

Newsletter education

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Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



Editorial

Welcome to our newly designed Education Newsletter, back after a short break.

This is just one change in a crucial transition period for us at the Council of Europe, as we equip ourselves to deal with the new challenges ahead of us.

The second Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State or Government in October 1997 went some way to defining a new agenda for the education department, emphasising our commitment to work on education for democratic citizenship and to respond to the challenge of new information technologies. A "Committee of Wise Persons" has also been set up to make recommendations for the most appropriate structures for the Council of Europe on its 50th anniversary.

Of course, change will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and the seeds of our future have already been firmly sown, notably under the direction of Maitland Stobart who retired in the autumn of 1997 after a distinguished career at the Council of Europe.

Maitland's mark will remain on the work of the education department for years to come, as Klaus Eichner, the current chairman of the Education Committee, fittingly pointed out in a brief farewell speech.

Maitland's departure has ushered in other changes. Jaroslav Kalous has joined the Council of Europe as Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport and, together with the Director, Raymond Weber, he will play a key role in leading our work for the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, after 25 years at the Council of Europe, I have taken over from Maitland Stobart as Head of the education department. During those years, my time has been almost evenly divided between education, culture and youth, and I am proud to have contributed to some of the Organisation's finest accomplishments in those fields.

The range of issues and subjects covered in this bulletin gives some indication of the variety of situations and needs across Europe. Diversity is one of our often unrecognised organisational strengths. I am constantly grateful for the opportunity of being able to work on a daily basis with people from over 40 countries, all of whom bring – and receive – a wealth of ideas, initiative and creativity.

Despite the inevitable frustrations involved in international cooperation, the miracle of an organisation that unites people from so many countries in the pursuit of positive ideals should never be forgotten, and my faith in the Council of Europe and enthusiasm for its work remain as strong today as when I first arrived in Strasbourg.

I hope that, on the basis of our shared values, principles and convictions, we will continue to foster quality education in Europe, and to facilitate the exchange of good ideas and initiatives. This is a common effort, and its success depends also upon the quality of input and feedback we at the Council receive from outside.

This Newsletter is an additional forum for that purpose. So please let's hear from you...

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Education at the summit

Education and culture featured prominently at the second Council of Europe Summit which was held in Strasbourg last October. Thirty-four European Heads of State and Government, out of 44, referred to education, language learning, culture and/or cultural heritage in glowing terms.

"One of the essential tasks of our Organisation is to teach citizenship and democracy to young Europeans, promote their love of justice and freedom, instil in them respect for others and a sense of responsibility. For education is at the back of it all (*c'est par là, par l'éducation, que tout commence*)", said French President Jacques Chirac in his opening speech.

The 44 Heads of State and Government solemnly declared in the Summit's Final Declaration that they were "aware of the educational and cultural dimension of the main challenges to be faced by Europe in the future as well as of the essential role of culture and education in strengthening mutual understanding and confidence between our peoples". The basic importance of education and culture for progress and peace in Europe could hardly have been more strongly or clearly expressed.

To put their convictions into effect, the Heads of State and Government agreed on an Action Plan pinpointing four main areas for immediate attention: (1) democracy and human rights, (2) social cohesion, (3) citizens' security, and (4) democratic values and cultural diversity.

Within each of these main areas a limited number of specific issues were indicated as worthy of priority action by the Council of Europe and its member States. This implies that the Council's activities and resources in the years to come will focus, in one way or another, on the priorities listed in the approved Action Plan.

Under the heading "democratic values and cultural diversity", the following three broad and far-reaching projects have been listed:

(1) Education for democratic citizenship, with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and including a new youth exchange programme; (2) Enhancement of the European heritage, by means of a campaign in 1999 on "Europe, a common heritage", based on existing or prospective partnerships between government, educational and cultural institutions, and industry; (3) A European policy for the application of the new information technologies, meant to ensure respect for human rights and cultural diversity, foster freedom of expression and information, and maximise the new technologies' positive educational and cultural potential, for which suitable partnership arrangements are to be sought.

These three clusters of activities have been referred to by the Deputy Secretary General, Hans Christian Krüger, while addressing the CDCC plenary session on 21st January 1998. The following are some of the comments he made, clearly indicating guidelines and expectations as to the Summit follow-up in education and culture:

"Politikverdrossenheit – a German term which means lack of trust or interest in political institutions – is said to be on the increase, which would not be a good omen for the development of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Genuine democracy is built on citizen participation. It is up to us to find new mechanisms to ensure that citizen involvement becomes more satisfactory than it is now."

"We must absolutely involve young people, remembering that what we adults say and do loses efficacy if it is not shared by the younger generation."

"In this connection I am glad to inform that the Norwegian Government has generously offered to make available a considerable sum of money (five million FF for a period of five years) to finance a programme which will facilitate the exchange of secondary school students."

"European cultural heritage provides tangible and visible evidence of the diversity and unity of our continent; and of its multicultural or, better still, intercultural dimension. To foster awareness of the European dimension of most of our cultural heritage is extremely helpful, both as a means to promote the basic values of our common culture and to overcome the abuse of cultural heritage by xenophobic or extreme nationalist behaviour."

"Which is why the Strasbourg Summit has recommended a public awareness campaign to highlight and enhance the cultural heritage in all its aspects, whether man-made or natural. We hope that the 1999 campaign will"

be as effective as the pioneering one launched by the Council in 1975, when the Organisation had a more limited membership.

"The new information technologies may well be about to change drastically our concepts of time and space, and hence our frame of mind and way of life. We must ensure, however, that the basic values for which we stand, and the fundamental human rights, including the right to privacy as part of the human dignity, are safeguarded and promoted."

"A silent revolution is said to be under way, similar in some respects to the one silently sparked off by Johan Gutenberg 550 years ago. We must ensure that people are the hammer and not the anvil of this revolution."

"These main areas or clusters of projects", added Mr Krüger, "are of direct interest not only to the CDCC and its four specialised committees, but to practically all sections and departments of this House. We expect, therefore, an interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach involving the

relevant forces which can contribute towards the common aims: the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and cultural co-operation".

Abbreviations:

DECS: Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport

CDCC: Council for Cultural Co-operation

CLRAE: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

Successful Ministerial Conference at Kristiansand

The 19th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education took place in Kristiansand, Norway, from 22 to 24 June 1997 (the first had taken place in The Hague in 1957).

It proved to be an excellent forum for a high-level discussion and reflection on major policy issues facing education systems in Europe today.

Thanks to a well-planned programme and to the many social activities organised by the host country, ample opportunity was provided to participants to get to know each other and exchange views in informal meetings.

Twenty-two Ministers and ten State Secretaries or Deputy Ministers took

part in the conference. The Committee of Ministers, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Council for Cultural Co-operation, Canada, United States, Israel, the European Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the European Union Committee of the Regions, UNESCO, OECD, and the Nordic Council of Ministers were also represented.

The theme of the Kristiansand conference was "Education 2000: Trends, Common Issues and Priorities for Pan-European Co-operation".

The introductory speech by Secretary General Daniel Tarschys set the high standard which prevailed throughout the proceedings.



"At the close of the 20th century", said the Secretary General, "the main challenges to education stem from the variety of profound and complex changes taking place in our societies.

"The globalisation of the economy, the rapid evolution of information technology and of the media, the increasing mobility of individuals, the growth of our multicultural societies and the changing pattern of work will compel everyone to acquire new skills.

"It is already clear that in future people will increasingly need skills linked to the processing and circulation of information, the provision of services and the management of human – especially intercultural – relations.

"The stubborn unemployment that we observe, and youth unemployment

in particular, raises a number of questions about our school systems:

"Is there a gap between the way young people are prepared for working life and the new demands of work? Are our education systems still based chiefly on the qualifications required in societies geared to industrial production? Do we give enough attention to skills and qualities connected with our emerging economies and societies?

"The future of our democratic societies and of our prosperity depends largely on the answers given to such questions by the education authorities".

The message which came out of the Kristiansand Ministerial Conference can be summed up as follows:

The Ministers express their high appreciation of the specific contribution by

the Council of Europe to European co-operation on education.

This contribution reflects: the pan-European nature of the Organisation; its long-standing commitment to human rights and pluralistic democracy; its concern for the individual and its refusal of situations of exclusion and marginalisation; its respect for the European cultural heritage and the diversity of European culture; its wish to bring the peoples of Europe closer together and strengthen mutual understanding and confidence in our continent; the involvement, in the Council of Europe's work on education, of national, regional and local policy-makers, practitioners and representatives of civil society.

The Ministers recommend that, in the medium and longer term, the Council



of Europe should concentrate its education programme on: education policies which favour the balanced development of the individual and which promote democratic security, social cohesion and the fight against exclusion; education for democratic citizenship, including experience of participation and democratic decision-making and the peaceful resolution of conflict; the European dimension of education, in particular modern languages, history teaching, school links and exchanges, the in-service training of teachers, the Europe at School activity, and the recognition of higher education qualifications; education in multicultural and multilingual societies (intercultural education).

The Ministers recommend that the Council of Europe should continue to support the reform of education in its new partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe in sectors where the Organisation has acknowledged expertise. In a spirit of solidarity, the Council should make a special effort to strengthen its existing co-operation programmes with member States or regions with urgent needs.

The Council of Europe's work on education is in vain if its results are not known to, and used by, member States and their citizens. The dissemination of these results should, therefore, be a major priority both for member States

and for the Council of Europe itself. It could take the form of national dissemination seminars, co-operation with commercial publishers, and closer contacts with the educational press, radio and television.

Full use should be made of the unprecedented possibilities for dissemination offered by the new information technologies, e.g. the Internet and multi-media resources.

Poland has offered to host the 20th session of the Standing Conference in the year 2000. ■

Eastern Slavonia

The way ahead through education and culture

Since September 1996, the Council of Europe has been engaged in an unprecedented form of cooperation with the United Nations Transitional Administration of Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) – the UN mission charged with peacefully reintegrating the war-torn and impoverished region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium to the Republic of Croatia.

Gabriele Mazza, Head of the Education Department at the Council of Europe, was



seconded on a part-time basis as Special Advisor on Education and Culture. His task, like the reality of Eastern Slavonia, was complex and multi-layered, but included the following elements: to gain the trust of both parties – Serbs and Croats; to help build confidence between the two main ethnic groups; to mediate negotiations on all aspects of future educational and cultural provision with full respect for minority rights; and to ensure the implementation of agreements. Five questions were put to Mr Mazza. Here are his answers:

Newsletter Education: *When you first went to Vukovar, what was the main challenge, and how did you address it?*

Gabriele Mazza: The immediate challenge was to bring the two parties together. After UNTAES asked the Council of Europe for assistance with education and culture, the tentative education negotiations broke down, and so I entered into a situation which was completely blocked.

It was therefore necessary to establish a new framework for discussions and decision-making – some issues being very politically sensitive, others more technical. Meetings were not simple to arrange as the Serbs refused to go into Croatia, and the Croats refused to come to Serb-occupied territory. The first meetings were held in a container in the “no man’s land” between the territories. So this was a difficult initiation period, and the actual substance of the negotiations was very limited, as neither side really trusted what the others were saying.

NE: *How did you overcome these immense communication problems?*

GM: There were a number of moments which, in retrospect, I see as breakthroughs. In December 1996 I organised a study trip for the key members of the joint committee which I chaired, to visit schools in Istria, where there is a very substantial Italian minority. For the Serbs, this was the first time that they had ventured into Croatia since the war, and they were inevitably somewhat nervous about it. Yet the visit went on very well, the Croatian Ministry officials organised everything with great efficiency, and a lot was learned about the actual situation of the Italian minority. The visit placed a certain burden of responsibility upon

the Croatian authorities – it would afterwards be impossible for them to deny to the Serbs, or to any other minority, rights that were granted to the Italians.

After the Istria trip, a seminar focussing upon different models of minority education in Europe was organised in the European Youth Centre in Budapest. Around sixty education officials, head-teachers and teachers participated, and this was far from an easy meeting; the two delegations stayed apart both inside and outside the meeting room. Despite the apparent problems, it became clear later that there had been some kind of breakthrough.

After this meeting, communication between the working groups improved significantly, and real progress was made. Eventually a full range of joint agreements on education were drawn up and signed by both parties.

NE: *Do you think that the agreements which have been signed between the Croatian authorities and the local Serbs are sufficient to guarantee educational rights in the region?*

GM: First of all, I would like to stress that these agreements were carefully worked out between members of the two main communities themselves, and this is the real key to their potential success.

Theoretically, it would have been possible for me to bring to the Region a well-prepared, ready-made package of transitional agreements, and to oblige the two sides to accept them: after all, I could call upon the full executive authority of the UNTAES mandate, if I wished.

However, if that had happened, there would have been no process, and it was the process as much as the agreements themselves which was critical. What I was really involved in was

confidence-building between the communities, and this was equally needed by both sides.

Having said that, the agreements themselves are, I think, very important and comprehensive. If they are properly implemented, they will offer all people in the region the possibility of building a better future. The agreements guarantee the vast majority of teachers their jobs, allow an acceptable mix of Serb-specific subjects (music, art, language, etc.) within the mainstream Croatian curriculum, maintain a certain number of schools which are mainly Serb, and ensure an ethnic mix in the key positions of school management (head teachers and deputy heads, for example).

There is also a moratorium for the next five years on the teaching of history since 1989, and the implementation of this agreement will be particularly important for peaceful coexistence. Education, which played a stabilising role in the process of reintegration, is now regarded as one of the most important factors in the key decision of the region’s current and future inhabitants – choosing whether to stay in, or return to, the region as citizens of Croatia. So it is difficult to over-estimate the importance of these agreements.

NE: *Do you think the Council of Europe will play a role in the future of the Region?*

GM: There is no question as to whether the Council of Europe will play a role or not – the question is rather what the precise nature of that role will be. With Croatia as a member State, it is impossible to ignore the Danubian region. Moreover, as an organisation which exists to promote the respect of human rights and pluralist democracy, it would be strange if,

in the post-UNTAES period, the Council of Europe did not play a significant role in assisting the Croatian authorities in their attempts to reconcile the people living in the region.

There is no doubt in my mind that the level of expectations with regard to the role of the Council of Europe is higher in this part of Europe than in any other, and it is here too that the image of the Organisation is at its strongest. The region therefore presents a great challenge to us, as a testing ground for the implementation of all that the Council of Europe stands for.

I am confident that, through a concerted and coordinated response from all sections of the Organisation, we can make a very significant and helpful contribution – and I think that the Croatian government would be satisfied with nothing less than our total commitment.

As far as education and culture are concerned, we have a number of European cooperation projects which are of great relevance. For example, promoting education for democratic citizenship; integrating students and teachers from the region into exchange programmes; eliminating “ethno-centrism” from history teaching; developing European training programmes for cultural administrators; broadening access to European cultural networks and stimulating creativity. These are just a few of the areas in which our work could be developed in Croatia, and in the Danubian region in particular.

Nobody who has been to this part of the world would pretend that our task will be an easy one, but I think we have a moral imperative to face the challenges ahead and, working in full co-operation with the Croatian authorities, I am sure that we can continue to make a worthwhile contribution.



In Vukovar, 1997

NE: *What do you consider to be your greatest achievement during this mission?*

GM: I wouldn't pretend that my contribution changed the course of history in this region, and indeed my work was only made possible by the excellent support I was given both within the Council of Europe and UNTAES.

I am very proud to have had the opportunity to contribute to a mission which has undoubtedly saved many lives, and is already regarded as one of the most successful missions accomplished by the United Nations.

I think the most important thing I managed to do was to earn the respect and trust of both parties – without that, the rest would not have been possible. ■

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Languages: a passport for European citizenship

A major conference was organised in Strasbourg in April 1997 to mark the end of the medium-term project "Language Learning for European Citizenship", in which over 2,000 language professionals and policy deciders had played an active part.

The final conference attracted more than 250 participants from 41 CDCC member States, as well as observer delegations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Canada. They had come to assess the results achieved since the project was launched and also to decide the main thrust of the Council's future work on language learning and teaching.

Languages are an area where an international organisation covering nearly all the States of Europe obviously has a lot to offer.

The fact that language projects have been a constant feature of the Council's programme since 1962 shows that member States are well aware of this – a point made by Secretary General Daniel Tarschys in his speech at the conference.

Some of the wider issues and implications had already been taken up by the Committee of Ministers in a 1982 recommendation, when it noted that "it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination".

Lifelong learning

Successive action programmes have helped the member States to rethink and update their modern language policies, tailoring them to the demands of life today. The process has been a slow one, but language teaching and

learning have been quietly revolutionised along the way.

The old, wholly book-based approach, taken over from the study of Latin and classical Greek and still current in the 1970s, has now given way to more active methods, better able to meet the real communication needs of adults and young people alike. Newspapers are now as much a part of the classroom armoury as literary texts, and songs, TV and the full range of audio-visual media and information technology are used as widely as textbooks.

From the start, the Education Committee had decided that the project should focus on the following sectors of education: (pre-) primary, lower and upper secondary, vocational and adult.

When it comes to language learning at (pre-) primary level, the question is no longer whether, or even at what age, a foreign language should be taught, but – quite simply – how. This recent demand sets a challenge for school systems, which have to devise effective ways of teaching languages to very young children. Apart from



Secretary General Daniel Tarschys, Mr Hermann Ströbel and Dr John Trim (project leader) at the head table during the final conference on language learning.



method and lesson content, this obviously means looking at the child's whole cognitive and affective development process.

More diversified language learning

Secondary schooling takes children from pre-adolescence to the verge of adulthood, and language learning is crucial at this stage. Its aim is simple: to give them the ability to communicate effectively in another language, and ideally in several languages. Acquiring a partial command of certain languages (for example, comprehension only) can also help to diversify their linguistic abilities.

Finally, as the Strasbourg conference recommended, adult language learning should aim at the acquisition of a certain range of languages for general and professional purposes, allowing learners to consolidate their language skills on a life-long basis and reflecting the changing pattern and growing diversity of adult language learning.

During the project, international workshops had focused on specific areas: objectives and evaluation, "learning to learn" (preparation for learning as a life-long process), bilingual education, use of the new information and communication technologies, and educational links and exchanges, with the main focus on teacher training in these areas.

A number of recommendations came out of the four-day conference held at the Council of Europe. Some of them were general, and were addressed to governments (language policies) and educationalists (practices connected with aims, methods and evaluation). Others, covering future action within a new medium-term project, were specific and directed to the CDCC.

Language tools for Europeans

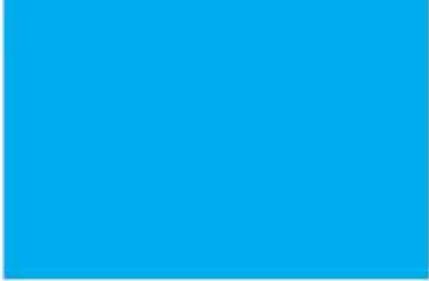
In practical terms, the Conference urged the Council of Europe to further develop two European instruments: (1) a Common European Framework

of reference for language learning, teaching and assessment, which is intended for policy deciders, curriculum developers, teachers, etc., and (2) a European Language Portfolio intended for learners.

The purpose of the Common European Framework is to enable all those involved in learning and teaching foreign languages to give one another a clear picture of their language policies, in particular aims, methods and actual results. This instrument will now be tested in various educational contexts. Once it has been piloted and has come into general use, it will help to guarantee quality in learning conditions and provide a basis for the mutual recognition of qualifications, thus facilitating professional and personal mobility at European level. A general guide as well as a series of ten user guides for specific categories have been prepared.

The European Language Portfolio will also be tested in selected countries, both in schools and in adult education. A kind of "language passport", it is intended to motivate holders to continue working on the languages they know – and learn new ones – throughout their lives.

The objective of the Portfolio is to give every European a useful, permanent, up-to-date record of his or her language skills, however acquired and regardless of level (even a modest or incomplete knowledge of a language can be noted). Periods of residence in other countries, necessarily involving contact with the local culture, may also be recorded.



Flexible in its whole conception, the Portfolio will provide a full, detailed and accurate picture of the languages a person knows or has learned, by following courses or otherwise. It will provide recognition of different levels of language competence in an internationally transparent manner by relating qualifications to a common

European scale of language proficiency described in the Common European Framework.

If the European Language Portfolio is implemented on a large scale, it will mark a definite step forward – and contribute significantly to the European Year of Languages, which

the Conference proposed for the year 2001. ■

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Playing with the past

Supposing the treaties concluded at Versailles, Neuilly and Sèvres, after the first world war, had been different, what would Europe look like today? There's no knowing, of course – but going back to square one and playing the negotiations over again can help schoolchildren to understand what the issues were, grasp the complexity of international relations, and form a more positive view of politicians.

Paris, 10 August 1920. After long negotiation, the Treaty of Sèvres is signed with the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte relinquishes its hold on Constantinople, which becomes an open city, under international control. Greece, which wanted Asia Minor and the strategic port of Smyrna, gets neither. It does, however, get Cyprus – handed over to it by Britain, which had secured a 99-year concession on the island from the Sultan in 1878.

Needless to say, none of this actually happened. The agreement reached at Sèvres was totally different. Turkey

kept Constantinople, Greece got Asia Minor briefly, and Cyprus stayed British until it became independent in 1959.

Those were, however, the conclusions reached by the secondary schoolchildren who – in February 1997 – took part in the “European Secondary School Students’ Conference: the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles”.

In effect, the participants were stepping back in time to renegotiate the agreements which brought the first world war to an end. There were six

treaties on the programme: the Treaty of Versailles between the allies and Germany (28 June 1919), the Treaty of Saint Germain with Austria (10 September 1919), the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria (27 November 1919), the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary (4 June 1920), the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey (10 August 1920) and the Treaty of Rapallo between Italy and Yugoslavia (12 November 1920).

Respected or ignored, these were the treaties which shaped Europe’s destiny and carried the seeds of the second world war. They marked the disappearance of four great empires –

the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and (for other reasons) the Russian Empire. All of them have gone, but today's Europe still bears their traces.

16 February 1997, Burwell House, Cambridge. Delegations from secondary schools in six countries – Denmark, the United Kingdom, France, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Germany – come together to renegotiate the peace treaties. The aim is not to rewrite the past, but to help participants to understand it better by playing it out again.

Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge, turned to the Council of Europe for help in recruiting teams from schools in other countries.

Apart from the United Kingdom itself, five have taken up the challenge. Participants are expected to know English (the language chosen for the exercise), have a good general knowledge of European history, and take a special interest in the 20th century – but are otherwise free to make their own choice in their own way. Denmark, France and Germany have gone for teams consisting of the best students from a single class or school. The UK hosts are all from Hills Road Sixth Form College. Bulgaria has pre-selected on the basis of a local competition, pitting two of Sofia's best schools against each other, while Slovenia has relied on a national competition.

The young people meet in Cambridge for three days, from 16 to 19 February 1997, to thrash the 1919 treaties out again. Obviously, a necessary first stage has been some serious work in their home schools on the content of

those treaties, the causes and effects of the first world war, the national gains and losses which came out of it, and the state of national public opinion in its immediate aftermath.

To give the whole thing a further twist, roles have been assigned to the various teams by lot. Denmark is standing in for the US, Britain for France, France for Italy, Germany for Britain, Slovenia for Serbia, Britain again for both Czechoslovakia and Poland, and Bulgaria for Greece. Throughout, the negotiating teams have to refer back to their governments for instructions or for approval of the points agreed so far. In most cases, these governments are represented by fellow-students, who have stayed at home and are contacted by fax. They have no hesitation in refusing to accept the provisional conclusions reached and sending their negotiators back to the table.

The exercise may seem purely abstract, but it brings questions which are not easily answered on that level vividly to life for the participants. What use are politicians and diplomats? What is negotiation and what does it involve? Is standing up for one's own country's interests enough to get good results? Is the winning side in a war always right? How does one negotiate with allies? With opponents? What are international politics anyway? To achieve viable solutions, what do international politicians need to know, apart from who is strong and who is weak?

One thing the participants learned is that winning a war does not make the victors right. Another was that all the parties to any conflict or negotiating process have interests which connect in complex ways. To take just one example, what should one do with Russian POWs in 1919? Should they

be sent back to Russia, which has now turned communist? Should those who want it be given political asylum in France? And why France anyway?

With *Realpolitik* staring them in the face, the young participants reacted very much like real politicians – they decided to pack the Russians off to Australia.

This is the prime purpose of any such exercise: to let young people see how complex international relations really are. It also gives them an idea of the political and cultural cross-connections which exist between the States of Europe.

Pleading Greece's case, for example, the Bulgarian team made a brilliant job of putting themselves in a neighbour's shoes.

Indeed, the whole thing was so successful that Germany plans to base another, similar session on the Peace of Westphalia, concluded by the Empire, the German states, France and Sweden in 1648. ■

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Reich

In the next issue:

- The "Education for Democratic Citizenship" project;
- The Final Declaration of the "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities" project;
- Books in brief.

A Secondary Education for Europe

The Council of Europe's project on the above subject, which wound up in December 1996, did two things: it provided a sweeping panorama of secondary schooling in Europe today and it also looked at ways of giving it a European dimension.

When the opening symposium was held in Brussels in November 1991, the project – set up by the CDCC the year before – had the active support of 25 States. By the time the final conference came round in Strasbourg, they had been joined by all the Council of Europe's new member States and a number of observers.

In those five years, the project pursued two main objectives. The first was general, and involved identifying and describing the problems of secondary education in Europe. Between June 1992 and April 1996, symposiums were held on the following topics: "Aims and objectives of secondary education", "Democratisation and reform of secondary education in central and eastern Europe", "The

school in the local community: autonomy and responsibility", "Contents and methods in secondary education", "School legislation: dialogue on the reforms in central and eastern Europe", "Science and technology teacher training", "Educational reforms in central and eastern Europe: processes and outcomes", "Pupil assessment, school evaluation and policy development", "Key competences for Europe" and "The development of human resources for secondary education in Europe: teaching and non-teaching staff".

Shared problems – and solutions

Twenty-three national guides were published, providing a near-exhaustive survey. These were then reduced to a single report, in which national systems were briefly described, so that problems universally encountered in running and reforming those systems could be looked at squarely and evaluated. This was the project's general aspect, but it also focused, more specifically, on ways of bringing the European dimension into secondary education.

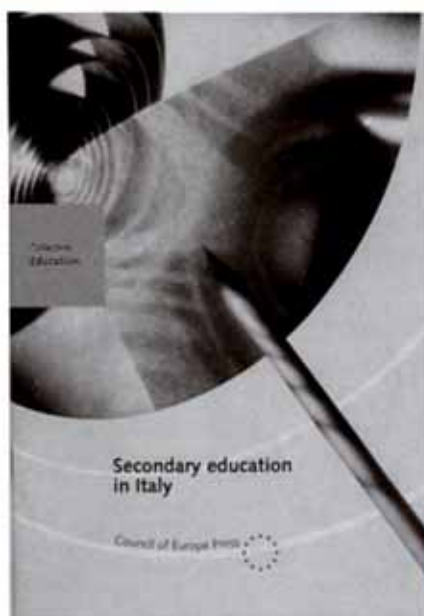
Some dozen monographs were published, detailing experimental schemes or giving examples of study-subjects where that dimension had been highlighted. The European clubs, the Ozone project, the Fax! programme, the Baltic Sea project and the Villette classes were among those covered. Numerous thematic files, aimed at making the European dimension a living part of classroom practice, were produced on subjects such as the environment, migration, the industrial



revolution, human rights, the economy and citizenship. A summary report on the various aspects of this whole question was also published.

A network of national correspondents was set up in 1991 to take charge of school links and exchanges. In fact, these links and exchanges have gradually become more important than they were expected to be when the project was first launched, and the network correspondents meet once a year to discuss the various issues they raise – which were summarised in the 1993 handbook, *School links and exchanges in Europe – A practical guide*. Teachers play a strategic role in these exchanges, and changes in their training to prepare them for this role were one of the questions considered by the network. The result was a blueprint for training which specifically featured modules on the management of trans-European links and exchanges.

Since 1991, the Council of Europe's in-service training programme for teachers has also emphasised the



European dimension at secondary level, particularly in the teaching of geography, history and literature. Its work on developing school links and exchanges was given powerful backing in a resolution adopted in 1994 by the European Ministers of Education.

Reform, yes – but how?

The basic aims of the “Secondary Education for Europe” project include: giving young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to face the challenges of living in Europe today, preparing them for higher education, mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural society, and making them aware of the cultural heritage and the responsibilities they share as Europeans.

The project has shown that all the States of Europe are engaged in ongoing reform of their secondary school systems. It is also clear, however, that traditional reform models are in crisis. In fact, none of the



CDCC's 47 member countries is setting about or organising reform in a way which all the others can copy, even though many of the problems they face are very similar – in spite of vast differences between their educational structures and traditions.

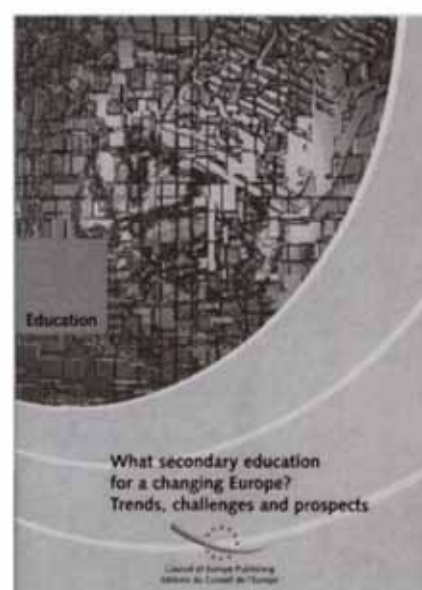
Pupil assessment, school evaluation, levels of centralisation of the education system, the content and meaning of “general culture”, the role of the State, the position of education in a market economy – all of these are key questions, and different States have different views on them.

The way ahead

Although the project insisted that education must be given a European dimension, it never defined that dimension in hard-and-fast terms. In fact, it can apply to the methods, content or even structure of secondary education, since shared problems need to be tackled together. In the long run, it seems likely that countries will come to think and talk about these issues in the same way – and indeed

that national educational policies will converge, without there being any single system or any binding harmonisation. Everything depends on context, and the content of secondary education simply cannot be squeezed into a supra-national mould. Other people, in other countries, think differently, and knowing about – and accepting – their ideas is vital.

The next stage for the Council of Europe and its member States is to make sure that the conclusions of the project “A Secondary Education for Europe” are fully publicised and properly exploited. This involves completing the publication programme, giving the project political expression in resolutions and recommendations, making sure the results get known (translations and publications for specialised and general readers, national seminars) and keeping a constant watch on new developments in educational policy. ■



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Towards an Intercultural Democracy

The Council of Europe is a veritable beehive of activities churning out innovative ideas on a wide variety of subjects, with the sole exception of defence. It is certainly a strategic venue to know which way the wind is blowing in the fields of education and culture, which are increasingly being perceived as the basis of democratic security and social cohesion.

A case in point was the conference held in Strasbourg last May to wind up a four-year-old project on "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: educational and cultural aspects".

The project produced a number of seminars, case-studies, publications and activities involving a large number of young people, all focusing on the management of diversity.

The conference led to an eight-page Final Declaration approved by the 160-odd participants, which clarifies the concept of an intercultural democracy based on the recognition of the rights and duties of cultural communities interacting with each other.

Multiculturalism has characterised Europe since time immemorial but it has increased beyond expectations in recent years as a result of the "boomerang of colonialism" (Antonio Perotti) and the large-scale mobility of travellers and immigrants, facilitated by the rapid means of communication, the collapse of political and ideological barriers and freedom of movement within the EU member States.

This phenomenon, which seems destined to escalate, has accelerated the intermingling of different religions, languages, ways of life, customs, claims and expectations by majority and minority groups living side by side.

The situation has triggered off ferocious wars in extreme cases, as we all know, and will continue to cause tension in various parts of the world unless the underlying theoretical and practical issues are addressed. The Final Declaration proposes a solution based on the recognition of cultural identity, cultural communities and multiple citizenship as essential elements of a modern democracy characterized by its intercultural dimension.

The conference was opened by Secretary General Daniel Tarschys, who, quoting Alain Touraine, stressed the need for individuals and groups to "live together – equal and different". Other main speakers included Ion



Etienne Grosjean, Thérèse Mangot and Raymond Weber leading the discussion on the text of the Final Declaration.

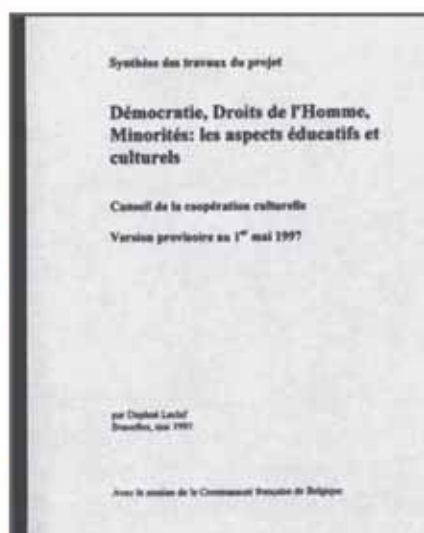


*The panel of experts addressing the Final Conference on its third day, 23 May 1997.
From left : Khaled Fouad Allam, Outi Ojala, Ambassador Alvaro Guerra (chairperson), Predrag Matvejevic, Jean Hurstel and Roger Hill.*

Caramitru (Romanian Minister of Culture), Ambassador Alvaro Guerra (Committee of Ministers), Margaretha Østern (CDCC Chairperson), Josephine Verspaget (Parliamentary Assembly), Dr John Evans (EU Committee of the Regions), Anthony De Giovanni (CLRAE), Predrag Matvejevic, Antonio Perotti, François Audigier, César Birzúa, Roger Hill, Jean Hurstel, Outi Ojala, Khaled Fouad Allam, Thérèse Mangot (project leader), Etienne Grosjean (general rapporteur) and Raymond Weber (who closed the conference).

The Final Declaration approved at the end of last May's conference is not a legal instrument, and has no binding

impact on the Council of Europe's member States. Nonetheless, it is an important document, supported by the results of a well-coordinated, interdisciplinary project involving several countries. It breaks new ground by updating our concept and practice of democracy. If acted upon, it could defuse the tension caused by social exclusion and contribute towards a solution of the ethno-cultural conflicts which have become the most common source of political violence in the world and, unfortunately, show no sign of abating. ■



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Recognition of qualifications – the Council and UNESCO launch a joint convention

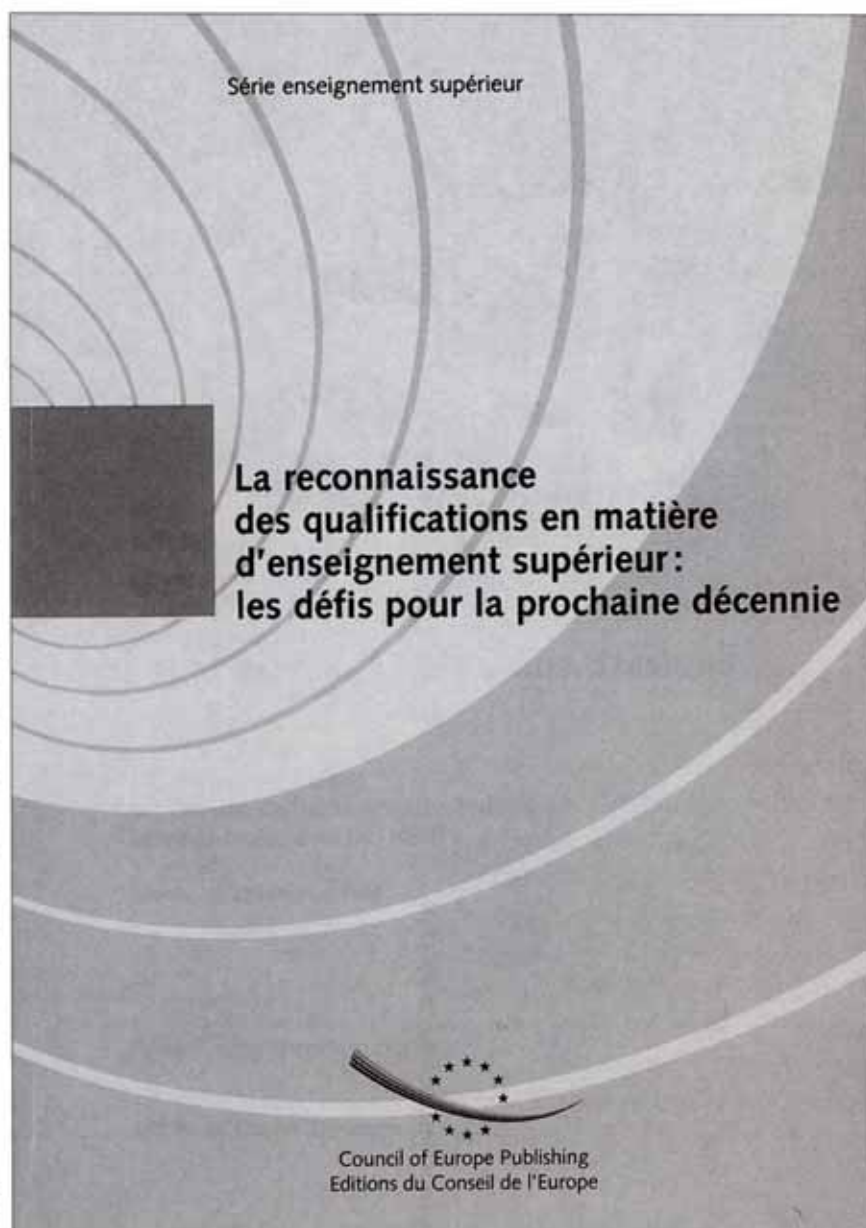
To simplify the recognition of qualifications in higher education and make the whole process more transparent, the Council of Europe and UNESCO adopted a single, updated convention in Lisbon on 11 April, 1997. Thirty-four States have already signed, and five ratifications are needed to bring the new agreement into force.

Some of the Council of Europe's earliest conventions were concerned with mutual recognition of qualifications – both those leading to, and those obtained at, university. As a result, persons with qualifications from States which had signed those conventions could begin their studies in their own country and then pursue or complete them abroad. However, most of those texts were prepared in the 50s and 60s, and higher education has moved on and changed in the meantime.

There are now university and non-university sectors, as well as many private institutions of varying status. Moreover, enlargement of the Council to include new members has increased diversification between the national systems. On top of the Council's five texts, UNESCO has had its own convention since 1979, applicable to countries in its "Europe Region", which actually includes a number of non-European countries, such as Canada, the United States and Israel.

When is a difference "substantial"?

Because of these two factors – the proliferation of conventions and changes in higher education – a new and up-to-date text was badly needed. Late in 1992, the Council suggested to UNESCO that a joint convention would make everything simpler and clearer, and save time and resources as



well. A feasibility study confirmed that the idea was a good one, and the Council's Committee of Ministers and UNESCO's Regional Committee for Europe gave the go-ahead.

The actual text was then prepared by a group of experts, working in consultation with the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility

(ENIC), which the Council and UNESCO had been running jointly since 1994. Together with the committee specially established for this purpose, ENIC will now have the job of making the new convention work.

Signatories to the text undertake to recognise qualifications validated by their partners as being equivalent to national qualifications on the same level – unless they can show that there is a «substantial difference» between them. States are left to decide what this term means, but one substantial difference would be, for example, a marked discrepancy between periods of study leading to supposedly equivalent diplomas.

Any State refusing to recognise another's diplomas must give its reasons for doing so, and signatories must expressly indicate what they understand by a «substantial difference».

Obligation, not option

By making it clear that recognition is not an option, but a general obligation, and by setting up open procedures to ensure that applications are processed within a reasonable time, the new convention should make it even easier for European students to study abroad and obtain foreign diplomas.

Apart from individual initiatives, on which no figures are available, 170,000 students are at present studying in other countries under the European Union's ERASMUS exchange programme. There were only 3,000 when the scheme was launched ten years ago.

Another 2,000 students and 800 teachers are doing likewise under the NORD-PLUS programme (which applies to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), while the CEEPUS

scheme, which operates in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, provides similar facilities for 800 students from those countries.

The following countries have signed the Council of Europe/UNESCO convention (up to 22/1/98): Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine, United States of America, Moldova, Austria, Italy, Canada, United Kingdom, Israel and Finland. ■

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How to contact us

Come surf with us on <http://culture.coe.fr> and you will have access to a wide range of information on the Council of Europe's activities in school, out-of-school and higher education and research, as well as culture and cultural heritage.

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Training for teachers – the European dimension

Since 1969, more than 20,000 teachers have attended training courses organised in different countries by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC).

The Museum as a Resource in History Teaching: this was the title of a course hosted in Stockholm, Sweden, by the University of Uppsala from 9 to 14 March 1997, with 20 history teachers and teacher trainers as participants. The

idea behind it – that museums can play a useful part in fleshing out and illustrating what children learn from textbooks – was a simple one, and the participants' aim was to see how best to put it into practice.

Practice, in fact, featured in the key-note questions the course set out to answer: In what areas are museums most useful as a teaching aid? How can the information and impressions

gathered during visits to museums be put to good use in the classroom? What can museum visits do that textbooks and other approaches to the teaching of history cannot?

The Uppsala course was only one of several, covering practically all areas of teaching, held in several countries during 1997.

Since 1990 an average annual total of 900 teachers and teacher trainers, as compared with an intake of about 400 in previous years, have been attending courses which not only help them to do their job better, but also bring them into contact with teachers from other countries, giving them a chance to compare situations and approaches and learn from one another.

The courses have the additional value of disseminating the latest trends and ideas on the Council of Europe's priority themes, such as modern languages, education for democratic citizenship and history teaching.

In the field of history teaching, for example, courses have been organised for teachers from countries which once formed part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. In addition to these national courses, which the organisers throw open to teachers and teacher trainers from other countries, there are the four seminars which the Land of Baden-Württemberg and the Council of Europe run jointly in Donaueschingen every year.

The first two seminars in 1997 were devoted to European heritage classes (May) and education for democratic citizenship (June), respectively.

The other two dealt with, respectively, women in Europe in the 20th century (October) and educational classroom games (November). In the first half

Participants to the course on "Democracy at School" last June enjoy a stroll in the charming streets and squares of Donaueschingen.



of 1998 the *Staatliche Akademie für Lehrerfortbildung* (set up at Donaueschingen by the then regional Minister for Education and current German President, Roman Herzog) will host and co-organise a course on "how to make a European training seminar successful" (May) and another one for heads of school and senior teachers on "population shifts and their impact on school life" (June).

Information on all courses and applications to participate are centralised by means of a network of correspondents – one in each CDCC member State.

On-the-spot expenses are covered by the host country, while travel is paid for by the Council of Europe. Participants undertake not only to send a report on the course to the organisers

and to their own authorities, but also to put into practice the training they have received and disseminate results to as wide an audience as possible in their own country. ■

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"Interdisciplinary Approach to Education for Democratic Citizenship"

76th European Teachers' Seminar
Donaueschingen, Germany, 16-21 June 1997

Report



Council for Cultural Co-operation
In-Service Training Programme for Teachers

Departures

Maitland Stobart, Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport and Head of the Education Department, retired from the Council of Europe late in 1997, after 36 years of active service. In bidding him farewell as chairman of the Education Committee, Klaus Eichner ended his speech as follows:

*«...I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known: cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all;*

*«...that which we are, we are:
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.»*

“With true British pragmatism Maitland believes in the bottom-up approach in international education activities. This is because for a devoted educationalist the needs of the individual come first. He has always upheld the key values of solidarity, compassion, open-mindedness, tolerance and civil courage...

“I do not think that Maitland feels at the end of an odyssey, but, since he referred recently to Lord Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, he obviously ponders on past, present and future. Here are the appropriate lines from Tennyson’s famous poem:

“Maitland does not like the word “retire”, as he will continue to serve the European cause by other means. He will leave us, but surely he agrees with John Donne: *No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, part of the main*”.

Ms Antonietta De Vigili – who retired also after 36 years, mainly dedicated to language learning and teaching, the section of which she was in charge – was happily surprised when, during a small farewell party in the *Restaurant bleu*, she was presented with a 79-page

Festschrift in her honour, with contributions by many experts with whom she had worked.

The preface by Maitland Stobart is worth quoting: “Our Organisation has always believed that if Europeans are to know and understand each other, to live and work together, they must learn each other’s languages.

“The achievements of our projects on modern languages reflect the vision, hard work and commitment of a group of dedicated experts and an equally dedicated secretariat, who worked together for an unusually long period of time. Antonietta De Vigili has been, in a very real sense, both the motor and the soul of our successive projects, and her unflagging drive and enthusiasm were an essential factor in their undoubted success”.

Antonietta De Vigili
in her office at the Council of Europe, 1996.

