

N E C E



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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

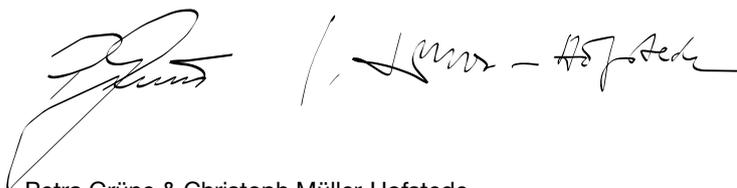
in 2011 the very foundations of the European Union were shaken by the financial crisis, thus once again raising well-known fundamental questions: Is it possible to maintain conditions for self-government while undermining the nation state? What are the limits of solidarity amongst Europe's citizens? Can Europe be truly united through its institutions, common history and its common currency? Now these questions take on a different meaning. Did Europe fail? and What does Europe need to overcome its crisis of „self-understanding“, this is what Dr Stefan Auer of La Trobe University, Melbourne, asks in his article. Or could this crisis be understood as a challenge, an opportunity, as Inga Wachsmann of the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, Paris, describes the situation? Dr Mimis Petridis explains the effects of the Greek crisis on the education-political work of the UNESCO Center Aristotelis in Halkidiki.

As in every edition of our newsletter you will also find a number of upcoming events and publications as well as interesting news from the European Commission and conference reports. E.g. the moderation team of this year's NECE conference in Warsaw, Almut Möller of DGAP and Dr Matthias Haß, political scientist, present a short summary. You will find further impressions (audio, video, written) from the conference at: <http://blog.nece.eu/>, and soon also at www.nece.eu.

We hope that you will enjoy reading and look forward to your suggestions.

We wish you, your friends and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Best regards,



Petra Grüne & Christoph Müller-Hofstede
Federal Agency for Civic Education

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FOCUS

This section highlights current issues on the political agenda of the European Union or in the field of citizenship education in Europe.

It's crisis in Europe – buzzword. Challenge! Chance?

by Inga Wachsmann, Responsible of programmes at the Foundation Charles Léopold Mayer – FPH (France)

Financial and economic crisis, debt crisis, social crisis, environmental crisis, ... crisis of credibility: illustrations of the crisis of democratic legitimacy in "Europe". These multilayered crises challenge different levels of governance in Europe as well as core values of the European integration project, democracy and solidarity in the first place. Could that permanent and complex situation be a chance for a democratic and participatory Europe?

Challenges for a supranational, legitimate, democratic and citizen-centred effective political Union capable of internal and external strategic acting

One summit after another is planned for crisis resolution. Crisis as a buzzword, to justify urgently negotiated, slightly democratic intergovernmental decisions taken by a leaders in the European Union (EU). Important, often unimaginable steps in terms of integration are made. Decisions in that "permanent state of emergency", as Habermas puts it, are complex, reaction instead of strategic, confusing, not credible and lacking democratic legitimation. Confusion gives a responsibility of explanation, training and understanding to the different political and societal actors including parliaments, the civic education sector and citizens themselves. Heading towards a political Union, there is also need for transnational parties and political proposals to reach a resilient transnational social and solidarity-inspired community – a feeling of belonging in this moment of general concern, where rudiments of a European public sphere emerge. In a subsidiary system all elements have to be operational to ensure democratic functioning, trust and efficiency.

Civil society challenges

As regards European civil society, there are multiple actors organising conferences and seminars, campaigns and trainings and lobbying for proposals. Every day, new and often innovative initiatives emerge. They are run by groups of engaged people, active citizens – be they "citizens" in the legal definition or not! - more or less organised in associations, initiatives, campaigns or movements. They play an important role for European citizenship and a role for civic education, too. The challenges are to achieve visibility on the adequate level of governance and to create synergies via interconnection and co-construction of proposals and activities. Despite the competitive situation of movements running for the same funds and political attention, appreciation of cooperation and coordination increases. Sharing rare capacities as a practice

of solidarity?! The core responsibility of civil society and citizens is to debate and make clear what kind of a democratic Europe they want and how they want to get there.

Citizenship reloaded: leading Europe through crises

Europe has a rich civil society. Its active citizens are needed as part of the solution of the multilayered crises. Manifestos are published and lobbied for (Spinelli group, Confrontations Europe, Sauvons l'Europe, etc.), calls for a convention for treaty reform (by the federalist movements, the Forum permanent de la société civile européenne, some MEPs) with concrete proposals about an agenda and its content, too. Despite cooperation and openness, civil society actors should link local initiatives providing practical solutions need with decision makers, media and also (Brussels-based) NGO-platforms or should push for a more open and flexible public funding of civil society initiatives.

Active citizenship also means a more intensive use of existing legal tools of participation, such as talking to MEPs, petitions to the European parliament, investigating the European Ombudsman, addressing the specialised and decentralised EU-agencies or filling the European Years (e.g. the year of "citizens" in 2013) with life. In addition, starting from April 2012, the unique transnational participatory tool, the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), will be launched. Criticism of its limits might be justified, nevertheless, European civil society might use the ECI to make itself visible and to show that active citizenship in Europe is possible.

Keeping the need for coordination and synergies in mind, new forms of citizens' movements occur, transgressing social classes, indicating shifts in civic organisation and addressing new demands towards democracy. Social networks, the Occupy movement or the "indignados": they are also symptomatic for diverse needs a participatory democratic system of the 21st century has to reply to. What remains to do is combining cooperation, thinking and acting as optimistic citizens engaged in (transnational) initiatives contributing to the emergence of a transnational community.

To conclude, three short examples of innovative successful citizens' organisations that work towards a participative and democratic Europe:

First, the G1000, a citizens' summit designed, organised and financed by a group of Belgian citizens starting out from the idea that the political crisis in Belgium is not only a Belgium crisis "but a wider crisis of democracy" (www.g1000.be).

Second, Finance Watch, a consortium of civil society organisations that are pooling their expertise and have now organised themselves as a "counter-lobby" vis-à-vis the well organised lobby of the financial sector (www.finance-watch.org).

Third, Citizens For Europe e.V. with its "Jede Stimme 2011" initiative around the Berlin regional elections where parallel symbolic elections were organised for all citizens not having voting rights (<http://www.jedestimme2011.de/>).

FOCUS

Europe's self-destructive article of faith

by Dr Stefan Auer, Senior Lecturer in History and Politics, A Jean Monnet Chair in EU Interdisciplinary Studies, La Trobe University, Melbourne (Australia)

European leaders' unwavering commitment to ever closer union is causing more harm than good. Europe does not need more integration; it needs more democracy to enable its nations to regain control over their destiny. Partial and well-managed disintegration may be preferable to a chaotic implosion.

Europe's better times were meant to be ahead of it. Not so long ago, *The European Dream* was believed to have provided the best 'vision of the future' (Rifkin 2004). 'Soft power Europe' would rule without anyone noticing but everyone benefiting. All these assumptions proved hubristic: Europe's turn of fortune is humbling, humiliating and, perhaps, irreversible.

What went wrong, and when? Europe's most audacious moment occurred some time between 1989 and 1991. That short period of time encapsulated both the demise of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the bold step forward on the path towards an 'ever-closer union' in Western Europe. Twenty years later, the accomplishment of post-Second World War European unity has proven extremely fragile. The significant failures of economic and political integration have forced Europeans to re-consider the underpinnings of their project. The economic crisis in 2010-2011 also manifested itself as a crisis of European democracy. Old questions acquired new meaning: is it possible to maintain conditions for self-government while undermining the nation state? What are the limits of solidarity amongst Europe's citizens? Can Europe be truly united through its institutions, common history and its common currency? Do we even need more unity in Europe? The bold project of the common currency, the Euro, became possible after the events of 1989-1990. Its primary political aim was to anchor a reunified Germany more firmly within Europe. Alongside the common currency, EU citizenship, introduced by the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, was meant to cement Europe's political unity. While the latter's consequences are not proving as damaging as those of the common currency, the considerable differences between the rhetoric and reality of supranational citizenship also expose the EU's limitations.

The common currency has always been much more than a transnational medium of exchange. From its inception it was intended to be the symbol of united Europe par excellence. Rather than achieving this, the Eurozone crisis has reinforced latent suspicions, if not hostilities, between EU nations. Similarly, citizenship rights aimed at strengthening the internal market by facilitating mobility also became part of the EU's efforts to engender a sense of belonging between ordinary people and the Union. However, as a result of the restrictions

placed on its application, EU citizenship made some Europeans, particularly from the new member states, feel like second-class citizens. Furthermore, demands for more redistribution of wealth across Europe (i.e. through Europeanizing the sovereign debt of the member states via Eurobonds) have met with growing resistance amongst citizens in the solvent countries, such as Germany, Finland and Slovakia.

The nationalist backlash

Rather than causing doubt among EU federalists, the most severe economic crisis in post-war European history has merely strengthened their faith in ever closer union: 'If the EU did not exist, we would have to invent it today,' wrote Ulrich Beck. 'Far from being a threat to national sovereignty at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the EU first makes it possible. [...] The pooled sovereignty of the EU provides the only hope for every nation and every citizen to live in freedom and peace.' This argument has been echoed by other leading intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas, former politicians such as Helmut Schmidt and Joschka Fischer, and by EU leaders such as José Manuel Barroso, Jean-Claude Trichet and Herman van Rompuy. After some initial delay, even national leaders followed suit. At the most recent EU Council summit on 9 December 2011, 26 out of 27 member states agreed to a plan to create a fiscal union for Europe, with far-reaching consequences for national sovereignty. With the notable exception of the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, the only strategy most leaders appeared to be willing to contemplate was moving forward towards a supranational Europe. This would eventually lead to harmonized taxation and a quasi government, at least for economic matters. What these plans ignored was the lack of public support for measures that would further erode national sovereignty. Control over the national budget is perhaps one of the oldest prerogatives of all democratic governments. After all, the slogan that inspired the establishment of both British and US democracy was 'no taxation without representation'.

To solve the sovereign debt crisis, the nations of Europe should reclaim their sovereignty, which would allow them to address the underlying causes of the current malaise: the lack of competitiveness and the loss of trust in democratic politics. The fact that markets no longer trust political leaders tends to obscure a far more worrisome development, which is the utter loss of respect that European citizens have for their democratically elected leaders. The latest summit did nothing to show how Europe's struggling economies can be saved from the imminent threat of sovereign default. It did not, because it could not. Only Italians can save Italy, only Greeks can save Greece. Europe has failed. Following the words of an Irish expert on failure, Samuel Beckett, Europe should: 'Fail again. Fail better.'

This article is an excerpt from Stefan Auer's forthcoming book *Whose Liberty Is It Anyway? Europe At The Crossroads*, Seagull Books, March 2012. The author thanks Nicole Scicluna who assisted in researching and writing the book.

If you would like to read on, have a look at www.eurozine.com/articles/2011-12-01-auer-en.html

INTRODUCING

In every edition we introduce organisations that are actively involved in the field of citizenship education.

The UNESCO Center Aristotelis

The UNESCO Center Aristotelis (UCA) is a non-profit organisation established in October 2010 in Halkidiki, Greece. Institutionally the Center has been existing since 2006 under the name of Cultural Organisation of Halkidiki (COH). It is dedicated to “education for all”. Also, the Center is active in the field of cultural production, cultural heritage and lifelong learning. The vice-chairman of the Center, Dr Mimis Petridis, answered our questions.

NECE: How has the UNESCO Center Aristotelis been organised and financed since 2010? What were the reasons for this kind of formation?

Mimis Petridis: UCA is organised on the basis of what in the past was the “Cultural Organisation of Halkidiki”. As its successor institution, from the COH the Center took over an establishment and a big network of contributors, partners and volunteers. During the first months of its existence the Center was financed by COH and the available funds were enough to allow the continuation of Center’s two, at the time, core activities: the SchoolDoc project and the ongoing cultural research activity in the field of culture of the ethnic and cultural groups that currently reside in the area of Halkidiki (Greek refugees from Istanbul, Asia Minor and the Black Sea, and immigrants from Eastern Europe and Central Asia). Since October 2010 the Center numbers 20 full members coming from the fields of higher education, local government and civil society as well as more than a hundred contributors/ cooperators who act as multipliers in their own institutions and organisations. All these people work on a voluntary basis, since the Center lacks funding to cover even the minimum of expenses. This “loose” type of organisation is not exactly an option but mostly a necessity resulting of the lack of structural funding.

NECE: The Center aims to promote “education for all”. How does the Center try to reach its main goal? Could you give a concrete example of methods and formats you work with?

Mimis Petridis: The organisational strategy of the Center refers to the incorporation of as many agents as possible, coming from as many different organisations/ environments as possible. These agents are usually members of cultural groups, youth organisations, immigrant organisations, but also civil servants, elementary and high-school teachers and citizens and politicians active in the local government. Through contacts, events, seminars and promotion activities, the Center tries to introduce the education-



nal element to the activities of these public bodies/ organisations, offering opportunities for both formal and non-formal learning. An interesting example of the methods and the formats we work with is the SchoolDoc programme. Under this programme our trainers try to support teachers and high-school students to do research and produce their own short-film documentaries, using tools and methods of non-formal learning. These short-films are later shown to larger audiences of youngsters and adults, so that the students take the position of knowledge providers. Through this activity it is not only the students who get access to a new type of knowledge (that of film-making and new media promotion) but also the adult audiences who get the opportunity to “rediscover” their reality through the (half-artistic, half-journalistic) view of the youngsters. In short, UCA understands “education for all” as an approach to knowledge that seeks to go beyond traditional modes of learning, but also beyond traditional audiences. In our case these audiences are youngsters facing an empowerment gap due to lack of access to the new technologies, elders who in their youth were deprived from basic education and adults that seek a type of knowledge that goes beyond vocational training.

NECE: What will be the next most important steps on the further development and upcoming special features of the UCA?

Mimis Petridis: There are three big targets set for the year 2012. The first target is the promotion of the Unesco System of Associated Schools among the schools of the area. We want to encourage the local schools to design their own projects in accordance with the four priorities set by UNESCO and support their participation in the Unesco network of associated schools. The second target of the UCA is the training of its own volunteers and partners. The aim is to provide training to teachers, trainers but also to ordinary members of organisations without teaching experience, so that they will be able to apply methods of non-formal learning to their group activities. By this type of training the UCA is aiming at further developing its educational efficiency through the best pos-

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sible exploitation of its own forces and without being dependent upon (unaffordable at the moment) external structures.

Finally, although there is a big uncertainty concerning the participation of Greek organisations in the life long learning programmes of the EU, UCA is preparing to apply for a Grundtvig programme together with other members of the NECE network, for the organisation and application of the votematch programme in late 2012. Under this programme UCA is expecting to further develop its organisational capacity and acquire funds for the promotion of citizenship education on the national level.

NECE: Regarding the financial crisis of Greece, how does this influence the work of the Center and its aim of promoting “education for all”? What do you think, how important is citizenship education/ education for all regarding the problems Greece is facing today?

Mimis Petridis: The financial crisis has a tremendously negative effect on the work of the Center. We can just mention that the MiniDoc project will take place this year with 1/5th of last year’s budget. It is easy to imagine that such a cutback can be fatal for an organisation that functions on a voluntary basis. However, we are determined to continue with whatever means are available. We need to continue. What was in the beginning a financial crisis is day by day becoming a social crisis.

Early school leaving is expected to rise and the will for lifelong learning by adults to fall. These phenomena gradually push the task of education from the central state to civil society. Citizenship education in particular can be seen as crucial for our perspective of education for all. First because it is being removed from the school curriculum, putting in danger a whole generation of students-future citizens. Second, because Greeks understand the financial crisis as a form of political (institutional) crisis.

Following the teaching of the great Aristotle -who gave his name to the Center- UCA has to stay active, reminding the people and practicing the view that democracy -far more than a political system- is a social achievement that needs to be validated and revitalised at every moment and within all political and social arrangements.

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REPORTS

NECE conference

“Closing the empowerment gap through citizenship education: How to address educationally disadvantaged groups”

17 – 19 November 2011, Centrum Artystyczne Fabryka Trzciny, Warsaw (Poland)

by Almut Möller, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and Dr Matthias Haß, Political Scientist

At this years NECE conference about 200 participants met in the welcoming atmosphere of Fabryka Trzciny in Warsaw's district of Praga, traditionally a poor neighbourhood, which is undergoing a process of gentrification right now.

Jacek Michałowski, Representative of the Chancellery of the Polish President, officially opened the conference. The international meeting focused on challenges and problems in the field of citizenship education with educationally disadvantaged groups. But also, as Thomas Krüger, the president of Germany's Federal Agency for Civic Education, stressed in his opening remarks, “we will rethink and change our attitudes towards these people as learners and citizens. We should stop focusing on the deficits but begin to see what they have to contribute.”

The opening lecture was held by the internationally renowned political theorist Benjamin Barber. In his thought-provoking lecture Mr. Barber analyzed the challenges democratic systems face today. For him the problems are threefold:

1. The existence of a democratic deficit. For more and more people active citizenship is not an option anymore because political decisions are made by small groups of elites.
2. The challenge to live in an information age when politics and commerce are dominated by digital media.
3. The challenges of an interdependent world. Nothing happens in only one place anymore. Democracy cannot be strengthened only in parts of the world while being neglected in others.

The challenge to citizenship education is not only to provide concepts of integrating participants in the political process, but to enable them to understand the degree to which Western democracies have become dysfunctional over time. According to Barber it is necessary to be subversive in order to change the systems towards more participatory forms of democracy.



REPORTS



The following panel discussion aimed to connect these broader topics with the particular focus of the conference. Barbara Malak-Minkiewicz from the IEA in the Netherlands contributed her experience with educationally disadvantaged groups. She stressed that it was necessary to try to enable educationally disadvantaged groups to participate in society on a basic level. Andy Williamson, a consultant from the UK, discussed the opportunities and limits of the new media with regard to civic participation. He stressed that the use of new media cannot be an end in itself. One clearly has to develop a productive approach to the new media in the field of citizenship education while being aware of the potential of these media as mere marketing tools.

The opening panel on the second conference day explored in depth the target groups. Eric Flügge from Sinus Institute in Germany presented the “Sinus milieus” method that aims at mapping strata of societies to better understand their respective needs, fields of interest and aims in life. He also presented the findings of a study on educationally disadvantaged groups, enabling the conference participants to better understand who the groups are that one needs to address and how to do this. David Kerr, the newly appointed Director of Educational Programmes at the Citizenship Foundation in London, widened the perspective to a European approach and presented the findings of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) which assessed citizenship education at both European and international levels.

The input from the panel discussions and lectures provided the framework for the discussions among the participants throughout the conference. An “Open Forum” where participants explored Fabryka Trzciny and got to know each other, eight workshops which were rerun in two consecutive sessions, as well as ample time in between the official parts of the conference created a space for participants to exchange ideas, to network and to develop ideas and joint projects. The workshops included a wide range of learning environments: schools as well as non-formal settings, community and urban district work, media and social networks, vocational training as well as outdoors activities. It proved to be very productive to hear voices from a wide range of backgrounds, coming from 26 countries from Europe and beyond. The workshop discussions were productive and lively. Participants transferred their work experiences from different countries into an international setting, shared their views, and discussed examples of best practice.

The conference concluded with French philosopher Jean-Marc Ferry who once again widened the perspective towards the topic of democracy and citizenship in a globalizing world. While Benjamin Barber’s opening lecture had focused on international challenges for democracy, Ferry very clearly and thoughtfully addressed the situation in the European Union as a “cosmopolitical” system: What does the increasing integration of

Europe mean for a transnational understanding of citizenship? And how can Europe’s democracies regain their clout over globalising markets that set up their own rules, thereby challenging democracy? Speaking about strengthening a transnational democracy in Europe, Ferry put a particular emphasis on parliaments that have to learn to connect and work with each other at all levels: locally, regionally, nationally, and at the European level. In order for the political sphere to re-conquer its power from the economic sphere, Ferry pointed out that it was necessary to globalise democracy in order to be able to democratise globalisation.

Within the framework of this year’s NECE conference the DARE General Assembly took place

On 19 November 2011, DARE held its annual General Assembly in Warsaw. Seven new member organisations were welcomed: Campus for Peace (Open University Catalunya, Spain), EUROCLIO-The European Association of History Educators, „The Child’s Crossroad“ (Georgia), Internationaler Bund (Germany), MEDIEL (Belgium), MitOst and EduNet (both Germany).

The General Assembly elected a new Board, which will serve for a two-year term. Board members are: Alenka Elena Begant (Centre for Citizenship Education, Slovenia, Treasurer), Frank Elbers (HREA, Netherlands, Chair), Lora Lalova (Partners Bulgaria Foundation), Tanveer Parnez (BEMIS, Scotland, Vice Chair), Gabriella Patriziano (VIS, Italy), and Georg Pirker (AdB, Germany, Secretary). Finally, members also adopted a new membership fee structure that will contribute to the medium- and long-term financial sustainability of the network.

DARE is a Europe-wide network of NGOs and other organisations devoted to raise the profile of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE), promote trans-cultural and transnational cooperation, and enhance the quality of education within these fields. DARE currently has 55 members in 27 countries reaching over 25,000 educators, trainers and other stakeholders. the Netherlands, facilitating workshops, debates and trainings for adults, youths and professionals on the topic of democracy and the rule of law.

More information about the NECE conference at: <http://blog.nece.eu/> and soon at: www.nece.eu

International Conference

“Becoming part of the mainstream?”

Right-wing populism and extremism in the European Union”

International Conference, 7 - 11 December 2011, International Sonnenberg Centre, St. Andreasberg (Germany)

by Martin Langebach, Lutz Heinke & Martin Hassel, Germany

Multiplicators from Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, the Czech Republic and Germany discussed, on the basis of presentations about certain European nations, similarities and differences of right-wing positions in the snowed in Harz Mountains.

As a certified expert, Magdalena Marsovszky (University of Applied Sciences in Fulda, Germany) addressed the development in Hungary. She did not only concentrate on the right-wing extremist party Jobbik and their Guards, but also outlined the wide-spread belief in the “Magyars cult”, the common root of all Hungarians, as a major problem. Marsovszky emphasized furthermore that the wish to redraw the nation’s borders is fairly popular in Hungary.

Aleksandra Moroska, political scientist (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland) tried to develop criteria to differentiate between right-wing extremism and populism. Moroska designed in her report on Poland the rejection of the European Union, which is spread among part of the population, as one of the main problems on which right-wing populist powers try to tie in. The result of the conference debate was that with the recent Euro crisis scepticism towards and the rejection of the EU is one of the current topics of the complete European right-wing populism.

Wolfgang Kapust, audio broadcast journalist (WDR/Cologne), pointed out to the growing impact of Islamophobia as a mobilisation topic of the populist and extreme right. There was agreement among conference participants that the rejection of Islam and Muslims has by now become a European phenomenon, on which right-wing populists and extremists, fuelling unreal fears.

Antonio Riccò, publicist, topically continued the work of his predecessor in his report on Italy. Islam is an issue today on which the populist

right constitutes a “we”-feeling. That those political powers are successful in Italy is foremost due to the media.

Annette Birschel, audio broadcast journalist from Amsterdam, pointed out by the example of Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders how populist figures could and can build their success in the Netherlands on fears and prejudices.

Carsten Hübner, journalist from Berlin, emphasized that there are topics which are picked up by populists and extreme right-wings Europe-wide. But yet, he does not see signs of neither a European agenda nor party nor a common faction in the EU-Parliament. Indeed, such a connection could arise from the current debt-crisis, the conference participants feared.

In the concluding event, the German Member of Parliament Viola von Cramon (die Grünen) talked about her own experiences in her constituency, where some parts have quite a notable right-wing potential. The commonly debated question of which demands should be posed to politics and the society to stop the spread of right-wing ideas closed the conference.

The conference was organised by the Sonnenberg-Kreis e.V. and was realised in co-operation with Nederlandse Sonnenberg Vereniging, Sonnenberg Association of Great Britain, Universität Pardubice, Kanizsa Felsöoktatásért Alapítvány, Den Danske Sonnenbergkreds and Liceo Morgagni. Funded by the EU programme „Jugend in Aktion“, the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Otto Bennemann Stiftung.

*More information is available at
<http://sonnenberg-international.de/BRR/>*



POLICY NEWS

This section provides information about news and political decisions that are relevant for the agenda setting of citizenship education.

Proposing 2013 as the „European Year of Citizens“

2013 will mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Union citizenship under the Maastricht Treaty that came into force on 1 November 1993. The European Commission therefore proposed to designate 2013 as the „European Year of Citizens“. Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner responsible for Justice and Citizenship, commented on this occasion: „The European Year of Citizens will be a good opportunity to remind people what rights they have thanks to the European Union and what the European Union can do for every one of us.“ The Year aims to help European citizens exercise their right to move and reside freely within the EU. The challenges for the „Year of Citizens“ will be to raise citizens' awareness of their right to reside freely within the European Union and of how they can benefit from EU rights and policies; to stimulate citizens' active participation in EU policy-making; to initiate debates about the impact and potential of the right to free movement, especially on strengthening cohesion and people's mutual understanding of each other. The Commission plans to further develop the multilingual Europe Direct and Your Europe web portals into a ‚one-stop-shop‘ information system on European citizens' rights. The Commission will also further promote the role and visibility of problem solving tools, such as SOLVIT (<http://ec.europa.eu/solvit>), which allow European citizens to make better use of and defend their rights.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/reding/multimedia/news/2011/08/20110811_en.htm

Adoption of renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning

The Education Council adopted a Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning which consolidates policy in the field of adult learning under the four strategic objectives of „ET2020“, the framework for European cooperation in education and training. Aimed at enabling all adults to develop and enhance their skills and competences throughout their lives, it builds on the achievements of the Action Plan on Adult Learning (2008-2010) and complements existing policy initiatives in the fields of school education, higher education (Bologna process) and vocational education and training (Copenhagen process). Particular attention is paid to the high number of low-skilled Europeans targeted by Europe 2020, starting with literacy, numeracy and second chance measures. The priorities set for 2012-14 focus on advancing the agenda at the national, regional and local levels.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20111128_en.htm

Shortlist for new Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner announced

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers has submitted a shortlist of three candidates for the post of Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner to the Organisation's Parliamentary Assembly.

The candidates are: Pierre-Yves Monette (Belgium), Nils Muiznieks (Latvia), Frans Timmermans (Netherlands). The Assembly will elect the new Commissioner during its winter plenary session in Strasbourg (23-28 January 2012). He will take over from present Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg at the end of his mandate (31 March 2012).

<http://dare-network.blogspot.com/2011/11/shortlist-for-new-council-of-europe.html>

The European Commission proposes two new programmes:

Erasmus for all - Investing in Europe's education, training and youth

Erasmus for All is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sports, proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011. The proposal is now under discussion by the Council (27 Member States) and the European Parliament who will take the final decision. Erasmus for All would bring together all the current EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sports, replacing seven existing programmes with one. It is due to start in 2014.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/index_en.htm

Creative Europe: support programme for Europe's cultural and creative sectors from 2014

Creative Europe is the new EU programme dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors, proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011, that will run from 2014 to 2020. The proposal is now under discussion by the Council of EU Ministers and the European Parliament.

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

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CALL FOR...

European Identity beyond the brink

Young academics and researchers are invited to submit their contributions to the upcoming issue of Open Citizenship. Open Citizenship is a hybrid journal combining committed articles by academics, journalists, the civil society, and politics to explore the scope and complexity of identity and citizenship within the European Union. The upcoming summer issue focuses on the state of identity and citizenship building in the European Union and investigates, among other topics, the impact of the current crisis on the creation of a closer union of citizens.

Submissions will be accepted on a rolling basis from 1 December 2011 and should be submitted to submissions@citizensforeurope.org.

www.opencitizenship.eu

Play Your Part – Active Participation in Civil Society

A seminar series to strengthen civil participation in Europe

How can citizens and actors of civil society improve the impact of their engagement on local, regional and international level? The seminar series organised by MitOst association and its partners offers place for an intensive exchange, for sharing experience in three main topical fields: youth empowerment, active citizenship and diversity work, for networking and finding future partners.

The seminar series will start with an introductory seminar in Weimar, Germany (25 - 31 March 2012), will be followed by a field phase to implement outcomes from the seminar, and will end with a reflecting seminar in Brussels, Belgium (17 - 21 September 2012).

Application deadline: 10 January 2012.

http://mitost.org/active_participation.html

International Journal of Progressive Education

The International Journal of Progressive Education will publish a special issue in October 2012 on the topic of 'Education for Active Citizenship'.

In recent years the adjective 'active' has often been added to the term 'Citizenship Education'. Bernard Crick wrote 'an education that creates a disposition to active citizenship is a necessary condition for free societies'. This suggests that Active Citizenship is more desirable than Passive Citizenship – but what do these terms mean, in terms of educational policy or educational practice? Proposals for articles are invited that discuss the development of active citizenship

education, analyse policies and/or practices that promote active citizenship education, are drawn from/relate to a range of educational settings, from prep-school to higher education, analyse active citizenship with reference to social class or gender. Submission of proposals for articles should be sent to: a.ross@londonmet.ac.uk until 15 January 2012.

www.inased.org/sissue6.htm

15th German-Polish Journalist Award

The next German-Polish Media Days will be held from 14 - 16 May 2012 in Schwerin, Germany. This event is also the stage of the 15th German-Polish Journalist Award ceremony. The jury is looking for journalism that enhances both Germans' and Poles' knowledge of one another and leads to a better understanding of politics, business, science, culture, and daily life in the respective neighbouring country. German and Polish journalists, publishing companies, and broadcasting corporations can submit articles and reports that have first been published or broadcasted between 1 January and 31 December 2011. Application deadline: 15 January 2012.

www.medientage.org or <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/8166.asp>

Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZZF)

Invited are applications for a Young Eastern European Fellowship to study German and European History in the 20th century. This six-months fellowship will provide young scholars from East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union with an opportunity to pursue individual research while participating in the academic life of one of Germany's major historical research centres, the ZZF, which covers a broad scope of Contemporary European History.

Application deadline: 16 January 2012.

www.zzf-pdm.de

The European Charlemagne Youth Prize

"The European Charlemagne Youth Prize" aims to encourage the development of European consciousness among young people, as well as their participation in European integration projects. The Prize is awarded to projects undertaken by young people that foster understanding, promote the development of a shared sense of European identity, and offer practical examples of Europeans living together as one community.

Submission deadline: 23 January 2012.

www.charlemagneyouthprize.eu/view/en/introduction.html

Building trust through communication in times of crisis

22-23 March 2012, Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (Spain)

The call of papers is extended until 20 January 2012 to cicom@unav.es (max. 8.000 words, notes and references included).

Please, check the style guidelines at:

www.unav.es/comunicacion/cicom/english-version-cicom/workshops.html

The Summer Academy: Democracy at School

The Summer Academy is an annual training project offered to teams of education professionals and local community actors. Based on Council of Europe recommendations and manuals in the field of EDC and HRE, it includes a practice-oriented seminar in Warsaw, Poland (7-15 July 2012), and a 10-months online follow-up. Focusing on school governance, classroom climate and cooperation with the local community, it aims at strengthening the practice of HR principles and democratic citizenship on different levels. The Summer Academy is organised in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Polish Ministry for National Education and the Polish Centre for Education Development and The European Wergeland Centre.

Application deadline is 19 February 2012.

<http://theewc.org/content/activities/summer.academy.democracy.at.school>

THE EAEA AWARD FOR ADULT LEARNING (Grundtvig Award) 2012

Each year, the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) celebrates innovation and excellence in adult education. In 2012, EAEA is looking for projects that tackle Activating Older Learners. EAEA is especially looking for projects that promote the active participation of older learners in society. Topics may include aspects of intergenerational learning, innovative partnerships as well as projects that promote policy changes that recognize the importance of learning for older people.

Application deadline: 5 March 2012.

www.eaea.org/index.php?k=118378

INFORMATION

Events

10 - 12 May 2012, Graz (Austria)

Universities' Engagement in and with Society

Within the wider European Policy context of Lifelong Learning and The European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity, this conference will examine the contribution of universities, through their lifelong learning opportunities, to the development of society, by exploring the following topics: initiating/accompanying innovation and development in regional businesses, NGOs and the public sector; Community learning: concepts, practice, outreach work; providing new learning opportunities for individual well-being, civic engagement and second careers in later life; supporting the individual learner.

More information at:

www.eaea.org/events.php?aid=118311&d=2012-05

21 - 23 May 2012, Berlin (Germany)

Federal Congress on Citizenship Education dedicated to the topic of participation

As an essential event of "Aktionstage 2012", the Federal Congress on Citizenship Education will happen in Berlin at several places around "Friedrichstraße". The Federal Congress will be dedicated to the topic of "participation". The focus will be on taking stock of and discussing current findings on the topic of participation and its effects on the development of democracy as well as on a general discussion of the interrelation of societal trends and citizenship education. These are the questions, which are supposed to be pursued: How could citizenship education accompany participative processes, what is its significance given current developments? Must citizenship education itself become more participative?

More information at:

www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/L6XWP4,0,Bundeskongress_Politische_Bildung_zur_Partizipation.html

25 - 27 June 2012, Bonn (Germany)

The fifth Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum

Topics of the international conference are culture, education and the role of the Media.

We are all part of a global society overflowing with information that can be accessed practically anywhere and at any time. We are also confronted with a chilling statistic: Approximately 850 million people around the world are illiterate, most of them in crisis regions and war zones. In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare the ten-year period from 2005-2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. It is increasingly evident that education, culture and upbringing form the key to peaceful co-existence and a sustainable future. The 2012 Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum addresses these issues, focusing on the role of the media and its responsibility for their images and messages.

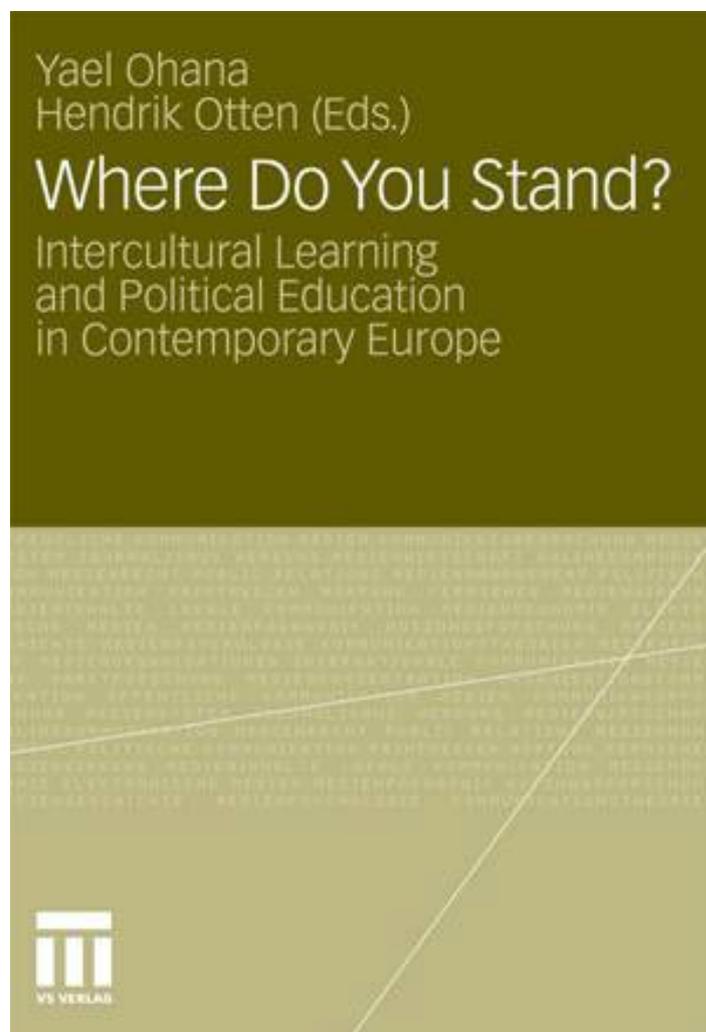
More information at: www.dw-gmf.de

Publication

Where Do You Stand? – Intercultural Learning and Political Education in Contemporary Europe

Yael Ohana & Hendrik Otten (Eds.), published VS Verlag 2012. 276 pages. ISBN 978-3-531-18031-1

This book considers the many controversial debates about the theoretical underpinning, ideological positioning and political significance of intercultural learning in and for the European youth field. Contributors challenge the elevation of intercultural dialogue to panacea for all societal problems, the problematic position of notions of culture at the heart of intercultural learning, and accepted knowledge of the purposes, contents, approaches and methods of intercultural learning. In an attempt to breathe new life into what is criticised as a stagnant debate, this book asks those concerned with political education to rethink where they stand in relation to the basic principles of a practice in need of radical re-politicisation if it is to live up to the contemporary challenges putting its mobilisational capacity to the test.



INFORMATION

Yael Ohana is a specialist in non-formal education and international youth work. She is the co-founder of "Frankly Speaking – Training, Development & Research" (www.frankly-speaking.org).

Dr Hendrik Otten is a specialist of political education. He is the director of the Institute for Research in Applied Communication (IKAB) in Bonn, Germany (www.ikab.de).

Order your copies for the special price of 25 EUR incl. Postage & packaging at: info@ikab.de

Upcoming Publication

Whose Liberty is it Anyway? – Europe at the Crossroads

Manifestos for the 21st Century

by Stefan Auer, will be published March 2012

The European Union is not a state but a collection of states. From the outset, this European project struggled to turn its history, its many histories, into one unifying narrative. United more by what they rejected than by their aspirations, Europe today is dedicated - in principle if not in practice - to the brotherhood of man, to unity in diversity, and to liberty under law.

Even as it struggles to deliver on its many contradictory promises, the EU attempts what many nations have attempted before: to control the past by recasting major events like the revolutions of 1989 as milestones in a common history, shared by all the people of Europe.

In *Whose Liberty Is It Anyway?* Stefan Auer exposes the limits of the current European project by questioning some of its many incongruities, particularly when it comes to its commitment to freedom. The author argues that the calls for more European solidarity are not convincing when Europe's poor are asked to pay for the mistakes of those who are more fortunate, and European citizenship appears hollow when basic EU freedoms apply to some citizens more than to others. Europe's unity, Auer asserts, can only be maintained by accepting its limitations and by beginning to fulfill some of its many promises.

www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/W/bo13219557.html#

Links

Sweden: Folk High Schools and Youth Unemployment

What can non-formal adult education do about youth unemployment? There seems to be a role for folk high schools, according to this report.

www.eaea.org/news.php?aid=118382&k=2088&d&utm_source=emailcampaign34&utm_medium=phpList&utm_content=HTMLemail&utm_campaign=EAEA+Newsletter+December+2011

New website for better policy making in education and training

Up to date research and information on the economics of education, tailor-made to the needs of busy policy makers, is now available on the re-vamped website of the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE).

www.eenee.de/portal/page/portal/EENEEView

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