draft recommendations

In an effort to improve this situation, the Parma conference presented seven draft recommendations, which it wanted the Council of Europe and its member states to adopt. First of all, states and their higher education authorities are urged to set up supervisory machinery to determine the real situation in their universities and, if necessary, to bring in legislation to prohibit all discrimination in higher education and employment on grounds of sex, age, ethnic origin, religion and handicap. Above all, they should adopt economic measures to make sure that student aid goes to students from lower-income groups... give handicapped students additional allowances to cover their special needs... impose registration fees only on students from high-income groups... and finally weight grants to institutions of higher education, in accordance with their efforts to

ensure equal access and help students from the least-favoured groups to make a success of their studies. This last point got very mixed reactions in Parma and was discussed at some length. It will very probably be modified.

When they have been finalised by the Committee on Higher Education and Research, the conclusions of the Parma conference will go to the Conference of European Ministers of Education in June. In four years' time, a further meeting will be held to look at practical action taken on the Parma recommendations in the meantime. ■

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Human rights: respecting diversity

Launched in 1993, the Council of Europe project, "Democracy, human rights, minorities: educational and cultural aspects", sets out to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which people need to become democratic, active, responsible citizens, who care about human rights and respect them.

Covering a broad range of disciplines and sectors, it aims, above all, at getting real results. At the request of various states, most of them new to the Council, five pilot activities have been (or are to be) set up as part of the project.

Romania is serving as a test-bed for research on civic education at primary and secondary level. The question of schooling for Gypsy children has prompted analysis of history textbooks and teaching in connection with minorities, with a special emphasis on the study of local history. In Russia, problems resulting from the presence of schools serving non-Russian minorities (Jews, Georgians, Tatars, etc.) alongside Russian schools have been tackled within the general context of education for democratic citizenship by networking schools within and between the regions concerned. Austria's proposed theme, "History and identity", is based on its experience of diversification of a heritage which it shares with its neighbours (Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic). A fifth pilot activity on history teaching through heritage education, proposed by Croatia, should lead to a follow-up operation on the project.

Pilot schemes for a better management of cultural minorities

These pilot schemes are geared to the needs of specific regions, and

are not intended to serve as universal models. They highlight general approaches, which are detailed in a practical guide, and users are expected to compare the various schemes and extrapolate solutions to their own problems.

A series of independent studies has also been prepared, covering specific schemes and focusing on the management of cultural minorities. They take in a broad range of topics: an intercultural approach to bilingual education; minorities and the media; a university centre providing psychological support for migrant families; self-government for Hungary's Gypsy minorities; and the documentation centre on human migration in Luxembourg. These studies are intended to give governments approaches they can follow in developing their policy on minorities.

Between specificity and universality...

Seminars have also been held to give educationalists on all levels a chance to examine the conceptual background to the various schemes in greater detail. The seminar held at Klingenthal (France), for example, considered problems of identity with reference to specificity on the one hand, and universality on the other. Educational and cultural aspects of the situation in the Balkans, an ethnic and cultural crossroads, were reviewed at a seminar in Sofia in May 1995. All

the region's countries were represented, in spite of the war still raging at the time in the former Yugoslavia. Estonia, itself facing the problem of integrating its Russian-speaking minority, played host to a seminar on human rights and minorities in the new democracies in October 1994. These various seminars culminated in a workshop, at which experts from a wide range of backgrounds were asked to consider the whole question of cultural communities as a factor in social cohesion.

Finally, the "Democracy, human rights, minorities" project has generated some practical materials. An inventory of the most significant instruments in the fields of education for human rights and democratic citizenship, and of diversity management is already available. An anthology of texts dealing with the emergence of the concept of human rights will be published in 1997.

The project will end next May with a final conference, which will assess its results, lay down policy guidelines and encourage dissemination of the many ideas and practical pointers which have come out of it. ■

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Civic education – the new priorities

How can we bring children up to be free and responsible citizens, capable of playing a full part in the social and political life of their communities? To answer that question, we first have to decide what kind of society we want

In the wake of discussions about the essence of democracy that have captivated most of the new democracies in Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990s, the notion of civil society seems to have gained prevalence. These discussions emerged as a reaction to what has come to be known as the 'plasticisation process' of the democracy concept. In the 1990s, the term 'democracy' became a plastic word, denoting, in fact, totally different political and economic agendas and outcomes. For some nation-states, democracy meant westernisation and the free-market economy; for others, it was equated with ethno-nationalism, and for some it was associated with international co-operation."

This is the way Switzerland's Professor Gita Steiner-Khamsi, who teaches at the University of Columbia (United States of America) sums up the options and possibilities facing our continent's young democracies in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, as well as the CIS.

Put in these terms, the basic problem becomes that of deciding what type of society we should be aiming at, and what kind of civic education we need to get it.

How to strengthen civil society?

Under the title, "How can education strengthen civil society?", the

Council of Europe and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe are together organising three regional seminars to take stock of the present situation and start working out strategies. The first was held in Tallinn (Estonia) in co-operation with the Government of Estonia from 29-31 October and was attended by representatives, educational policy-makers, media operatives and, above all, non-governmental organisations from eight countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The other two seminars will be held at venues in south-eastern Europe and the CIS between now and 1998.

The field to be covered is immense, ranging all the way from civic education in schools (and the questions it raises: who should determine the curriculum? which teachers should be involved? what training should they get?), through pupil participation in the life of schools and participation by young people in the life of towns, to the role of youth organisations in the community. The last aspect raises further questions: how should the new youth organisations, which have taken over from the old Komsomol-type state organisations in many former Eastern bloc countries be structured? And how should the people who run them be trained?

The role of the media

Each of these basic questions raises new ones in turn. What is the media's role in forming and informing responsible citizens? What training do citizens themselves need to make the most of politically independent media? What access to education and information must they be given? This last is a crucial question in countries where modern information and education facilities are still largely restricted to the major cities. Internet may be universally available - but the money needed to access and exploit it is not. Moreover, Internet sites operate only in the main international languages, and this makes consultation harder.

All of these questions boil down to one central challenge: finding ways of holding our continent together, while respecting its cultural and political plurality. Jaak Aaviksoo, Estonian Minister for Education, set the seminar participants on the path to meeting it in Tallinn. Their conclusions will be reviewed at a final conference in 1998.

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Parliamentary Assembly:

backing education and young people as part of the Middle East peace process

On 7 November 1996, the Council of Europe's Standing Committee, on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, revived a debate stalled since violence flared in Israel in September by adopting a resolution on the situation in the Middle East.

In this resolution and in an order adopted at the same time, the Assembly insists on the contribution which the Council should be making in the region in the education and youth fields—whose importance in the peace process had already been stressed by a task force convened in Tunis by the Committee on Culture and Education in February.

The Assembly calls for the setting-up of Palestinian youth organisations, in liaison with the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest

and with the youth programme of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity in Lisbon. It wants to promote co-operation between Palestinian and Israeli youth organisations, dialogue between young Europeans and young Arabs, and youth exchanges in general.

The Assembly also favours education and teacher training programmes aimed at developing tolerance and combating racism and xenophobia, facilitating conflict resolution and promoting human rights, democracy and intercultural coexistence.

More generally, it is willing to advise on improving Palestinian education, youth and sports structures and infrastructures.

All of these points were raised at a meeting which the Social, Health and

Family Affairs Committee held with the Palestinian Legislative Council's Education and Social Affairs Committee at Ramallah on 18 November.

They will be taken further at the symposium on dialogue between young Europeans and young Arabs which is being held at the European Youth Centre in Budapest on 11-12 December. ■

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... In brief ...

After more than a quarter century of dedicated work in the area of modern languages, Antonietta De Vigili has left the Council of Europe Secretariat. Representatives of member states and colleagues have paid warm tribute to her exceptional contribution to the pioneering developments that she has promoted and managed in consecutive Modern Languages Projects. We wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement in her native Trentino.

Gabriele Mazza, Head of the Higher Education and Research Division, was appointed in September 1996 as Special Advisor on Culture and Education to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) and Chairman of the Education and Culture Joint (Serb and Croat)

Committees. Gabriele Mazza has responsibility for supervising policy developments in culture and education during this highly sensitive transitional period: the Region will pass under Croatian sovereignty in 1997. Gabriele Mazza is now dividing his time between Strasbourg and Vukovar.

Maitland Stobart, Head of the Education Department, was one of eight people in the field of education to be awarded the prestigious Comenius Medal. The medal, created jointly by Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO and the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, is intended to reward exceptional achievements in the area of research and pedagogical innovations. The medal was awarded to Maitland Stobart at this year's

session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva.

The Education Committee has elected a new Chair and Vice-Chair, Mr Klaus Eichner, Head of the German delegation and Ms Jurga Strumskiene, Head of the Lithuanian delegation. Mr Eichner and Ms Strumskiene will take up their duties at the Education Committee's next meeting, which will start on 18 March 1997.

New

The Council of Europe web site on European cultural co-operation is now available at the following address: <http://www.coe.fr/culture>

Publications

Guides to secondary education in Europe



The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" was developed as part of the project "A secondary education for Europe". The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the education systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.

Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. At present,

guides are available for Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland.
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Education diary

13-15 FEBRUARY (1997)

Second Annual Colloquy of the European Centre for Modern Languages: "Modern Languages learning and teaching in Central and Eastern Europe: which diversification and how it can be achieved?"
Graz AUSTRIA

16-19 FEBRUARY (1997)

The European Secondary School Students' Simulation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Its results will be used in the Education Committee's new project on teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century in secondary schools.
Cambridge UNITED KINGDOM

18-20 MARCH (1997)

Meeting of the Education Committee
Strasbourg FRANCE

19-21 MARCH (1997)

Meeting of the Higher Education and Research Committee
Strasbourg FRANCE

8-11 APRIL (1997)

Diplomatic Conference for the adoption of the Joint CE/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region
Lisbon PORTUGAL

15-18 APRIL (1997)

Final Conference of the Modern Languages Project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" on the theme "Learning languages for a new Europe"
Strasbourg FRANCE

21-23 MAY (1997)

Final Conference of the project "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects"
Strasbourg FRANCE

8-11 JUNE (1997)

Annual meeting of the ENIC Network (Council of Europe/UNESCO) with the NARIC Network of the European Commission
Helsinki FINLAND

22-24 JUNE (1997)

19th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education: "Education 2000: Trends, common issues and priorities for pan-European co-operation"
Kristiansand NORWAY

10-12 SEPTEMBER (1997)

Conference on regional co-operation in higher education (with the Nordic Council of Ministers)
Reykjavik ICELAND