

# SIESC - TODAY

English Edition

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## EDITORIAL

### In a difficult world

What world do we live in! That often heard exclamation can testify to a nostalgic look at an idealized past or to a dream of a perfect harmonious world where it would be easy to live and to act. Then we would teach only motivated pupils, with the unanimous support of their parents, in well organized and well equipped schools. Reality, however, is totally different.

We live in a difficult world. The common house, our planet is in danger. Our societies cannot assure work to all their members, thus making the young people the generation of uncertainty. There exist apart from the classical family a great diversity of families in which the children have to live and to grow up. The conflicts in international life direct refugees to us, of whom we demand respect of our values. But do we know what the European values are for which we demand respect from everybody?

It's that difficult world which was given to us by grace, which we have to confront, to understand, and to evangelize. We must listen to the world, without judging. Thus we will be able to carry on a true dialogue with the

families as they are in their diversity. In front of our pupils – who like us are not ideal – we will not neglect the little acts of daily professional life, revealing our relationship to work and to ourselves. We will not expect everything from our institutions. We can fight for their improvement, but we will act immediately. By means of our personal efforts in everyday life we will practise ecological vigilance and we will realize the values we teach our young people. Then we will be allowed to demand respect for them both from them and from those who come to take refuge in our countries.

Having contributed to making arise “great persons” with a clear and strong identity, capable of a true dialogue with their neighbour, we will pass on the joy of the gospel to them. As teachers we are first of all citizens of the world, thus our responsibility is twofold. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to conversions. We have to decide for ourselves in a difficult world where every human being searches for his/her place and task which God has assigned to him/her.

**Agnès ROSE**

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## SIESC–European Federation of Christian Teachers

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## In einer schwierigen Welt

In was für einer Welt leben wir! Dieser oft gehörte Ausruf kann von einem nostalgischen Blick auf eine idealisierte Vergangenheit zeugen oder von einem Traum einer vollkommenen harmonischen Welt, wo es leicht zu leben und zu handeln wäre. Wir würden dann lauter motivierte Schüler/innen unterrichten, mit der einmütigen Unterstützung durch ihre Eltern, in gut geführten und gut ausgestatteten Schulen. Doch die Realität ist ganz anders.

Wir leben in einer schwierigen Welt. Das gemeinsame Haus, unser Planet ist in Gefahr. Unsere Gesellschaften können nicht allen ihren Mitgliedern Arbeit sichern, was die Jugendlichen zur Generation der Unsicherheit macht. Neben der klassischen Familie gibt es eine sehr große Unterschiedlichkeit der Familien, in denen die Kinder leben und aufwachsen müssen. Die Konflikte im internationalen Leben führen Flüchtlinge zu uns, von denen man verlangt, dass sie unsere Werte achten. Aber wissen wir, was die europäischen Werte sind, für die wir von allen Achtung verlangen möchten?

Diese schwierige Welt ist es, die uns durch Gnade gegeben ist, der wir uns stellen müssen, die wir verstehen und evangelisieren müssen. Wir müssen auf die Welt hören, ohne zu urteilen. So werden wir einen wahren Dialog mit den Familien führen können, wie sie in ihrer Unterschiedlichkeit sind. Vor unseren Schüler/innen – die wie wir nicht ideal sind – werden wir die kleinen Handlungen des täglichen beruflichen Lebens nicht vernachlässigen, die etwas über unsere Beziehung zur Arbeit und zu uns selbst verraten. Wir werden nicht alles von unseren Institutionen erwarten. Wir können für ihre Verbesserung kämpfen, aber wir werden sofort handeln. Durch unsere persönlichen Bemühungen im alltäglichen Leben werden wir ökologische Wachsamkeit üben und die Werte verwirklichen, die wir die Jugendlichen lehren. Dann werden wir Achtung vor ihnen verlangen können, sowohl von ihnen als auch von denen, die in unseren Ländern Zuflucht suchen.

Wenn wir dazu beigetragen haben, „große Personen“ mit klarer und starker Identität entstehen zu lassen, die zu einem echten Dialog mit ihrem Nächsten fähig sind, werden wir ihnen die Freude des Evangeliums weitergeben. Als Lehrer/innen sind wir zuerst Bürger/innen der Welt, unsere Verantwortung ist also eine zweifache. Als Jünger/innen Jesu sind wir aufgerufen zur Umkehr. Wir müssen für uns selbst in einer schwierigen Welt entscheiden, wo jeder Mensch den Platz und die Aufgabe sucht, die Gott ihm zugeteilt hat.

Agnès ROSE

## Dans un monde difficile

Dans quel monde vivons-nous ! Cette exclamation souvent entendue peut témoigner d'un regard nostalgique sur un passé idéalisé ou d'un rêve d'un monde harmonieux parfait où il serait facile de vivre et d'agir. Nous enseignerions alors à des élèves tous motivés, avec le soutien unanime de leurs parents, dans des établissements bien conduits et bien équipés. Or la réalité est tout autre.

Nous vivons dans un monde difficile. La maison commune, notre planète est en danger. Nos sociétés ne peuvent assurer un travail à tous leurs membres, faisant des jeunes la génération de l'incertitude. Il existe hors de la famille classique une très grande diversité des familles dans lesquelles les enfants

ont à vivre et à grandir. Les conflits au sein de la vie internationale conduisent chez nous des réfugiés dont l'on réclame qu'ils respectent nos valeurs. Mais savons-nous quelles sont les valeurs européennes dont nous voudrions exiger le respect par tous ?

Ce monde difficile est celui qui nous est donné par grâce, que nous avons à affronter, à comprendre et à évangéliser. Il nous faut être à l'écoute du monde, sans juger. Nous pourrions ainsi avoir un vrai dialogue avec les familles telles qu'elles sont dans leur diversité. Devant nos élèves - qui, comme nous, ne sont pas idéaux - nous ne négligerons pas les petits actes de la vie professionnelle quotidienne, révélateurs de notre rapport au travail et à nous-mêmes. Nous n'attendons pas tout de nos institutions. Nous pouvons lutter pour leur amélioration mais nous agissons de suite. Par nos efforts personnels dans la vie de chaque jour nous exercerons une vigilance écologique et réaliserons les valeurs que nous enseignerons aux jeunes. Nous pourrions alors en demander le respect tant à eux qu'à ceux qui viennent se réfugier dans nos pays.

Ayant contribué à faire naître des «grandes personnes» à l'identité claire et forte, capables d'un vrai dialogue avec leur prochain, nous leur transmettons la joie de l'Évangile. Enseignants, nous sommes d'abord citoyens du monde, notre responsabilité est donc double. Disciples de Jésus Christ, nous sommes appelés à des conversions. Nous avons à décider par nous-mêmes dans un monde difficile où chaque être humain cherche la place et la tâche que Dieu lui a attribuées.

Agnès ROSE

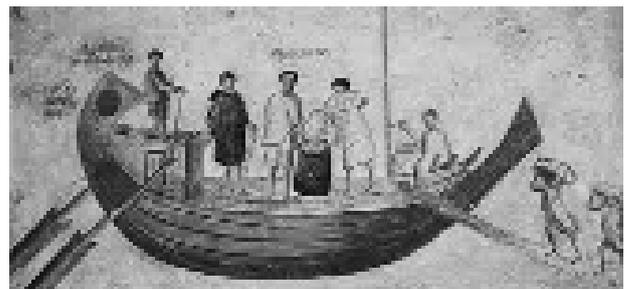
## 60th Annual Meeting of SIESC Rome, July 23rd/29th, 2015

### SIESC'S LIFE

“Otium et negotium. Educating the young people to the human dimension of work”

Going to Rome is never like going to a town like the others: For our 60th Meeting that was very true. That place was, however, not chosen in the first plan; our Italian colleagues had first thought of Lombardy, less out of the centre of Europe, but the World Exhibition of Milano had made it very difficult to find accommodation in the whole region. One had to change: thanks to the Romans for taking on the baton!

The whole meeting was held in Casa Bonus Pastor on the via Aurelia, a guest house of the Vatican on the hill, near to the tall historic ramparts surrounding the Città del Vaticano. The cicadas were singing under the pines.



Mosaic of Ostia

70 participants from 14 countries, Austria, France, Germany, and Italy being the largest groups, Belarus, England, Luxemburg, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, and one from Bolivia. We were happy to meet our Orthodox Serb and Protestant Swedish colleagues again.

In Rome the Latin language is everywhere. We even had it in the title «Otium et negotium» in order to express that we were going to reflect on our responsibility as educators in front of work in the world of today; what human dimension has it got? In our days the absence of work is not only the time of free activities of leisure, mainly opposed to compulsive professional work, negotium, but it is often unemployment, its menaces and its destructive miseries. Background for today's generations!

Several talks were given by several voices, several approaches to situations whose economic, social, psychologic complexity makes the task of educating young generations more difficult, when young teachers and young parents are themselves implicated in those situations. On July 24th Don Mario Tonini, Gian Carlo Sacchi, Francesco Belletti on young people and work between projects and uncertainty in society, at school, in the family. On July 25th Alfonso Balsamo, Roberto Cipriani, Gian Cesare Romagnoli on the situations in Italy, in Europe, in the world. On July 26th Sofia Corradi on the pedagogy to be realized for the generations of uncertainty, particularly by the programmes Erasmus. On July 27th Don Carlo Nanni (a reunion of mutual happiness) on young people and work in the work of Don Bosco from the 19th century to nowadays, Andrea Porcarelli on the perspectives at the beginning of the 3rd millennium, Maria Vittoria Cavallari on European projects between schools, Marco Cappelletti, representative of the Ministry, on «peer education», a pedagogical model associating pupils, teachers, and parents, a statement by the president of UCIIIM, Rosalba Candela, a debate with several speakers. All in all a large whole, very well documented and very open, unfortunately without the possibility of translating all contributions beforehand. But you will find the texts of the statements in English, French and German on the SIESC website; and you will appreciate that they are often developed in more detail than in the oral statements.

Catherine Le Coz and Mirella Pacifico made a summary of the work they observed in the language groups. Wolfgang Rank gave a report on the life of SIESC since the meeting at Kranj; there must be found a new president, but the candidates do not show up. Yves Calais drew conclusions of the meeting, whose reflections obviously deal with other points than those of the meeting at Münster 30 years ago in 1984.

The times of prayer marked the days, as we always like to have it. The opening prayers of each day were built on verses from the Psalms of the respective Laudes. The morning mass, celebrated in a very simple way in the chapel of the Casa Bonus Pastor by F. Christophe Silvestre, who had come with friends from the South of France, regularly united about 30 colleagues; Sunday mass, in the morning as well, was more solemn.

As regards cultural visits, they are abundant in Rome. The visit to Trastevere on foot was very much appreciated: after the



*Santa Maria in Trastevere*

Palazzo Corsini with its astonishing collections, the church and the square of Santa Maria in Trastevere before a dinner in a typical trattoria. The trip to the sanctuary of our Lady Divino amore, southeast of Rome, didn't allow the visits planned on the route, as the places were closed on Sunday, but it gave us a long time at a magnificent place with its chapel from the 18th ct. and an immense modern church, partly subterranean, surrounded by large many-coloured stained glass, built for large pilgrimages. Several participants went down to St. Peter's Square for the Angelus with Pope Francis on Sunday midday; many enjoyed it very much during the free times to see the monuments of old Rome and of the ancient town. The optional excursion of July 28th, having started with a boat trip down the Tiber between green banks and flights of birds, allowed a very remarkable visit of thrilling excavations at Ostia; one will not keep an unforgettable remembrance of the beaches where the Romans crowd together; but it was a good journey full of conviviality.

The conviviality of the days spent together, that's what marks our international meetings, which are not reunions of top representatives, nor only intensive days of formation, but also agreeable meetings of men and women from countries with rather different histories, first encounters or reunions, a little like of brothers and sisters who do really converse. That's not so frequent in international life.

Once again thanks to our Italian friends for having organized that 60th Annual Meeting!

Until next year in Romania!

Yves CALAIS

## Invitation to Cluj

**Dear members and friends of SIESC, AGRU and SIESC invite you to the 61st Annual Meeting of SIESC at Cluj from July 22nd to 27th/28th, 2016.**

We invite you cordially to next year's annual SIESC meeting at Cluj, in Transylvania, in the western part of Romania. We, the teachers in AGRU, the Romanian organization of Greek-Catholic lay people, are going to prepare it for the time from July 22nd to 28th, 2016.

Together with the Council of SIESC we have decided to deal with a topic which is up to date in almost all European countries, which we have been confronted with for centuries in our part of Romania, and which is a special challenge to

## Invitație la Cluj

Christian teachers: "Identity and living together: Educating to plurality". We want to find out what school subjects such as History, History of Art, humanistic culture as a whole, and Religious Instruction can contribute to that part of education.

In addition to the attraction of the topic (and the well-known conviviality of SIESC) we think that our country might be new and interesting for many of you (at least it will be the first SIESC meeting in Romania). Cluj (Klausenburg) is a town where Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Jews have learnt to live together. It is the European capital of Youth in 2015. And at its international airport direct flights from many European cities land (see [http://airportcluj.ro/?id\\_limba=2](http://airportcluj.ro/?id_limba=2)).

Moreover there is no lack of interesting places, churches, castles, towns in the surroundings which you could visit together with us or on your own. We will prepare some excursions, especially one to Sighet, in the north of the country, where you find the Memorial to the Victims of Communism and of Resistance (see <http://www.memorialsighet.ro/index.php?lang=en>).

We look forward to meeting you at Cluj soon.

Marius BOLDOR, vice-president of SIESC  
Alin TAT, president of AGRU

**Dragi prieteni, dragi membri ai SIESC,  
AGRU și SIESC vă invită la ediția 61 a Întâlnirilor  
anuale SIESC între 22 și 27/28 iulie 2016 la Cluj**

Vă invităm cu drag la următoarea întâlnire anuală a SIESC la Cluj, în Transilvania, în partea apuseană a României. Noi, cadrele didactice din AGRU, organizația românilor laici greco-catolici, o vom pregăti pentru perioada cuprinsă între 22 și 28 iulie 2016. Alături de Consiliul SIESC, am hotărât să abordăm o temă de actualitate pentru aproape toate țările Europei, temă cu care, în regiunea noastră din România, ne-am confruntat de-a lungul secolelor și care este o provocare deosebită pentru profesorii creștini: „Identitate și conviețuire: educarea la pluralitate”. Dorim să descoperim în ce fel materii cum ar fi istoria, istoria artei, cultura umanistă în ansamblul ei și formarea religioasă își pot aduce contribuția în această sferă a educației.

Dincolo de atractivitatea temei (și bucuria împărtășirii în SIESC, bine cunoscută), credem că țara noastră ar putea fi o noutate interesantă pentru mulți dintre dumneavoastră (aceasta, de altfel, va fi prima întâlnire a SIESC în România). Clujul este un oraș în care românii, maghiarii, germanii, evreii au învățat cum să trăiască împreună. Este, totodată, capitala europeană a tineretului pentru anul 2015.

În aeroportul de la Cluj sosesc zboruri directe din foarte multe orașe europene.

Mai mult, există numeroase locuri interesante, biserici, fortificații, orașe din împrejurimi pe care le veți putea vizita împreună cu noi sau pe cont propriu.

Vom pregăti câteva excursii, îndeosebi pe cea de la SIGHET, în nordul țării, unde se află Memorialul Victimelor Comunismului și al rezistenței

Ne bucurăm încă de pe acum să vă întâlnim curând la Cluj.

Marius Boldor, vice-președinte al SIESC  
Alin Tat, președinte al AGRU

## INTERNATIONAL LIFE

### LAUDATO SI, maturity and effect

It needed a pope who wanted to be called Francis to dare entitle his encyclical letter "Laudato sí", taking up the first words of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Thus he puts his appeal to obligation of ecological vigilance under the sign of the action of grace, "Laudato sí, mi' Signore", "Praise be to you, my Lord": It's God the Creator who is addressed.

Since its publication the encyclical letter has appeared as the charter of Christian ecology and was hailed as such by all, Christians, believers and non-believers of this time. It confirms by means of its authority what had already been said without having attained that degree of reputation, not to say urgency; it invites all those who are not yet sensitive for safeguarding the common home to take ecology into consideration. A remarkable, often very simple and very practical piece of pedagogy!

I still remember our surprise at the title of the Oecumenical Meeting of Bale at Pentecost 1989: "Justice, Peace, Safeguarding the Creation". And our embarrassment at the

numerous regional meetings when associating "Justice and Peace", a self-evident couple of words, with "Safeguarding the Creation", which we could only put into connection with what had gone before by replacing it with "mastery of the creation". We very badly realized the urgency and the close relationship to justice and peace.

A quarter of a century later that has become evident and the text by Pope Francis uses the phrase of "integral ecology". That adjective expresses the fundamental link between environmental ecology, the first one coming to mind, and human ecology, the just political and economic handling of the human home: without the second one the first one is incomplete, mutilated. All the technical studies put in numbers, all the collections of photos of journalists show its range everywhere. At the moment when I write this, one doesn't know what will come out of the World Climate Conference at Paris called COP 21, and if the maturity of the question will have led the responsible politicians to take the expected difficult decisions.

The effect of the encyclical will be what the Catholics, the other Christians and believers will make out of it, and at a larger scale all those who feel themselves concerned by the problems connected to environmental ecology and human ecology, in the particularly vulnerable poor countries and in the rich countries involved in solidarity.

As teachers we are first of all citizens of the world, thus our responsibility is twofold, according to the amount of our means. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to conversions, according to the effectivity of God's call.

Yves CALAIS, 5/11/2015

Post Scriptum - COP 21, 12/12/2015

The limitation of the augmentation of temperature to at most 2 degrees Celsius, the help for countries of the South amounting to at least 100 billion dollars, the revisions determined for every 5 years, recognition of the human rights: That is the first worldwide agreement of 195 states on the climate, which can make us rejoice, even if it appears to be still insufficiently precise. A victory of diplomatic work which must now be realized on the political level!

### **Living European values Teaching/learning European values Demanding European values**

In whatever way the challenges to Europe and the EU have developed in the last months, there were regularly recurring statements that Europe/the EU is or ought to be a community of values, too, and that refugees coming to Europe must learn and realize those values.

Christian teachers have been demanding, perhaps more than others, during the years of development of the EU that the EU must not only be an economic community, but a community of values. The discussion about "values" has always been especially difficult (but essential), and thus the answer to the question what "European values" are is very controversial now as well. Are these political, moral, religious, Christian values? Can you impose "values", can you enforce them? What are you allowed to demand without violating the dignity, the person, the self-determination of a human being? And which values are valid for the whole of Europe, if we consider the diversity of the European states, peoples and cultures?

We should probably rather say: Just as from every human being living in Europe we demand from everybody who comes to Europe and wants and is allowed to stay there to respect the "values" sustained by declarations of rights such as they are summarized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights and the catalogue of Basic Rights of the EU. There concerns such as the respect of human dignity, the acceptance of the rule of the state, freedom of opinion, religious freedom (including the right to change one's religion), freedom of assembly, equal rights of men and women, fundamental neutrality of the state opposite religions, protection of minorities and many more are anchored and can be justified.

We know that in order to realize those "values" it is necessary to make constant efforts in one's personal life in one's actions, to discuss further development and interpretation constantly, to introduce the next generations constantly and to transmit the values to them, to detect and punish offences constantly by means of the judicial system. But that is worthwhile, if we want to enjoy the advantages and the security of that European community of values.

Hence three challenges result in my opinion: Such values we must respect and live personally in everyday life. In that respect we ought to be examples as parents and teachers. Such values we must teach in our schools and expect the children and youths to know and to learn to respect them. And then we may also expect and demand of all those who come to Europe and want to stay to respect such values and to live correspondingly.

Wolfgang RANK, president of SIESC

## **NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS**

### **Germany - VkdL**

#### **Christian education moving with the times for 130 years**

On Sept. 13th, 1885 Pauline Herber together with about 60 female teachers founded the "Verein katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen e.V." at Koblenz-Moselweiß. On Sept. 12th, 2015 the VkdL celebrated its 130th anniversary at St. Aposteln in Cologne. The celebration started at 10 o'clock with a thanksgiving service. After it Rainer Werner from Berlin gave a talk on the topic "1885 to 2015 – the long way to a humane pedagogy".

130 years ago the situation of women, female teachers and also mothers was different: Education and formation were firmly held by men. The individual woman was neither financially secure nor recognized in her social function. She was dependent on the husband and the family. The VkdL was one of the first association which spoke up for the rights and the interests of the – mostly unmarried – female teachers, it was home, community of faith and professional association for Christian female pedagogues of all sectors of education and formation.

Contemporary history accompanied the VkdL through World War I and II and put the faithfulness of its members to a hard test: The courageous testimony and commitment of Maria Schmitz (president from 1916 till 1953) during the Nazi time cannot be estimated highly enough nowadays. In spite of innumerable harassments and bans from the profession more than 70 % of the members remained in the VkdL even after a double membership had been forbidden and turned their backs on the national socialist teachers' association. In spite of the forceful dissolution of the VkdL in 1937 the association continued its work in the underground, and it gave its members support and a spiritual home.

Up till today the VkdL has been fighting for women to be estimated for their nature just as men and for them not to be instrumentalised by the state as an economic factor. The VkdL has been committing itself up till today for an educational system oriented towards talents and achievement which promotes girls and boys equally and doesn't design their future by means of structures: Women neither need a "hearth bonus" nor a "quota for women". They don't want alms from politics nor their decisions to be made for them. They neither want to be "copies of men" nor to be pitied by men. They want to decide themselves if they found a family, care for children at home themselves, start a career in their profession, or advance science. Hunger for power is a bad counsellor for education of girls and women in dignity. That was valid 130 years ago, that is valid today.

The VkdL speaks up for equal rights of man and women, which offer both sexes the same access to education and formation without evaluating: Every human being is searching for his/her place which God has assigned to him/her.

Roswitha FISCHER

## Austria - VCL

### A description of good teaching

*In a statement the president of the VCL summed up her description of good teaching, including the basic framework conditions :*

My hypothesis: Good teaching is a "Gesamtkunstwerk" (an entire work of art), whose components are all equally (?) important and must not be played off against one another. As soon as one factor is turned into its opposite, the whole is in danger of falling apart:

- ❖ TEACHER PERSONALITIES COMPETENT IN THEIR SUBJECTS
- ❖ A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL ESTEEM
- ❖ GOOD BASIC FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS
- ❖ GOOD DESIGN AND ARRANGEMENT OF TEACHING AND VARIETY OF METHODS

**Hypothesis 1:** Good teaching needs teacher personalities competent in his/her subjects standing out because of professional ... empathy ... humour ... authority ... leadership ... expertise concerning teaching and learning ... calmness and courage ...

**Hypothesis 2:** Good teaching needs a climate of esteem which does not allow any place for belittling, cynicism, or humiliation ...

**Hypothesis 3:** Good teaching needs good basic framework conditions:

Without claiming completeness and without evaluating which framework condition is more important, the following external factors can be derived from many years of practice as favouring good teaching:

- manageable, not too demanding expectations by the educational authorities;
  - leadership of the headperson who feels co-responsible for the good climate among the staff, accompanies new developments effectively, and advises the teachers in the development of their teaching respectively supports the discussions on teaching within the staff;
  - a staff with shared attitudes concerning values, pulling together as much as possible with respect to the importance of good relationships and being aware that each class, each pupil, each lesson is different. Every day all participants learn from one another.
  - colleagues who exchange opinions of teaching and pupils, who sometimes are single fighters, but mostly team-oriented, and are not afraid of opening their lessons for colleagues (mutual visits) and considering feedback as a favourable instrument, know how to handle criticism etc.;
  - good climate in the class which allows teaching as free of disturbances as possible;
  - pupils who are motivated, have a good look at the contents of learning, by themselves and in a team, take responsibility for their learning, instead of just being exposed, acquire the capacity for reflection and giving feedback;
  - not to be forgotten: Successful teaching presupposes discipline and corresponding manners. For that the support of the parents is essential, for they shape the attitude of their children towards school and learning decisively.
  - school/classroom as an inspiring and demanding space of teaching and learning with good equipment (rooms, media, library, time ...). ...
  - use of media: One cannot think of modern good teaching without the use of media, however, in moderation and not as an aim in itself.
  - Support personnel such as school psychologists, supervisors, social workers, administrative support personnel etc. would be very helpful. But Austrian teachers can only dream of that, as the TALIS Study 2008 has shown ...
- Hypothesis 4:** Good teaching needs the best possible preparation and arrangement ...

Isabella ZINS

## France - CdEP

### The family's vocation and mission in the Church and in the contemporary world

Contribution to the bishops' synod, october 2014 and october 2015

#### The family or families ?

Their current **diversity** makes us answer in the plural : classic or nuclear family, young or older people living together, reconstituted families, with few or many children, one-parent families, same-sex families.

Today, in the face of the dual reality of a tough world - "*but this is the world which was granted us by God's grace, which we have to face, understand and evangelize*" - and the Church which requires from us "*an understanding attitude and no judgement on the world*", two notions emerge from our reflection : **difference** and **handing down**.

The **major difference** is between the Church's vision about "the family's mission and vocation" and grassroot realities.

Whether it be about married again divorcees, young or older people living together, or the issue of gay people, the reflections of CdEP groups revolve around **openness** and **hope**. Rather than a strict and legal implementation of the law, a decidedly pastoral and welcoming attitude is expected from the Church.

As the Vatican reminds us, "we have to help each family as it is", with reference to God's mercy : "*I didn't come for the healthy, but for sinners*".

Let's **welcome** these new ways of living as a family : in the wake of cohabitation for instance, "*the meaning of marriage has shifted, it is no longer seen as a beginning, it is a completion, and the Church should take this into account*".

The other very frequent theme is **upbringing** or **handing down**, because *the family is the place for unity, handing down and hospitality*, and because handing down and education are CdEP's human and professional base.

The younger generations aren't bothered with an obsolete, often guilt-inducing tradition. They can perceive the Church's word in a more positive way. This is a whole project to be implemented in movements and associations as well as parishes, as "*sharing to children the joy of the Gospel which gives life a meaning*".

In school, our own environment, we affirm that having talks with families is fundamental. The same applies to the relationship between families and the Church as an institution, hence these proposals :

- to accept dialogue up to confrontation, to allow each person to pursue their truths. *About the notion of "openness to life", where the Church's language is way apart from the practise of Christian couples, fewer rules and more incitation to responsibility would be necessary."*

to perceive the huge diversity of families as good news, "*similarly to the existence of four gospels :there is a dynamic in the encounter of families, which will have to adapt between them, and the Church should promote this process : evange?*

*lization is a deeply horizontal reality."*

In conclusion, "*we are clearly aware of being involved in a long collective history. Our hope is that it will carry on its ever new road.*" In this purpose all the groups insist on the need to **propose, to invent, to rely on a project pedagogy**.

Summary of a synthesis made up from various contributions from Christians in Public Education teams.

Jacqueline Xhaard-Bourdais

## Romania - AGRU

### Survey of Rumanian teaching after 1989

At the end of 1989 secondary education in Romania had two problems: ideological orientation and orientation towards production, in that case industrial one. The first one, more obvious and detested by society, was relatively easily discarded: school books in humanist subjects, marked by ideology, were replaced and new subjects were introduced (logics, psychology, sociology, civic education). The introduction of religious instruction as a school subject has raised discussions, certain voices of society accusing the school of denominational partisanship or of having replaced communist ideology by religious ideology.

The process of adapting scientific subjects to the new educational context turned out to be more difficult. During the years of communism the school represented a privileged way of urbanisation for a population still rural in its majority. The most desirable form of access to urban life was through university studies, but that was a difficult way because of the restricted number of places at the faculties. The greatest number of pupils in secondary education was orientated towards the *industrial* upper secondary schools, which supplied theoretical general education and qualification for a profession for future workers in the "building sites of socialism". The disintegration of industry after 1990 made those schools transform themselves into *theoretical* upper secondary schools, but without the necessary investment on the level of infrastructure and in the quality of teachers. Lacking a real change in the vision of the Ministry of Education the curricula of scientific subjects have remained about the same. The consequence is a rigid kind of teaching, characterized by parameters of quantity, abstract and without practical orientation. The results in exact sciences of Rumanian pupils at international Olympiads cover up the problems of a school incapable of giving a new vision of education.

In 1997 alternative school book were introduced, but without bringing in substantial change. The salaries of teachers have always remained a problem – the average salary of a secondary teacher being about 300 euros –, which has consequences on the level of the formation of future teachers,

becoming more and more precarious. After 1990, in the context of the free market, the teaching was “liberalized”, that is to say it lowered its standards of quality in order to be able to take in all the new “clients”. Emphasis is put – in university formation as well as in post-university courses – on the “art of teaching/learning”, forgetting more and more about the contents of that apprenticeship. (...) All that can hardly be applied to pupils coming from disadvantaged environments, but also from newly rich ones, without any genuine interest in school and only attracted by the new technologies. In order to overcome those difficulties of the system, the state tolerates private lessons and paid competitions as ways of improving the level of teaching and the revenues of teachers, too. Thus the universal and free school attendance tends to differentiate due to the background of the pupils and their financial possibilities.

As a conclusion I must say that the Rumanian school system is still waiting for a genuine reform and that the results, insofar they exist go back to individual efforts.

Mihai MACI, teacher of philosophy at Oradea University.

## Slovénia - DKPS

### Searching for Identity Through Student-Teacher Relationships

Every year, Socialna akademija, an institute for education, research and culture, organizes a series of events called Social Week, a part of their effort for general social progress. This year it ran under the title «In search of a dialogue». The Slovene association of Catholic teachers prepared one of the events. Though students and teachers meet on a daily basis, this meeting was slightly different. We hosted students from three Ljubljana highschoools. All students but one are graduating this year, each with his or her own vision for the future.

The introductory question to our students was: Who are you? What is identity? It's something that represents you, something you are. It is different – but equally important – for each of us, and is influenced by our environment. We spoke plainly about the teacher's role in forming the identity of a stu-

dent and the truth might have been harsh for some of the teachers. Yes, even arriving late or filling in the e-thing which has replaced conventional class registers reveals teachers' attitude to their work, the subject they teach, even themselves. If teachers do not respect their own work or themselves, the students learn only what kind of person not to become. The students think that a teacher with a strong identity is the one who is strict and demanding, yet fair to the students.

The first impression, students say, is important for a teacher's reputation. The latter is then passed down through generations and partly determines how the new students respond to the teacher's work. We came to the point where the students confessed they can manipulate teachers, but did not leave their «safe zone»; the students insisted it was the teacher who was, for the most part, responsible for the atmosphere in the classroom.

It was also precious to hear a voice from the teachers' side. When asked how a teacher can be objective, they first lowered their eyes to the floor and then confessed it's one of the hardest tasks. It can never be done to perfection. They all wish they could do it, of course, but reality is something else. One of the reasons, I think, is that the students are not ideal either.

Most of us agreed that schools should do more to help students build their identity. They could offer more activities which strengthen a human being's spirit and soul. Spiritual identity is the most neglected aspect and is, nowadays, almost a taboo, but students and teachers are breaking it with small acts of sincerity. We also agreed that our school curriculum is inadequate when it comes to developing national identity, which will probably be the topic of our next meeting.

We ended the evening with a prayer. We asked God that our student-teacher relationships would give rise to great people – people of great relationships, whose identity is at the same time clear and strong, yet capable of genuine dialogue with their neighbour. If an institution cannot provide that, it can be given by people, who make it alive and active – by students and teachers, who have prepared our meeting and made it fruitful.

Matevž VIDMAR

#### A note from the editor

SIESC-TODAY publishes articles of two types :

1/ It provides information concerning the life of SIESC and international affairs : for this SIESC governing body takes on full responsibility.

2/ On their authors' own responsibility, it publishes information coming from member and partner associations as well as from guests to allow them to put into dialogue their own positions and to lead readers to think about these positions which can not be shared by everybody.

**OUR BEST THANKS TO OUR TRANSLATORS**