



International Association  
for  
Christian Education



Intereuropean Commission on  
Church and School

# newsletter

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## Editorial

The crisis in Europe has become a burning issue. There are two opposing points of view represented by “For Europe” (Daniel Cohn-Bendit und Guy Verhofstadt), demanding a federal and post-national European Union and skeptical analytical views toward the establishment of new power structures (Ulrich Beck). The economic perspective dominates in the search for solutions to the fiscal crisis and in finding a sustainable development strategy.

Fortunately also citizens become active in this situation and look for a broader horizon. Eleven big foundations, all dedicated to the common good, have initiated the campaign „I want Europe“ with the support of well known figures from politics, sport, science and culture.

As we seek a direction for the future of Europe education is a prime issue. The European Union has currently published “Rethinking Education: better socioeconomic results through investments in qualifications“. In this documents the increasing rate of youth unemployment is mentioned and the demand for more flexibility in the education system.

Education is seen as a tool to foster growth and competition. The demand includes “higher and more relevant qualifications” especially entrepreneurship and more STEM-qualifications (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). This is problematic if other aspects and aims of education are neglected or not taken seriously.

The Nobel Prize Committee has dedicated the Peace Nobel Prize 2012 to the European Union in recognition of its 60 years contribution to peace and reconciliation. Also in educational activities there is the need to remember that Europe is a successful peace project and not just a system of economic collaboration. The role of education includes the promotion of a reflexive perspective on Europe, to foster self-esteemed and the critical faculties of European citizens, that act for social cohesion and who are active in making Europe. There are thousands of school partnerships and encounters. Teachers at schools and universities receive qualifications to promote and to moderate these processes. This is also the perspective of the activities of IV & ICCS.

With our very best wishes for the New Year 2013

Dr Tania ap Sïon and Dr Peter Schreiner (ICCS)  
Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer and Dr Wim Kuiper (IV)

## Information from IV and ICCS

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### IV: Board meeting in Münster

Like the meeting in May this year the board meeting of IV in September 2012 was held in close connection with the meeting of the CoGREE steering group. The board met on 21<sup>st</sup> of September in Muenster and was warmly welcomed by the Comenius-Institut. As guests the president of ICCS, Dr Peter Schreiner as well as ICCS secretary Dr Tania ap Siôn (Wales/UK), attended the meeting. The staff member in the IV office, Kerstin Wiechmann, introduced the new budget procedure of the EKD that is taken over also by IV for practical reasons. It provides a more transparent presentation of the economic situation of IV. Other topics were a strategy for finding new members and the relationship with other European organizations such as EurECA (The European Educators' Christian Association) und ECNAIS (The European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools).

In the planning of activities of the organization for 2013 and further on it became crystal clear that there are common interests between IV, ICCS and CoGREE. Common ideas include producing synergy by close cooperation in preparing conferences and seminars, to save resources and to have a broader audience.

### IV: Workshop at AEED Jubilee

On 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Erzieher in Deutschland e. V. (AEED) celebrated its 60th anniversary by organizing a conference at the Hans-Lilje-Haus in Hanover. The theme was: Connecting, supporting, organizing in service training – self understanding and mission of Protestant teacher associations.

Prof. Dr. Fulbert Steffensky delivered a key note address on „Wishes for the Religious Education of my grandchildren“, church officer Birgit Sandler-Koschel (EKD) gave the sermon at the festive worship. Rita Révész und Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer (IV) introduced the work of „Protestant teacher associations in Europe“ in a workshop. The AEED is one of the biggest members of IV. Further information about the meeting is provided at the website of the AEED ([www.aeed.de](http://www.aeed.de)).

### IV: General Assembly in Teschen

The “Protestant Society“ (Towarzystwo Ewangelickie w Cieszynie), which is the owner of a school centre, was the host of the General Assembly of IV, held in in Teschen (Poland) on 09-10 November 2012. About 25 delegates of member organisations, guests and speakers from eight countries came together in the hotel „Ondraszek“ in Ustroń. They informed each other about the situation of Protestant schools in central and eastern Europe and discussed the issue of pastoral care in schools (main speaker Prof Dr Adrian Korczago, Warschau). As a new member of IV the network of schools from Austria „Verein der Freunde der Pilgrimschule“ ([www.pilgrimschule.at](http://www.pilgrimschule.at)) was accepted. Rita Révész (Budapest), who already served on the board of IV as an adviser was elected as an ordinary member of the board. Now the board is complete again. During the assembly the participants could visit the Protestant school centre in Teschen as well as the impressive Jesus-Church with the museum of Protestantism. Many participants could attend also the festive service at the Polish day of independence on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November.

### **IV & ICCS: Publication on Education for Democratic Citizenship**

The draft of a joint publication of ICCS & IV „Education for Democratic Citizenship in the Context of Europe. Introduction and Resources for Churches and Educators” was presented at the general assembly of IV in November. The first part includes an introduction in basic elements of EDC as well as a presentation of European and selected national initiatives. The second part contains of selected key documents and a commented list of resources. Expected feed back to the draft will be used to re-work and finalise the text. An online publication as well as a printed version is planned for the beginning of 2013. It is also planned to include the Conference of European Churches CEC as a co-editor.

### **IV & ICCS: EKD-Project „500 Protestant Schools worldwide celebrate 500 Years of Reformation“ – Preparatory Conference in Eisenach**

IV has agreed to take responsibility for the organisation of an international Conference that will take place from 10 to 12. April 2013 in Eisenach/Germany. The background is provided by a project initiated by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). The aim of the project is to activate Protestant schools worldwide to organize contacts and exchanges with other schools. The international conference has the theme „Responsibility for education in a free context – 500 Years of Reformation.“ It will be the starting event for creating an international network. It is planned to invite key persons from Protestant educational institutions from all over the world to discuss the frame and content of the project. Part of the project is to establish a website on the basis of a database for the participating schools.

### **IV & ICCS: Study tour for head teachers to England & Wales**

From 16 to 20 April 2013 a second study tour for head teachers of European schools is planned. The theme of the study tour is: “Schools with a Christian religious character and Citizenship“. Dr Tania ap Sïon, ICCS Sekretärin, and Prof David Lankshear will organize the program. It includes the participants an insight into religious education in schools, into the inspection system of Anglican schools as well as into the training courses of teachers. Invitation, program and more information are available at the IV-website [www.int-v.org](http://www.int-v.org).

### **ICCS & CoGREE: Interview with James Barnett on activities at the Council of Europe**

*Why is it important for ICCS to collaborate with the Council of Europe?*

Because we are an INGO with participative status, but it goes further than that. My work is chiefly concerned with the INGO conference. INGOs have firsthand experience of civil society, so they provide a range of expertise, people listen, we collaborate with people who work in this pan European Institution and we have opportunities to discuss issues with politicians. Religion is more prominent than it was, because the Council of Europe has organised colloquies related to education and religion. The recently founded (2009) European Wergeland Centre in Oslo is a Resource Centre for European Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship which are contiguous issues with religion. A couple of years ago I was involved in a meeting at the North South Centre in Lisbon on “Freedom of Expression,

Conscience and Religion". The North South Centre is another close partner of the Council of Europe. We need to hear and to be heard.

The Council of Europe is interested in teaching religious facts, which is not quite the same as religious education. We need to explain that religion involves more than teaching facts. It includes membership of a community, religious practice and so on, while believers in different traditions also refer to spiritual awareness. ICCS's involvement with church and school is, therefore, pertinent, though the CoE works with different religious traditions as well. This involves "transferable skills." For example I organised a ceremony at the Madni Mosque in Bradford last year with the COJEP - an INGO working with young people of Turkish origin. As representatives of INGOs we work together when we have common interests or competence. These are ways in which we influence thinking about issues that concern us.

#### *What can ICCS exactly do?*

We provide expertise in a large and complex organisation. Peter Schreiner is a member of the expert group on "Dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education." I am an Anglican Priest, but my work has been in education in secondary schools, in lay training and in informing people about Europe. I preside a group that is producing a report on the religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue mentioned in the White Paper adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2008. The multi-religious group also includes participation by people who are "without religion." We are concerned with

- non-confessional teaching about confessional issues,
- awareness of religious and non religious conviction
- discussing religion with young people so that we can live together in the context of European diversity.

Everyone knows that I am Christian, but it is important and quite proper to be able to work non confessionally. The model owes a lot to French *laïcité*, which is perceived as creating a neutral space in which people can live according to convictions that include different religions and no religion. In being a bridge between Church and school ICCS can contribute to the relationship of religious conviction and the religious neutrality of the Convention on Human Rights.

Religion also needs to be better understood. We can help to create a space not just for religious practice but also for informed judgement. The public school is a proper place for providing information about religion. ICCS is naturally involved in the field.

#### *What perspectives do you see in the field of religion and education concerning the CoE and the EU?*

Because civil servants and politicians are very busy, they are concerned with "practical" issues. Nevertheless, good education about religion contributes to wellbeing in society. Unfortunately, when there is conflict religion is often a factor. Because it is also a source of inspiration for charitable organisations and indeed for INGOs, the former Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Mr Gil Roblès initiated a series of colloquies in which we looked at education and religion. In our INGO partnership I belong to the CINGO (Christian INGO) informal grouping. Members are involved in many aspects of humanitarian work. We are partners in the wider process implied by the *Charta Oecumenica*. That is a perspective to pursue.

I am also a member of the G3i - an international, inter-convictional and intercultural group that organises colloquies and other events in cooperation with the European Institutions. Convictional difference is important because there is no "agreed metaphysic" - we have lost an agreed language about human spiritual awareness and experience. The problem is that

European Institutions do not, cannot and must not know whether God exists, but they must recognise that many citizens have a view about religion and non religion. In that context we need meeting and dialogue among and between religious and non religious convictions.

We also need to be careful about the language. Conviction and certainty are not quite the same. Certainty is fixed, but convictions grow with us and evolve over the years of life. In dialogue with the Institutions we need that openness for ourselves, towards the institutions and towards other human beings. So religion and within it our own Christianity are important. That is why we need to work at issues that include the school and the church(es). I am convinced that it is important I believe that it can be done. I am sure that we can contribute. The *enjeu* is changing but ICCS is still a natural partner in the work. Like many INGO representatives my extended work provides links in a complex context.

### **ICCS: New Correspondent from the Ukraine**

Since September there is a new ICCS Correspondent from the Ukraine. Dr. Vitaliy Khromets is associated professor in the department of Culture in the institute of Philosophical Pedagogy and Science and the connected Centre for Religious Education. Currently Dr. Khromets is working on a dissertation on Religious Education in the Ukraine. He is warmly welcomed in ICCS. The national correspondents of ICCS communicate and create links about issues of church and school between the national and the European level.

### **ICCS & CoGREE: Klingenthal Colloquium**

Can religious education contribute to social cohesion in Europe? This was the leading issue of the fifth colloquy organized by the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School ICCS and the Coordinating Group for Religion and Education in Europe CoGREE from 8 to 12 October 2012 in Klingenthal near Strasbourg. More than 25 experts from 14 European countries came together to discuss theoretical, conceptual and practical education initiatives and approaches to "Social Cohesion, Religion and Education in the Context of Europe". A common finding of lectures and working groups has been that a stronger relationship is needed among research projects that deal with the „impact“ of religious education for social cohesion as well as the recognition of the different national and regional contexts of Europe. Key notes of the colloquy from Prof. Bert Roebben (university of Dortmund), Prof Leslie Francis (Warwick), OKR'in Birgit Sandler Koschel, director of the education department of the EKD, Dr Valentin Kozhuharov, Prof Robert Jackson, Warwick, Katharina von Schnurbein, policy adviser of the European Commission (and as a member of BEPA = Bureau of European Policy Advisors responsible for dialogue with churches and religious communities, from James Barnett, representative of ICCS at the Council of Europe and from Peter Schreiner are available on the website of CoGREE ([www.cogree.net](http://www.cogree.net)) or will be available soon.

## IV: News from Members

### *AKES: National Congress of Protestant Schools*

The Working Committee of Protestant Schools (AKES) organized its 5th National Congress from 13th to 14th September 2012 in Berlin with the theme: "A Protestant school is more." About 5000 educators followed the invitation with the motto: When you meet a child, you catch God red handed." More information as well as the key note of Prof. Dr. Christian Grethlein is available at: [www.bkes-2012.de](http://www.bkes-2012.de).

### *ESS-EKD: German School Award for Protestant School Neuruppin*

The German School Award, presented by the Robert Bosch Foundation and partners, acknowledge educational activities and spread news about it all over Germany. There are the following categories: Encounter with diversity, quality of teaching, achievement, responsibility, school climate and school as a learning institution. The main prizewinner in 2012 is the Protestant School of Neuruppin ([www.gymnasium-neuruppin.de](http://www.gymnasium-neuruppin.de)). The prize was presented by the former Federal President Dr. Roman Herzog. Congratulations.

## CoGREE and member organizations

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### CoGREE: Meeting of the Steering Group in Münster

The second meeting of the CoGREE steering group in 2012 took place at the end of September in Münster. It was the last meeting with Elza Kuyk as CoGREE secretary. The steering group warmly thanked Elza for her commitment and gave her big thanks for her work. Now she has started to work as a political advisor at the theological faculty at the Free University of Amsterdam. At the meeting the coming CoGREE Conference in 2013 was prepared. It has the working title: "Religion in Schools in Europe: Research – Politics – Practice" (see underneath). The group has also worked on a revision of the working paper in progress on key issues for the CoGREE activities. Now the following revised structure should be used: 1. Why is this an important issue and for whom is it important? 2. What is the state of art of research and discourse? 3. What can be the role of CoGREE and its member organisations? The work will be focused on the rights of the child to religion and religious education as well as on religion in the public sphere and as a factor of social cohesion. The next meeting of the steering group will be on 14th and 15th of June 2013.

### CoGREE: Preparing a Congress in 2013

From 20th to 22nd of November 2013 a European Congress of CoGREE will take place in cooperation with the Besturenraad and other partners in the Netherlands. A draft program was worked out in a preparatory group with Elza Kuyk, Dr Gerhard Pfeiffer and Prof David Lankshear as members. The working title for the Congress is: "Religion in schools in Europe: Research, Politics and Practice." The aim of the event is to contribute to a dialogue between politicians, academics and practitioners about the awareness, the value and the specific place of religion in school. Although the relation between religion and school is organised in different ways in national contexts, common challenges appear on a comparative European perspective.

As part of the programme national and European oriented examples will be presented in a series of workshops, in a panel issues in relation to the political responsibility for religion in education will be discussed. Also key notes will be part of the planned programme. The place of the event will be announced beginning of 2013 and then more information will be available.

### **EFTRE: Conference in Malmö 2013**

The next European conference of EFTRE will take place at the University of Malmö from 21st to 24th of August 2013. The theme is: "Religion and Relationship: Dealing with Differences." Invited are religious education teachers, teachers of ethics and citizenship from all over Europe. The program includes lectures, workshops, seminars and language groups. More information about the program and on how to register is available at [www.eftre.net](http://www.eftre.net).

## **CEC and CPCE**

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### **CEC: Activities of the working group „Education“**

The working group on education of the Conference of European Churches has been active with Education for Democratic Citizenship and the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). Concerning the first issue a conference was organized that worked out a number of proposals for action of the member churches of CEC. For the second issue a briefing paper was worked out promoting participation of member churches in national activities to implement the Strategic Framework. Now the executive committee of CSC has decided to make education for democratic citizenship the main issue of the coming plenary in April 2013. Also the activities of the Council of Europe and the European Union will be presented there. At the meeting of the working group at the beginning of December a workshop was planned concerning action programmes and project lines of the EU. This will take place in June 2013. Also the ICCS & IV publication on EDC was discussed and it is suggested that CSC should become a co-editor.



### **CEC: Revision process and General Assembly in Budapest 2013**

The 14th General Assembly of CEC will take place from 3rd to 8th of July 2013 in Budapest. The theme is: "And now what you are waiting for? CEC and its mission in a Changing Europe". The focus of the Assembly will be decisions to revise the constitution, the mandate and the working methods of CEC. In a consultation process member churches and associated organizations could send in their comment to the proposal of the revision working group. ICCS and IV have mentioned in their statements the importance of the collaboration of CEC with the associated member organizations especially in the issue oriented work of CEC. There is a fear that the proposed restructuring process will abolish the status of associated organizations in the new framework of CEC and that future cooperation can be organized only rather loosely or at specific selected occasions.

## CPCE: General Assembly in Florence and Publication

It seems that the publication on "Formation of Faith. Handing down Faith in European Protestantism" edited by Martin Friedrich and Hans Jürgen Luibl (2012), Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, as well as the consultation on „Education for the Future - between Qualification and Orientation“ in September 2011 in Tutzing near Munich will be the only concrete efforts concerning the decision of the General Assembly of CPCE 2006 in Budapest to organize a project on Education, Protestantism and Europe. The first activity has the aim „to describe education in faith as a future way for the churches and to sketch out the Protestant contribution for future European work on education.“ Those who expected from the General Assembly fresh impulses for dealing with education as a future working issue must be disappointed. The final report of the 7th General Assembly includes decisions on working areas such as church community, plurality of religions and interconfessional dialogues. Also a project was launched on "Europa reformata," celebrating 500 years of reformation. As part of "further working issues" the regional group on South-East-Europe is asked to organize a study on "Education for the Future" but without further ideas about what exactly the study should deal with. Is this more than a fig leaf?

## Council of Europe and European Union

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### Council of Europe: Conference on EDC und HRE



The conference on "Human Rights and Democracy in Action - Looking Ahead" (29 to 30 November in Strasbourg) has had the aim to summarize what activities have taken place in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) and to discuss impulses for further activities in this field.

Among the more than 200 participants also Vincent Dubois and Richard Fischer attended on behalf of the working group "Education" of CEC. A special emphasis at the conference was to look at how the European Charter on EDC/HRE is implemented in the

member states so far. Also a new edition of the Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People COMPASS was presented.

### European Union: Recommendation for the Validation of non-formal and informal learning experiences

The European Commission has launched a Recommendation of the Council on „the validation of non-formal and informal learning“. The aim of this initiative is to introduce a national system that gives an opportunity to all citizens to make visible what they have learnt outside school and to use it for their career or further learning. Validation of non-formal and informal learning expe-

periences in the EU Member States makes an essential contribution to EU's ambition to achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set by the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Altogether the validation of non-formal and informal learning experiences also contribute towards the achievement of the Europe 2020 headline targets for early school leaving, the proportion of 30-34 year olds having complete or equivalent education, the overall employment rate and poverty and social exclusion, a process that is followed up during the European Semester ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/informal/proposal2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/informal/proposal2012_en.pdf)).

## European Union: New Rethinking Education Strategy demanded

In November, the European Commission presented a communication with the title: "Rethinking Education strategy: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes" ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/com669\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/com669_en.pdf)). The document aims at describing how "efficiency and inclusiveness" of the education systems can be increased for "providing the right skills for employability." There is an urgent need for the Member States to organize "a change and adaption of the education systems in the Member States towards the challenges of today's economy and labour market" and to find solutions to solve the increasing rate of youth unemployment. Growth and competitiveness should be boosted by "developing world-class vocational education and training to raise the quality of vocational skills". The broad mission of education and training encompasses objectives such as active citizenship, personal development and well-being. The main emphasis in the document is on an orientation of education on the needs of economy, especially in entrepreneurial competencies. Therefore it is proposed to strengthen the potential of ICT (information and communication technology) and of open education resources (OER).

### Colofon

This Newsletter is edited under the responsibility of the Board of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School and the Board of the International Association for Christian Education.

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