



International Association
for
Christian Education



Intereuropean Commission on
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Editorial

Europe and populism, that is a tense relationship. Elections in the Netherlands and in France this spring were a success mostly for pro-European politicians with a rejection of populist tendencies, which was a relief for many. Nonetheless, there are strong anti-European tendencies in some societies because it is not clear (anymore) what the European integration stands for, in what areas it should proceed, and what benefits it has for European citizens. Developments in Poland and Hungary stand exemplary for tendencies towards a re-nationalisation, the Brexit in Britain is testing the EU at a whole new level.

In this situation, we want to call attention to a declaration of the European education ministers, which was passed in March 2015 in Paris and worked on continuously:

“Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.”

In a time of so-called religious terror attacks, where European integration loses support and dividing national policies find more approval, the ministers want to emphasise basic values (and education related to this) that may foster the cohesion of the European Union: respecting human dignity, freedom (including freedom of expression), democracy, equality, rule of law and respect of human rights. The values are shared by all member states of the European society that is characterized by plurality, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality of men and women.

Only empty words? No, helping to realise these basic values is a great task, also for religious education. It means fostering a process in which children and youth can take an active part, one that encourages them to think critically. Because the future of Europe lies in them being active and responsible, in shaping European societies..

We wish all readers a peaceful summer.

Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer and Dr Wim Kuiper (iV)
Dr Tania ap Siôn and Dr Peter Schreiner (ICCS)

Information from IV and ICCS

IV: News from the IV Board

For the first time in a long while it was possible for a representative of the Protestant schools in Hungary to attend the board meeting of the International Association, which took place on 10-11 March in Frankfurt-on-Main. For this task the head of the educational institute of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary appointed Judit Hallgató. For 25 years Ms Hallgató has been the head of the notable Protestant school centre in Győr. There she realised many successful international projects and partnerships and on top of that, she speaks excellent German. As a guest of the board Dr. Uta Hallwirth was also present, who as the head of the WAES (see below) was partly responsible for conference in Bratislava in November 2016 (see newsletter No 9). It was decided that the conferences should preferably take place every three years and experts of Catholic schools should be invited as well.

The focus of the board meeting on 14-15 July in Hannover was the preparation for the General Assembly 2017, where important decisions concerning the composition of the board will be made. Furthermore, the board talked about the events of the Reformation anniversary, which the association supported in many ways. A turning point for international cooperation is the transition of the project schools500reformation to a future global network of Protestant schools. The board sees it as the responsibility of IV to represent Protestant European Schools in this context and to coordinate their contributions.

IV: General Assembly 2017 “What kind of teachers do Christian schools need?” (Dublin, 1st & 2nd December)

The next General Assembly of the International Association of Christian Education (IV) will take place on 1-2 December 2017 in Dublin (Ireland). The host is the (Anglican) archdiocese Dublin. The assembly is connected with a learning event about “Commitment and Qualification: What teachers do we need in Christian Schools?”. Prof Dr Manfred Pirner (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) will deliver the keynote. Membership applications from countries not yet represented are expected in the statutory part of the assembly. It is, as always, also part of the programme to get to know the local school and church life.

IV & ICCS: European Conference in Bad Wildbad 2017

“A pedagogy of hope in a changing Europe” was the topic of the European Seminar for Teachers and Teacher Trainers, which took place in Bad Wildbad (Germany) on 18-21 April. It was jointly organised by the International Association and the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS) together with the Academy for Further Training and Career Development in Schools of Baden-Württemberg. Around 30 teachers and other education experts from 7 different nations participated. It started off by looking at current challenges in Europe in order to get to know ways to convey knowledge about and a positive view of Europe in schools. Elements of a pedagogy of hope were introduced, which are aimed at strengthening pupils in their own actions and giving them hope for the future. As a representative of Religious Education Prof Dr Bert Roebben (Dortmund) gave an inspiring lecture and the viewpoint of educational science

was represented by Prof Dr Dirk Oesselmann (Freiburg). The organisation of the conference was supported by Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer, Dr Peter Schreiner and Janika Olschewski.

Reformation Summer 2017

World Reformation Exhibition “Gates of Freedom”, Wittenberg

The anniversary of the Reformation 500 years ago brings many events and projects for people interested in Protestant education and especially Protestant schools. As part of the World Reformation Exhibition “Gates of Freedom”, which can be visited from 20 May to 10 September in Wittenberg, the pavilion “Talent’s Tent” offers pupils and teachers of Protestant schools a place to meet and a platform for presentations. IV secretary Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer and Janika Olschewski (Comenius Institute) came for the Europe themed week from 31 May to 5 June to inform about the diversity of Protestant school and education activities in European countries.

International Schools Camp and Global Schools500Reformation Day

From 22-27 June pupils together with teachers from all continents met, talked and celebrated together in a youth camp. Hundreds of them came from overseas, first to Protestant schools in Germany, to then travel together with their German peers to Wittenberg for games, competitions, discussions and talks. The highlight of the week was the Global Day on 23 June. The day was packed with a varied programme containing lots of music; balloons with the thoughts of young people on the motto “Let’s shape the future together” were flying in the sky of Wittenberg and everybody walked together through the town centre to the All Saints' Church, where a moving multilingual service was held. The sermon was given by the Chairman of the Council of the EKD, Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and the Revd Samuel Mutabazi from Rwanda. Pupils stated new theses from a Protestant perspective on how to shape the future of school, church and society.

Global Pedagogical Network (GPEN) – Joining in Reformation

With the highlight of the global Schools500Reformation Day the internet-based project “500 Protestant Schools worldwide celebrate 500 Years of Reformation” came to an end. The website www.schools500reformation.net will remain active and can still be used. Nonetheless, those responsible for the project were thinking about a new structure for the time after the Reformation anniversary and the idea of a worldwide network entitled “Global Pedagogical Network (GPEN) – Joining in Reformation” was born. This new network was launched at the Global Schools500Reformation Day on 23 June. The education department of the EKD have plans regarding the specifics of the network, which will be further worked on and implemented at an international conference in Rwanda in November 2017.

CoGREE and Member Organisations



Meeting of the CoGREE Steering Group January / October

The steering group of CoGREE met in Münster in January 2017. One topic was the contacts to the Conference of European Churches. The exchange with the general secretary, the Revd Heikki Huttunen, in the context of the Klingenthal colloquy as well as impulses from the open letter “What Future for Europe?” were much appreciated. A more intense exchange with the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) is also being pursued. The next meeting of the steering group will take place in Soesterberg/NL near Amersfoort on 13-14 October. The concept for a newly designed website will be the main topic.

EFTRE: Board Meeting in Athens

On 31 March 2017 the Board of the European Forum for RE teachers (EFTRE) met in Athens. Eleven European countries were represented at the table of the Inter-orthodox Centre and projects were planned together. The focus was on the upcoming conference 2019 in Dublin. The preliminary working title was chosen as “Religious Education. REconciling REalities“. Thematically the conference will revolve around current challenges in our (European) societies and new challenges of Religious Education. Furthermore, references to the history of Ireland will be made, which is a role model for reconciling different (religious) groups. Janika Olschewski and Lesley Prior participated at the meeting and can be contacted for further information. Updates can also always be found on www.eftre.net.

EFTRE: Seminar at University Athens

The day before the EFTRE board meeting a seminar with board members of EFTRE and RE teachers as well as RE university students took place at the National and Kapodistrias-University Athens. Contributions from Lesley Prior (Roehampton University, London), Risto Aikonen (University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu), Olga Schihalejev (University of Tartu) and Sandra Cullen (Dublin City University) encouraged discussions about what good RE should look like. The participants could find commonalities as well as differences between various European countries. This made it possible that horizons were broadened and that everybody could learn from each other.

WAES: OKR Dr Uta Hallwirth's Farewell

The Department for Research and Development of Protestant Schools (WAES) has existed at the Comenius Institute since 2003 as a joint project of the EKD and Barbara-Schadeberg-foundation. The office has since then – according to its mission – supported Protestant schools in Germany intensely in the context of research and practice through cooperation initiatives and its own projects. The head of the Department has been since its founding OKR Dr. Uta Hallwirth. After 14 years in this position Uta Hallwirth was given a festive farewell at the church offices of the EKD, with best wishes for her well deserved retirement. A lecture was given by Prof Dr Martin Schreiner, University of Hildesheim. The head of the education department, Dr Birgit Sandler-Koschel, and the director of the Comenius Institute, Dr. Peter Schreiner took the

opportunity to express their thanks and appreciation for her accomplishments. It is planned to fill the position in autumn.

AGES: General Assembly and Learning Event

The Association of Protestant School Confederations (AGES) includes school alliances from north and south-west Germany as well as the Protestant school foundation of Bavaria, which all together represent 165 schools (mainly focused on general education). Besides that, there are expert groups: the “economic conference” and the Protestant boarding schools in Germany (EID). The most recent General Assembly, in which IV has a seat and vote, took place in the Wilhelm-Löhe school in Nuremberg on 6 April 2017. It was followed by a learning event regarding staff recruitment for Protestant schools. Thereby it became clear that private schools are coming more and more under pressure through having to compete with the state school system because in comparison with them, the church barely offers anymore the safety of civil service positions to teachers.

AEED: Ecumenical Cooperation Gains importance

As in former years the Association of Protestant Teachers and Educators (AEED), which is the umbrella organisation of all German Protestant RE teacher associations, linked its representative assembly with an ecumenical seminar about RE in Germany. It was organised together with its Catholic equivalent, the German Catechist Association (DKV) and took place on 5-7 May 2017. The representatives of both associations could experience in the conference centre “Augustinerkloster” in Erfurt inspiring inputs as well as stimulating discussions regarding the question of God in RE and regarding the didactics of confessional-cooperative learning processes. For both sides, there is no question that the cooperation of the confessions in RE is a necessity, which also offers new opportunities. Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer and Dr Peter Schreiner participated at the event.

Summer Academy in Hungary

The educational institute of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary held a summer academy for teachers of Protestant schools in the south-east Hungarian city Mezőberény on 3-5 July 2017. Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer, IV secretary, was invited to participate. Topics of the lectures were, for example, a changed understanding of education and new learning methods in a digital era, recognising burnout and intervention methods, as well as the expectations the Church has of teachers at Protestant schools. The workshops dealt with issues regarding the cooperation between the school and parents, primary school education for the local German-speaking minority and with the newly established obligatory social service in the last years of upper secondary school. The IV secretary campaigned for deepened cooperation on a European level as well as recognising the global dimension of Protestant education.

Current Developments in the READY Project

The first half of the project time was taken mainly by planning and developing, but now the results are increasingly shared with the public. For example on 13 June the first national multiplier event took place in London. It will be followed by a German one on 6 October in Tübingen. Dr Peter Schreiner will hold a lecture on the topic, “Religious education between ‘neutrality’ and

‘confessional RE’. The READY project in the context of European development”. Afterwards there is the chance for further discussions about the results of the project in smaller groups. It is still possible to register for the event.

To register, please visit: <https://lobw.kultus-bw.de/Events/Veranstaltung/8174>. Janika Olschewski olschewski@comenius.de and Dr Peter Schreiner schreiner@comenius.de can be contacted with further questions.

CEC and CPCE



CEC: Consultation Process: What future for Europe?

The consultation process, which was started by CEC in June 2016, was a great success. With an open letter to Churches and partner organisations in Europe, CEC initiated an exchange about a European project, which is in favour of building a community based on common values. In the spirit of the 15-year-old Charta Oecumenica, CEC asks the basic question about common values and their realisation in Europe today. By May 2017, they had received 19 responses from CEC member Churches, national church councils and partner organisations. Some of the manifold aspects that were mentioned concerned the question, to what extent is it the responsibility of Churches to contribute to a value debate that is imposed on by politics? Especially because Europe is more than just the member states of the EU. The thematic contributions are summarised in a report: http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Future-of-Europe_summary-and-analyses-of-received-reactions_final.pdf and can be found here: <http://www.ceceurope.org/open-letter/>.

CEC: Thematic Reference Group of Education for Democratic Citizenship

Due to the loss of the Revd Richard Fischer and Maria Pomazkova in the CEC office in Strasbourg, it has not been active anymore. This situation has hampered the work of the thematic reference group of Education for Democratic Citizenship. This conclusion was drawn at the last meeting in Strasbourg at the end of February. Speaker Hanna Broadbridge in close cooperation with the General Secretariat is preparing a thematic contribution of the working group for the General Assembly of CEC from 31 May to 6 June 2018 in Novi Sad. A further meeting of the group is planned for September 2017 in Brussels.

Council of Europe and European Union



EU: Europe Seminar in Brussels

From 31 May to 2 June the “Europäischen Bund für Bildung und Wissenschaft e.V.” (ebb-aede) organised in cooperation with the Karl-Arnold foundation a seminar in Brussels regarding European education policy. Together with representatives of the European parliament, the commission and the Committee of the Regions the participants could discuss current developments

such as the Brexit and preventing terrorism. Especially regarding the last point, common values and accepting the human rights convention is crucial. RE can play a key role in getting them across to pupils. Therefore a meeting with COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community) to discuss further these issues was arranged as well. Janika Olschewski (Comenius Institute) participated and can be contacted for further information.

EU: Consultation regarding ERASMUS+

ERASMUS+ is the EU programme for general and vocational education, youth and sports. Under its umbrella seven different subprogrammes exist with a total budget of €14.7 Million (term of 2014-2020). This means an increase of 40% in comparison to the former term. Around 4 million participants and 125,000 institutions have profited from ERASMUS+ in the last 30 years. The goal of the consultation is to hear the opinions of different stakeholders and of the general public regarding the relevance of the ERASMUS+ aims as well as the effectiveness of the steps taken and the efficiency of the implementation. In addition, views on the coherence and the surplus of the programme were explored. In other words, what the programme is able to achieve better regarding the challenges and possibilities in the field of education, training, youth and sports when compared with the member states by themselves.

EU: Consultation on Shared Values

The European Commission has launched a consultation on promoting shared values through education, which is open until the middle of August 2017. The outcomes will inform policies that promote social inclusion and the ownership of shared values through education, while also helping to prevent violent extremism.

The consultation is part of the follow-up of the [Paris Declaration](#) of the education ministers on promoting citizenship and the values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education (adopted 17 March 2015).

"Shared values such as mutual respect and freedom of expression are fundamental to the functioning of our democracies. I believe that education can play a stronger role not only in equipping young people with skills but also helping them to become engaged citizens who can live together respecting their differences and being able to distinguish facts from propaganda."

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

Council of Europe: Learning to Live Together.

A shared Commitment to Democracy

Around 300 representatives of governments, education institutions and civil society organisations debated the future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe at a conference in Strasbourg on 20-22 June 2017. The participants discussed current challenges and opportunities in this area, shared examples of good practices and lessons learned, and proposed recommendations for future action, including specific criteria and mechanisms for evaluation of progress, in particular in the framework of the Council of Europe [Charter on Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#).

The conclusions of the forthcoming [Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe](#) provided the basis for discussion. More information about the conference is available at: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/conference>

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