



**International Association
for
Christian Education**



**Intereuropean Commission on
Church and School**

newsletter

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Editorial

The final report of the Working Group on Education of the Conference of European Churches / Church and Society Commission recommends that the newly structured CEC continues its activities in education. It is argued that a European oriented education can foster the living together of old and young, that religious education contributes to identity formation and dialogue in a situation of cultural and religious plurality and that the contributions of Christian churches to education are valuable in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are basic European values. The Commission no longer exists. It has merged into the new streamlined structure of CEC. According to the new Constitution, ICCS and IV can cooperate with CEC as "Organisations in Partnership." CEC itself has expressed the wish to continue the established cooperation but concrete terms have to be discussed. Common issues are obvious such as a Europeanisation of education by the European institutions. Important challenges lie in the areas of Education for Democratic Citizenship, solidarity, justice and human rights education and also in the objection against a mainly economy oriented concept of education in Europe.

Support comes from Pope Francis. In his speeches at the European Parliament and at the Council of Europe on 25 November he underlined the importance of education for peace-making processes and stated education as a hope for all people in Europe. Speaking to the European Parliament, he strengthened the relation between dignity and transcendence - otherwise Europe would risk "losing its soul and the humanistic spirit that loves and defends." Faith and reason, religion and society, dignity and transcendence, the interplay of these areas shapes the discussion about concepts of education. ICCS and IV contribute through their projects and activities to actualize these connections. Another leading idea could be what the director of the Reformed Educational Institute in Budapest, Pál Szontag, expressed at the IV general assembly: "We do not teach subjects, but children and young adults."

**We wish all readers at the end of a very busy year
a period of sobriety, confidence and good perspectives for 2015.**

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

Information from IV and ICCS

IV: Board meeting of IV

Perennial issues of the board are finances of the association, the communication with members, planning, organization and evaluation of events and seminars, the backing of current projects and reports about events of partner organisations of IV. After the meeting of the board on 10/11 July in Nuremberg (see report in newsletter No. 5) another meeting took place before the general assembly on 20 November in Pápa (Hungary).

Important decisions were made for the launch of the head teacher study tour in the Netherlands and the seminar for teachers in 2015. The board expressed an urgent need to increase its personal resources. It had been planned to incorporate a representative from the Reformed Teacher Association of Hungary (ORTE) into the board. After the sudden death of the chairman of ORTE, Bálint Korsós, that plan could not be implemented. The board looks for other suitable members to enlarge its capacity for cooperation.

The involvement in projects on a global level increased the workload of some board members. An expansion of IV activities beyond the European context, as proposed from outside the association, is incompatible with the statutes and with its working capacities.

ICCS: New member from Belgium

The Orthodox Institute Saint-Jean-le-Théologien based in Brussels/Belgium has become a member of ICCS. The Institute offers training courses and seminars for Orthodox theology and also for teachers of Orthodox Religious Education. Orthodox Religious Education is an ordinary subject in schools in Belgium. More information is available at the website of the institute: www.ioj.be. ICCS extends a warm welcome to its new member.

ICCS: Religious Education in Romania

Simona Sav, a PhD student from Romania introduced the situation of RE in Romania at the CoGREE colloquy in Klingenthal. The following text summarizes main aspects of the situation. A longer version is available through: www.iccsweb.org

The official title of Religious Education (RE) in Romania is simply "Religion". Its profile is confessional, and it is taught one hour per week. In theory, the status of RE is optional; however, in practice, it is arguably compulsory with an opt-out opportunity. The model is that of "education into religion," although it contains elements of education about other religions and non-religious worldviews. Religion is part of the basic curriculum, section on "Human and Society," for primary and secondary levels. In Romania, compulsory education starts at grade 0, when children are 6 and ends at grade 10, when they are 16.

Any of the 18 legally recognized denominations, called *culțe*, can organize RE in public schools. By *culțe* we refer to those religious denominations or confessions that have been legally registered as such, and have thus gone beyond the status of mere religious associations. This recognition brings about the right to state funding, according to their need and the number of members. The conditions for religious associations to become *culțe* (and thus to benefit from state funding) are the following: (1) they must prove to have been present and active in Romania for

at least 12 consecutive years and (2) they must prove that their number of adherents is at least 0,1% of the population (thus at least 19,000 members, according to the 2011 census). Religious associations that have not been granted the status of *culte* cannot organize RE in schools. Parents, legal guardians or pupils of legal age can choose one Religion class, or they can choose to opt out. If they do not specifically ask in writing, in a letter addressed to the school principal, at the beginning of the school year, to opt out or to attend another RE than that provided through the Romanian Orthodox syllabus, pupils will be automatically enrolled in Orthodox Religion class. Ethics classes are very rarely provided, depending entirely on the school, and history of religion classes are virtually non-existing.

Grades are given (from 1 to 10), same as for other school subjects, and religion thus counts for the general average. Those that do not opt for Religion can have their average calculated without it.

The teachers are trained at faculties of theology, according to their confession. In the rural context, RE is sometimes taught by local clergy. The profile of lay Religion teachers is often young people under 40. In order to be accepted at university, prospective students must bring a recommendation from the priest/bishop of the parish he/she belongs to. RE teachers are paid by the state. In May 2014, following a Protocol signed between the Romanian Orthodox Church and state representatives, the equivalent of *missio canonica* was introduced, whereby a RE teacher can lose their job due to immoral behaviour or grave conflict of theology.

The textbooks are developed by individuals according to Ministry guidelines, given the blessing of the Patriarchate or of their own religious confession, and must be approved by the Ministry of Education. The aims of RE have changed over the past decade, mainly due to membership in the European Union and the engagement of the state to uphold and promote democratic values and human rights. Therefore, the aims of RE must be in accordance with the general aims of education based on competences, the principles of life-long learning, the formation of intercultural, interpersonal, social and civic competences, etc. At the same time, each confession is allowed to pursue its own confessional/catechetical goals. For example, the aims of the Romanian Orthodox church formally include the formation of “personalities in accordance with Christian values, through the integration of religious knowledge in the process of structuring moral-Christian attitudes, and through the application of faith teachings in one’s own life and in the life of the community.” (See “Programa scolara – Religie cultul ortodox,” available at [http://patriarhia.ro/images/pdf/Invatamant_pdf/Programa V-VIII aprobata prin Om 5097 09.09.2009.pdf](http://patriarhia.ro/images/pdf/Invatamant_pdf/Programa_V-VIII_aprobata_prin_Om_5097_09.09.2009.pdf)).

Simona Sav

IV: General Assembly at 20-21 November in Pápa (Ungarn)

The small town of Pápa in western Hungary has been an important centre for Protestant education for centuries. In the hotel "Villa Classica", 24 delegates from ten different European countries met for the general assembly. "Human Rights and Democracy in the context of a Christian based Education" was the theme of a study day that framed the general assembly. After the welcome of IV President Dr Wim Kuiper, the Director of the Reformed Educational Institute in Budapest, Pál Szontagh, provided an overview on current developments of the education system in Hungary. He highlighted the introduction of Religious Education to all schools and the professional development of teachers.

Friday morning started with a service in the Protestant church, organized by the school pastor and the head teacher of the Protestant primary school. This was followed by visits to classes and a tour through the Reformed Gymnasium and the Technical College. After lunch, participants had the opportunity of visiting the outstanding library with its historic collections.

In the afternoon in the ceremonial hall of the gymnasium Dr Peter Schreiner delivered a lecture on "The Contribution of Religions and Churches to Citizenship Education". The section on practice included a presentation of the Comenius-sponsored project "European Literacy and Citizenship Education" (ELICIT+). The Protestant pastor Erzsébet Molnár introduced the College for young Roma in Nyíregyháza in the Northeast of Hungary where she is the Director. Simone Kohlmann, University of Bamberg, introduced the current situation of the IV sponsored project "500 Protestant schools worldwide celebrate 500 Years of Reformation."

In the statutory part of the general assembly the delegates of member organizations adopted the budget, reports and the work programme of the board. For the general assembly in 2015 invitations were expressed to meet either in Dublin (Ireland) or in Bern (Switzerland).

ICCS: Perspectives from the Consultation of Correspondents

Two different perspectives on how to understand the acronym ICCS in a new way were developed at the meeting of correspondents in April 2014 in Klingenthal:

It could be spelled as: **I**nspiration, **C**learing house, **C**ontacts, **S**ynergy or as **I**nnovation, **C**ollaboration, **C**onnections, **S**haring of Resources. These together are key issues that can guide further activities of ICCS in the area of church and school in Europe. At the meeting correspondents did not stop with these poetic terms, but identified also underlying challenges, such as the public role of religion and how education can constructively deal with it, the relation between Religious Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship and also the issue of commonalities, overlaps and distances shaping the relationship of church and school. A crucial task of ICCS is to establish "connections" between important educational activities and projects of the European institutions and the education activities of churches and religious communities. Churches are often important providers of education through their schools and other educational institutions. They contribute also to the public education system. The planned common board meeting of ICCS together with IV in February in Budapest will provide space and time to continue the discussion on a new profile of ICCS.

IV: Conference of Protestant Secondary Schools in Ireland (Dublin, 25 09 2014)

For the first time all 27 Secondary Schools of Anglican and Protestant character in Ireland gathered for a conference. Invitation came from the “General Synod Board of Education“ of the Church of Ireland. The main aim of the conference, with the theme “Faith and Partnership”, was to reflect a common identity and possible ways of cooperation. Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, welcomed the participants and introduced together with the director of the Church of Ireland College of Education a research project: “Ethos, Ether and Ethics - Exploring the social climate of Ireland’s Protestant Secondary Level Schools.” Six Church of Ireland schools participated together with an Anglican school from Northern Ireland. At the conference more findings from research were presented as well as contributions from significant authorities from the state and a discussion forum was organized. On invitation of the organizer of the conference, Dr Ken Fennelly, the secretary of IV presented the activities of IV and also the project “schools500reformation.“

As a follow up of the now established contacts, Dr Fennelly and his colleague from Northern Ireland, Ian Ellis, participated at the general assembly of IV in Hungary. A formal membership is anticipated in the future..

ICCS: “Ethik-Religionen-Gemeinschaft“ as part of the Syllabus 21 for the German speaking part of Switzerland

The Syllabus 21 for the German-speaking part of Switzerland was released at the end of October 2014. In 21 Swiss cantons the same syllabus has now been introduced for the elementary school (from pre-school up to grade 9). The French-speaking regions have already implemented earlier a common syllabus “Plan d’Etudes Romand (PER).“ Each of the cantons is free to decide when and how to implement Syllabus 21.

The new syllabus is based on interdisciplinary competences.

<http://vorlage.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=10|30&code=t|104>

Also the syllabi for the subjects are based on subject specific competences that pupils should get. It is remarkable that “Ethik-Religionen-Gemeinschaft (ERG)“ [*Ethics-Religions-Community*] should become an integrated part of obligatory education. All pupils, irrespective of their religious background and affiliation, will take part in that subject.

Relevance and aims as well as didactical principles are presented in introductory sections of the superordinated division Nature-Human-Society (see

<http://vorlage.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=160&code=g6&la=yes>).

At pre-school and primary level (so called first and second cycle) the specific intentions of ERG are part of the area “Nature-Human-Society”, specifically in competence area 11: “Exploring and reflecting basic experiences, values and norms” and in competence area 12: “Encountering with Religions and World Views <http://vorlage.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=160|41&code=b|6|1&la=yes>

At secondary level I (third cycle) the intentions are summarized in the division “Ethics-Religions-Community.“ <http://vorlage.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=160|45&code=b|6|5&la=yes>

Each of the cantons can decide independently to introduce an additional confessional Religious Education course. Confessional Religious Education can become a meaningful complementary contribution concerning “Ethics-Religions-Community”, although it is not clear how many of the cantons will further support confessional RE at schools and develop it further on. Confessional-based education will move in presumably out of school and church-based contexts.

The decision of the German-speaking part of Switzerland for the subject “Ethics-Religions-Community“ follows a similar perspective as the German Bundesland Brandenburg with the subject “Lebensgestaltung-Ethik-Religionskunde (LER)“ or even more similar to Norway with their subject on “Religion. Life stance and Ethiks (RLE)”. Website: <http://www.lehrplan.ch/>

Johannes Kilchsperger

IV: Re-establishment of “Work Group Protestant School in Germany“ AKES

On 19 September the re-establishment of the “Work Group Protestant School in Germany“ AKES took place in Stuttgart. The Work Group brings together more than 50 founding members of national level including all big school foundations and Schulwerke, the school alliances and associations in the field of Protestant schools. In AKES church-based and free Protestant and diaconical sponsors of Protestant schools will cooperate closely. Together with school administrations and those responsible for Protestant schooling in church and diaconia they intend to make Protestant schools more visible in public and in church and to promote further developments. The “Work Group Protestant School in Germany“ elected its executive committee on 29 September. The bylaws, based on the framework rules of the former AKES but further developed, includes the following purposes: to promote the development of profiles of Protestant schools, to organize the exchange of information and perspectives between those responsible for schools, the EKD and Diakonie Germany; to promote the exchange of expertise and development of common perspectives among those responsible for Protestant schools; to promote public relations and public discourse about Protestant schooling. The AKES is organizing the “Federal Congress of Protestant School“ and is interested in international cooperation.

Birgit Sandler-Koschel

IV: General Assembly of the Federation of Protestant School Associations (AGES), 17-18 November 2014 in in Frankfurt a. Main

AGES was founded as a coalition of regional Protestant School Associations in Germany. The general assembly, meeting twice a year, consists of the directors of the school associations, representatives of the Church, of the Diakonie, the Barbara-Schadeberg Foundation for the promotion of Protestant Schools and the International Association for Christian Education IV. Main activities, mainly organized by head teachers, deal with basic issues in education, school development, in-service training and cooperation with parents. After the re-establishment of the Work Group Protestant School in Germany (AKES), in which the sponsors of schools carry weight, it has been a central focus of the agenda in Frankfurt, to develop the profile of AGES further and to find appropriate ways to cooperate with AKES. AGES as well as AKES are both member organisations of IV.

IV / ICCS: “School Leaders Education Visit to Christian Schools in the Netherlands”

The programme of a study visit to the Netherlands includes an introduction to the education system, information about Christian schools and their importance, the ways of cooperation among them and the practice of religious education. The visit is organized for head teachers but also open for other experts in Christian education. Visits are planned to general and to vocational schools and also cultural events are part of the programme. The working language will be English. The agreed date is 3-7 March 2015 with the option of one extra day. Those who have expressed their interest but have not been accepted so far may move up the waiting list. The

idea is also to replicate the visit in 2016, if there is enough interest. Please send requests to the office of IV (Kerstin.wiechmann@ekd.de)

IV / ICCS: European Seminar for Teachers in Bad Wildbad (Germany)

For many years IV has organized a biennial seminar for teachers with a programme based on a Christian perspectives on education in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Bundesland of Baden-Wuerttemberg. These seminars are acknowledged as in-service training and take place in the Landesakademie für Fortbildung und Personalentwicklung an Schulen in Baden-Württemberg, located in Bad Wildbad (Black Forest). Also, ICCS has become a partner in recent years.

For 2015 the theme is: "Seeking Solidarity in a troubled Europe – Challenges and Choices for Schools and Education." The programme includes expert contributions from the perspective of politics, diaconical social education and religious education as well as practical examples of work from schools of different European countries and also non-formal education. A detailed programme will be available in January 2015 and will be published on the websites of IV and ICCS.

The date is 7-10 April 2015 and the number of participants is limited. Working languages will be German and English. Teachers from Baden-Wuerttemberg can register through the official channel. All other participants should register at the IV office in Hanover. (kerstin.wiechmann@ekd.de).

CoGREE and Member Organisations



CoGREE: Klingenthal Colloquy and Follow up



The Sixth Klingenthal Colloquy with the title: "Intercultural Education and the Religious Dimension" took place from 6-10 October at the centre of the Goethe foundation in Klingenthal near Strasbourg. There were 28 participants from 15 different European countries. Current reports about the situation of school-based Religious Education from the Ukraine, Greece, Romania, Denmark and Finland were part of the programme. A main focus was given to the "Signpost" document of the Council of Europe that was introduced by Dr Claudia Lentz from the European Wergeland

Centre in Oslo (www.theewc.org). Also contacts with the Council of Europe were part of the programme.

At a meeting with the new director of the Council of Europe for democratic citizenship and participation, Jean-Christophe Bas, initiatives for a national implementation of the Signposts docu-

ment were discussed. “Signposts – Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education” was worked out to promote the implementation of the recommendation of the Council of Ministers from 2008 “on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education”

(<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1386911&Site=CM>) (possible to order as a printed copy or as a pdf file at: <https://book.coe.int>). On the website of the European Wergeland Centre a discussion group was established as part of the section “Share and Connect” (www.theewc.org) and translations of the document in other languages are also in the pipeline. In 2015 a number of national consultations are planned, to introduce the document and its recommendations and to discuss if and how it can be implemented on a national level. A report about the colloquy is available in german language and published at www.iccsweb.org and also at http://www.comenius.de/themen/Evangelische_Bildungsverantwortung_in_Europa.php.

CoGREE Steering Group met in Vienna

On 18-19 November the steering group of the Coordinating Group for Religion in Education in Europe (CoGREE) met in Wien. The group evaluated the colloquy “Intercultural Dialogue the Religious Dimension“, that took place at the beginning of October in Klingenthal near Strasbourg. The colloquy proposed that discussions about “Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education“ should be organized on a national level. Therefore, CoGREE is planning cooperations with the European Wergeland Centre in Oslo and consultations on a national level with different partners.

EFTRE: Meeting of the Executive in Copenhagen

Members of the EFTRE Executive met in Copenhagen, Denmark on 18 November 2014. There were two main areas of focus:

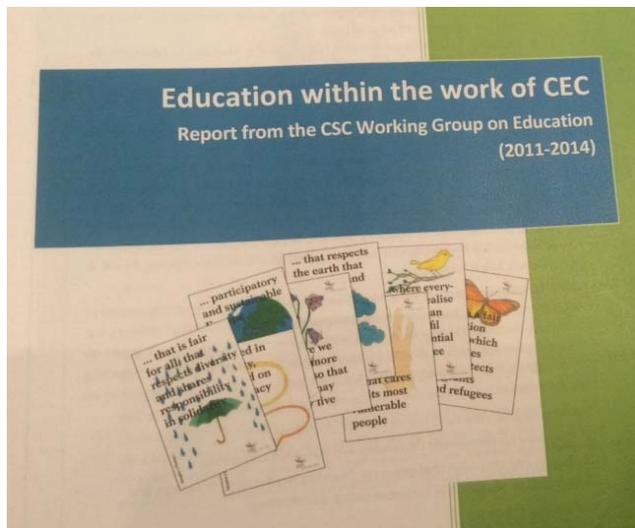
1. The next EFTRE Conference - in collaboration with CoGREE - will be held in Vienna, Austria on 31 August – September 2016. Everyone is welcome to apply. The title will be “Believing, Belonging and Behaving: Challenges for RE in 21st Century Europe”. The programme will have a similar structure to the parallel event in Malmo in 2013 with a mixture of key note addresses, seminars/workshops and visits to sites relevant to the themes of the Conference. Professor Denise Cush, Professor Bert Roebben and Dr Peter Schreiner have already confirmed that they will be involved. There will also be a key note address on religion and RE in Austria. Other contributors will include EFTRE Board Members and local contacts from Vienna.
2. EFTRE representatives from six different member countries were present at the recent Klingenthal Colloquy which focused on the new European Council of Europe publication, “Signposts”. As a result of discussions there, the EFTRE Executive has undertaken to develop a project to create teacher-training materials based on “Signposts”. Translations of “Signposts” into several other languages has also been offered for free by some members of the EFTRE Board and it is hoped that these will be authorised by the Council of Europe.

Lesley Prior

CEC and CPCE



CEC: Meeting of the Working Group “Education”



An evaluation of the work done between 2011 and 2014 and the drafting of a report for the Church and Society Commission (CSC) have been the central items of the meeting of the working group on 3-4 November 2014 in Strasbourg. Between 2011 and 2014 the working group has dealt with “Education for democratic and European citizenship“, on education initiatives to establish visions for the future of Europe, “Die AG hat zwischen 2011 und 2014 insbesondere zu” and on a European as well as church-based concept of education. A number of contributions of the group can be found on the website of CEC <http://csc.ceceurope.org/> in the section “Issues/Education“.

The final report includes the recommendation that the newly structured CEC should deal with education as an important European issue, should monitor developments of a European education policy in a critical way and promote the member churches to include European and global dimensions in their own education activities. The report will be presented to the new governing board of CEC and will be also discussed at the plenary of the Church and Society Commission. The new board confirmed that issues and concerns so far included in the CSC work, will be taken up by the governing board. Dr Peter Schreiner has been a member of the Working Group Education with a mandate of both the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) and of ICCS.

CPCE: Religious Education at European Schools

The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) invited to a meeting about the situation of Religious Education in European Schools (see www.eurisc.eu) on 27 October at the Protestant Academy in Tutzing. As part of a reform of the secondary stage II, there is a proposal to substitute the confessional Religious Education in grade six and seven by a common subject called Ethics and Religious Knowledge, which should have a non-confessional profile. CPCE will provide a discussion about this proposal and will develop supporting structures for teachers of Protestant Religious Education. Points that need further clarification in this proposal include, for example, the qualification of teachers as well as content- and structure-based implications. At the meeting a working group was established for preparing ongoing activities.

CEC: Plenary of the Church and Society Commission discussed future of CEC

At its final plenary on 3-4 December in Leuven/Belgium the Church and Society Commission stated that their issues and concerns should be integrated in the new CEC working structure. The report about activities in 2013 and 2014 as well as the presented programme perspectives for 2015 marked important points for the contribution of CEC in discussions about the future of Europe, on social and environmental issues, in education and on human rights. The manifold crisis that Europe faces today, is demanding and challenging for politics, society and churches. A crucial issue will be how committed member churches will identify with the new structure of CEC and strengthen the Conference of European Churches as a common instrument to make the voice of churches in Europe heard also in education.

Council of Europe and European Union



EU: New Commissioner for Education comes from Hungary

On 1 September 2014 the new EU Commission with EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker started their work. The new structure includes six vice presidents each dedicated to different areas. The Hungarian Tibor Navracsic is responsible for the field of “Education, Culture, Youth & Sport“. Navracsics has been deputy prime minister in the cabinet Orban and minister for foreign affairs and trade. In the so-called mission letter of president Juncker it is emphasized that education, culture and participation in civil society are “a key component of our shared European identity and values.“ It is emphasized that they contribute to “self-expression, creativity and entrepreneurship “ but also to “social cohesion and a dynamic society.“

Links: Mission letter:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_mission_letters/navracsics_en.pdf.pdf

Information about the new Commissioner:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/navracsics_en

EU: Dokument: Quality Teacher Education

On 21 May 2014 the Council of Education Ministers of the European Union adopted Conclusions on “effective teacher education“. The document accentuates the importance of systems and persons who are responsible for teacher education. Teachers face manifold new challenges. The Member States can use funding opportunities such as the programme *Erasmus+* and, where appropriate, the European Social Fund. The Member States see an important element in enhancing high quality initial teacher education and teachers’ continuous professional development. The focus on initial teacher education is of special importance because many of them will resign during the next years. The document is available at:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%208883%202014%20INIT>

Council of Europe: 2014 Exchange on the Religious Dimension of intercultural Dialogue. "Intercultural Dialogue: interaction between Culture and Religion"

The colloquy in Baku at the beginning of September was the seventh colloquy organised by the Committee of Ministers. We are now talking about the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. Aspects covered in earlier colloquies include *The teaching of religious and convictional facts*, *The media beliefs and religions*, *The role of young people in respect of the religious dimension*, *Taking responsibility in tomorrow's Europe* and *Freedom of religion in today's world*. At Baku we were concerned with the interaction between culture and religion. It was interesting that Azerbaijan is a former soviet republic with a Muslim tradition, Ottoman influence and even the excavation of a church dedicated to St Bartholomew.

The programme involved three panels. The first was about "Tolerance of religious and non-religious convictions as a social capital in culturally diverse societies." The second was about the contribution of religious and non-religious convictions to combatting all forms of discrimination, intolerance and violence. The third panel considered the contribution of cultural heritage of a religious nature to intercultural dialogue and to the universal values defended by the Council of Europe - in particular human rights, but also, of course, democracy and the rule of law.

Discussion around the theme of tolerance included tolerance as "putting up with someone" with the implication that this is not the real tolerance of personal acceptance. In the act of tolerating we might marginalise a person or a group, for example. A parallel interest was hate speech with its lack of tolerance. We mentioned its prevalence in certain circles. Nevertheless, we hope that religion might be able to appeal to a social capital of tolerance that respects human rights and the rule of law. One speaker said that we need mutual dignity based on respect, even more than tolerance.



The second panel on the contribution of religion was reminded that human rights are the same for all, that we make an individual contribution with organizational collaboration, while mutual recognition goes beyond convictions. As for tolerance, we were asked how religions deal with internal intolerance. The importance of the issue is obvious and groups within religions do cause difficulties. Nevertheless, criticism need not be intolerant or against anything. An example could be criticism of Israel for bombing civilians.

The third panel, with its discussion of cultural heritage was interesting because cultural heritage is not just academic. Religious monuments matter because they can be places of installation or enthronement of religious and non-religious dignitaries. In another context, explanation of religious buildings and associated political events in the past - or more recently - is a form of education. It might be useful to consider monuments and their presentation to visitors and tourists. This can be related to current interest in Ottoman, Islamic and Jewish culture (etc.) or more specifically to Ottoman architecture in Greece.

We also mentioned the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities because the local community has an important role in a context of cultural diversity. In that respect readers of this brief report might like to consult a Council of Europe publication called *Gods in the City - Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at local level* (2008) (ISBN 978-92-871-6384-4 Council of Europe Publishing).

Conclusions included the need for intercultural dialogue and respect for universal values.

James Barnett

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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