

# SIESC - TODAY

English Edition

n° 47 - January 2011

## EDITORIAL

### Meetings

While the cancelling of the annual meeting at Oradea changed the plans of numerous SIESC members, several of them kept their plans to visit Romania. The seriousness of the crisis was perceptible for them in various ways. In the course of encounters it could appear how much the country has been determined by Ceausescu's dictatorship, which left remembrances engraved in everybody's hearts, but also tensions. Therefore you understand the necessity to act with respect to a purification of recent memory, to realize the spirit of community against the spectres of the past; that will be the topic of the meeting at Warsaw.

You will not enter on the challenges of the world without dialogue. It is suitable to emphasize the collaboration between peoples of different cultures, to be open-minded. "The religions should be advocates of a life that brings happiness to all human beings." The pedagogy of dialogue should contribute to living together in equal dignity. You will promote the meeting of one another among youngsters, you will teach them to respect one another, whatever the cultural and denominational differences are.

It is also necessary not to neglect the riches of the intergenerational encounter. It is good to create it and to promote it. You will also have to ascertain the passing on of testimonies between the old and the younger ones and to find equilibrium between the thousands of demands of the present and what is valuable in the past and in history. Therefore you must wish for a formation of teachers on the highest level, preparing them in different ways for different tasks.

One also wishes that spiritual values should be introduced in the frame of education. In any case one can ask oneself it is the values that are in a crisis or those who teach them. Isn't there too often a gap between what you say and what you do, between what you propose and what you testify? Certainly you must not be silent if truth is at stake, but you must also match your life with what you proclaim. It is not enough to want to make Christ's teaching known to the world, it is still necessary to live the commandment He has given us: "Love one another!"

**Agnès ROSE**

### SUMMARY

#### Editorial

Meetings p.1

#### SIESC'S LIFE

Impressions of Romania p. 2  
Warsaw 2011 p. 4

#### INTERNATIONAL LIFE

The religions and Europe p. 5  
Pax Romana :  
Buddhism and catholicism p. 5  
Pax Romana Europe p. 6

#### NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Germany	VkdL	p. 6
Austria	VCL	p. 7
France	ACMEC	p. 7
	CdEP	p. 8
Italy	UCIIM	p. 8
Romania	AGRU	p. 9
Slovenia	DKPS	p. 9
Czech Republic	UCPCR	p. 10

## SIESC-European Federation of Christian Teachers

**Editeur** : SIESC, association loi 1901, siège social : 20, rue Mégevand, F-25000 Besançon, représentant légal : Wolfgang RANK, parmi les principaux associés : Nicole BALU , Darja MAZI-LESKOVAR, Agnès ROSE.

**Directeur de la publication** : Wolfgang RANK

**Responsable de la rédaction** : Agnès ROSE

**Imprimeur** : Association diocésaine de Troyes, 10, rue de l'Isle, F-10000 Troyes

**Parution et dépôt légal** : janvier 2011

**ISSN** 1779-5648

**Prix du numéro** : 4, 50 EUR

## Begegnungen

Während die Absage des Jahrestreffens in Oradea die Pläne zahlreicher SIESC-Mitglieder verändert hat, haben mehrere von ihnen daran festgehalten, sich nach Rumänien zu begeben. Die Schwere der Krise war für sie unterschiedlich wahrnehmbar. Bei den Begegnungen konnte deutlich werden, wie das Land durch die Diktatur Ceausescus geprägt worden ist, welche Erinnerungen in die Herzen aller eingeschrieben hat, aber auch Spannungen hinterlassen hat. Man versteht also die Notwendigkeit, mit Blick auf die Reinigung der jüngsten Vergangenheit zu handeln, den Geist der Gemeinschaft gegen die Gespenster der Vergangenheit zu verwirklichen; das wird das Thema des Jahrestreffens in Warschau sein.

Man wird den Herausforderungen der Welt nicht ohne Dialog begegnen können. Es kommt darauf an, die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Völkern unterschiedlicher Kulturen zu betonen, eine offene Einstellung zu haben. „Die Religionen sollen Anwälte eines für alle Menschen glückenden Lebens sein.“ Die Pädagogik des Dialogs muss dazu beitragen, in gleicher Würde zusammen zu leben. Man wird die Begegnung mit dem anderen bei den Jugendlichen fördern, man wird sie lehren, den anderen zu achten, wie auch immer die kulturellen und konfessionellen Unterschiede sind.

Man darf auch den Reichtum der Begegnung der Generationen miteinander nicht vernachlässigen. Es ist gut, diese zu schaffen und zu fördern. Auch die Weitergabe von Zeugnissen zwischen den Alten und den Jüngeren ist zu sichern und ein Gleichgewicht zwischen der Antwort auf die tausend Ansprüche der Gegenwart und dem, was in der Vergangenheit und der Geschichte wertvoll ist, ist zu suchen. Deswegen wünscht man sich eine Ausbildung auf höchstmöglichem Niveau für die Lehrer/innen, die sie in unterschiedlicher Weise auf unterschiedliche Aufgaben vorbereitet.

Man wünscht sich auch, dass spirituelle Werte in den Bereich der Bildung eingeführt werden. Jedenfalls kann man sich fragen, ob es die Werte sind, die in der Krise sind, oder diejenigen, die sie unterrichten. Besteht nicht zu oft eine Kluft zwischen dem, was man sagt, und dem, was man tut, zwischen dem, was man vorschlägt, und dem, was man bezeugt? Sicher darf man nicht schweigen, wenn es um die Wahrheit geht, aber man muss auch sein Leben mit dem, was man verkündet, in Einklang bringen. Es genügt nicht, der Welt die Lehre Christi bekannt machen zu wollen, man muss auch noch das Gebot leben, das Er uns gegeben hat: „Liebet einander!“

**Agnès ROSE**

## Rencontres

Tandis que l'annulation de la Rencontre d'Oradea changeait les plans de nombreux membres du SIESC, plusieurs d'entre eux ont tenu à se rendre en Roumanie. La gravité de la crise leur a été diversement perceptible. Au cours des rencontres, a pu apparaître combien le pays a été imprégné par la dictature de Ceausescu qui laisse des souvenirs gravés dans le cœur de chacun mais aussi des tensions. On comprend alors la nécessité d'agir en vue d'une purification de la mémoire récente, de mettre en oeuvre l'esprit de communauté contre les spectres du passé ; ce sera le thème de la Rencontre de Varsovie.

On ne relèvera pas les défis du monde sans dialogue. Il convient de mettre l'accent sur la collaboration entre des peuples de cultures différentes, d'avoir un esprit ouvert. «Les religions doivent se faire les avocats d'une vie réussie pour tous les êtres humains.» La pédagogie du dialogue doit contribuer à vivre ensemble dans l'égalité. On favorisera la rencontre de l'autre par les jeunes, on leur apprendra à respecter l'autre quelles que soient les différences culturelles et confessionnelles.

Il ne faut pas non plus négliger la richesse de la rencontre intergénérationnelle. Il est bon de la créer et de la promouvoir. Il y aura aussi à assurer le passage de témoins entre les anciens et les plus jeunes et à trouver un équilibre entre la réponse aux mille demandes du présent et ce qui a de la valeur dans le passé et l'histoire. Pour cela on souhaite que soit donnée aux enseignants une formation au plus haut niveau possible les préparant différemment pour des tâches différentes.

On souhaite aussi que des valeurs spirituelles soient introduites dans les cadres de l'éducation. Toutefois on peut se demander si ce sont les valeurs qui sont en crise ou ceux qui les enseignent. N'y a-t-il pas trop souvent un écart entre ce qu'on dit et ce qu'on fait, ce qu'on propose et ce dont on témoigne? Certes on ne doit pas se taire quand il s'agit de la vérité, mais on doit aussi mettre sa vie en accord avec ce qu'on proclame. Il ne suffit pas de vouloir faire connaître au monde l'enseignement du Christ, encore faut-il vivre le commandement qu'il nous a donné «aimez-vous les uns les autres».

**Agnès ROSE**

## SIESC'S LIFE

### Impressions of Romania

*Extracts from letters by colleagues,  
who travelled to Romania this summer*

«Buna dimineata»

We have received divergent impressions :

Geographic impressions : By coach or by train we crossed numerous regions, from the Danube to Timisoara passing Bucharest, Sibiu, Cluj ... from the Black Sea to the mountains.

Historical impressions : The visits have shown us how much the country has been determined by Ceausescu's dictatorship. There remain moving remembrances engraved in everybody's heart. There remain some conflicts in the regions, on the political level (Hungarians – Rumanians, Rumanians – Gipsies) as well as on the religious level. In fact, multiple religions get into contact and try to live together with one another.

The visits also allowed us to discover fortified churches and numerous icons.

Human impressions : (...) Lodging, hospitality, visits of towns, exchanges, interviews: That was only joy and happiness.

**Brigitte ESTEBAN**



Oradea: Greek catholic secondary school

For 19 years I have been to Romania almost every year, to Cluj and Oradea. There have been considerable changes there during that time: a lot of large enterprises, an enormous frequency of middle class cars, far better roads, sections of a motorway and wonderful city centres (first of all Oradea). But this year I for the first time saw unimaginable poverty: the Gipsy quarter at Blaj and the poorest quarters at Cluj and Oradea. And there we only saw the outside of those huts! (...) All colleagues told us that Romania is really in a serious crisis, the salaries were lowered, the VAT was raised from 19 to 24 %. A lot of parents who want to send their children to the nursery of the Sisters of St. Basilius can't pay the fees. Bishop Bercea of Oradea, however, seems to be optimistic. He represents the Greek Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church at diverse conferences in Europe. He deeply regrets the cancelling of the SIESC meeting, it would have been good for the teachers of his diocese.

Gabriele PEUS-BISPINCK

(...) What surprised us first of all, is the inferior knowledge of French there compared with the east. In Bucharest it did not happen rarely that we were addressed by people keen on speaking French. In the west (of Romania) we are under Germanic (or „Saxon“) influence and that can be heard. (...)

In the towns we saw a population exercising their occupations, some casual labourers were visible, but few beggars, active urban life, very necessary renovations under way. In the country we especially saw people living by the roadside and street cleaning teams cleaning the roads and the gutters due to the recent floods.

(...) Too great a capacity of lodging offered in the large hotels and the prices lowered extremely for that reason were, we must concede, the only perceptible aspect of the crisis. Let's only add the prices of foodstuffs in the markets, exceedingly high for the modest Rumanian salaries. (...)

As in the east of Romania we could observe the position of religions in the public space and the competition between them. There the orthodoxy does not represent a majority; it shares the field with Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and Lutherans. But it tries hard to implant itself. ... How many villages which up till now didn't have an orthodox church, see one of them rise in the most visible and strategically most useful spots (e.g. in the middle of a round-about built rather to that end than for car circulation). (...)

In 1994 we had seen the construction of the new Roman Catholic cathedral at Bacau in its dimensions, a luxury project and an analogous expression of the wish to outdo the rivals.

Maité and Antoine MARTIN

(...) So on the first day we met (together with Gabriele Peus-Bispinck) the priest Todorean, director of the Caritas of the Diocese of Oradea. He took us to a library (...) in which you can buy the books displayed there, but also read them on the spot over a cup of tea – if you cannot afford to buy them. In addition to that, we were at a small tailor's shop. Not far from it there was the clothes room where pieces of clothes are given away to needy persons free of charge. By car we were taken to some other quarter to the construction site of the “canteen”, a place where the extremely needy can eat, have a shower, or change clothes free of charge. There rooms will be provided for mothers and their children who are victims of domestic violence. (...) On the third day we visited the city centre of Oradea. (...) There are a lot of very large buildings which will be

Oradea : Black Eagle palace



very beautiful after their renovation. At one of the most important squares there are no less than three churches: The Greek Catholic cathedral, (...) an Orthodox church and St. Ladislau's Church (Roman Catholic). The interior of these churches is baroque. We admired two very beautiful buildings dating back to the time of the Jugendstil: the Palace "Black Eagle" and the Hotel "Astoria".

(...) At their home we became acquainted with a retired couple who collaborate very actively in the Greek Catholic community. While we were tasting delicious bites, we talked with them about the difficulties concerning that church: It wants to get back "its" church buildings, but the Orthodox community refuses to return them to them. (...)

During those four days the friendliness of the people in the streets often struck us, who gave us information with a smile, and especially the matter-of-factness and the kindness of all those who accompanied us. They devoted all their time to us, as if it were normal.

**Gisela ARENDT and Marie-Odile TRICHET**

### **Welcome to Warsaw !**

Dear friends, dear members of SIESC,

This summer we would gladly like to receive you in Poland.

The 56<sup>th</sup> annual SIESC meeting will be held in the Recollection and Formation House in Warsaw, in the middle of the forest, from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We hope that this modern and comfortable house will provide you with everything you will need both during our meetings and prayers.

The main topic of our meeting will be "Spirit of community versus spectres of the past (the role of teachers, especially Christian teachers, in 'purifying' recent memory)".

We asked the following three speakers to participate in our meeting:

**Katarina Kruhonja**, of the Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights in Osijek (Croatia), who will speak about "purifying" the recent memory in diverse countries;

**Marcin Kula**, professor of contemporary history at Warsaw University and at the private Academy of Leon Kozminski, who will present us history as a subject traditionally serving to fortify the national community, and who would also like to make us think if it should continue this way, or if teaching history should mainly guide to understanding the social phenomena;

**Krzysztof Czyżewski**, director of the Centre "Pogranicze – sztuk, kultur i narodów" ("Borderland – of arts, cultures and nations") in Sejny, on the Polish-Lithuanian border, who will tell us about the culture of co-existence and will show us how to preserve the ethos of the borderland.

We would like to present you our city – especially the Old Town, Warsaw University Library, the most modern one in Poland, and the Palace of Culture and Science (Stalin's "gift" for Warsaw, the monument of soc-realism art) with a beautiful panorama of the city from its 30th floor. We will also invite you to the places associated with Frederic Chopin: Żelazowa Wola and Brochów.

zowa Wola and Brochów.

As the optional trip we would like to propose to you an excursion to Kazimierz Dolny (a beautiful town by the Vistula river with its Renaissance architecture), Nałęczów (a health-resort with its famous mineral waters) and Lublin (with its beautiful and interesting Old Town).

We look forward to meeting you in Warsaw!

More detailed information will be provided to you later, together with the invitation.

With kind regards,

**Elżbieta JAWORSKA and Małgorzata WOJCIECHOWSKA**

#### WITAJCIE W WARSZAWIE!

Drodzy przyjaciele, członkowie SIESC,

Z wielką radością chcemy tego lata przyjąć Was w Polsce.

56 doroczne spotkanie SIESC odbędzie się w Domu Rekolekcyjno-Formacyjnym w Warszawie, w środku lasu, w dniach 23 – 28/29 lipca 2011. Mamy nadzieję, że ten dom, nowoczesny i wygodny, zapewni nam wszystko, czego będziemy potrzebowali w naszych obradach i wspólnej modlitwie.

Wybraliśmy temat główny naszego spotkania: „Duch wspólnotowy przeciw demonom przeszłości (rola nauczycieli chrześcijańskich w „oczyszczaniu” bliskiej pamięci)”.

O udział w naszym spotkaniu poprosiliśmy troje prelegentów:

panią Katarinę Kruhonja z Centrum na rzecz pokoju, przeciwdziałania przemocy i praw człowieka (Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights) w Osijeku w Chorwacji, która wygłosi referat o pracy nad „oczyszczeniem” świeżej pamięci w różnych krajach;

pana Marcina Kulę, profesora historii najnowszej na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim i w Akademii Leona Koźmińskiego, który ukaże nam historię jako dyscyplinę nauczania tradycyjnie służącą umacnianiu wspólnoty narodowej i zastanowi się, czy nadal tak być powinno, czy też może nauczanie historii powinno dziś prowadzić przede wszystkim do zrozumienia zjawisk społecznych;

pana Krzysztofa Czyżewskiego, dyrektora Ośrodka «Pogranicze - sztuk, kultur, narodów» i Fundacji Pogranicze w Sejnach, na granicy polsko-litewskiej, który opowie nam o kulturze współistnienia w długim trwaniu i pokaże nam, jak praktykować etos pogranicza.

Chcielibyśmy pokazać Państwu nasze miasto – zwłaszcza Stare Miasto, Bibliotekę Uniwersytecką, najnowocześniejszą w Polsce, i Pałac Kultury i Nauki („prezent” Stalina dla Warszawy, pomnik sztuki socrealistycznej) wraz z piękną panoramą miasta z jego XXX piętra. Zaprosimy Państwa także do miejsc związanych z Fryderykiem Chopinem: do Żelazowej Woli i do Brochowa.

Jako wycieczkę fakultatywną chcielibyśmy Państwu zaproponować wyjazd do Kazimierza Dolnego (miasta nad Wisłą, z piękną architekturą renesansową), Nałęczowa (uzdrowiska ze źródłami wód mineralnych) i Lublina (z pięknym i bardzo interesującym Starym Miastem).

Czekamy na Państwa w Warszawie!

Dokładniejsze informacje otrzymają Państwo później, wraz z zaproszeniem.

Do zobaczenia.

**Elżbieta Jaworska i Małgorzata Wojciechowska (KIK)**

## INTERNATIONAL LIFE

### The religions and Europe

*Representatives of the three Abrahamite religions have passed a resolution at a congress of the "World Conference on Religion and Peace" as early as 1998 which in my opinion is still valid and should be called to mind again.*

WOLFGANG RANK, Präsident des SIESC

1. Our religions are in the service of God and humankind. They must take up the challenges of the historical and political situation(s) of our continent. Above all, this is a matter of *genuine tolerance and constructive cooperation* in the sphere of reconciliation and peace, of individual rights and human dignity.

2. Far from taking a superior stance and blaming one another and those outside their communities, the religions should learn from the ups and downs of the *history* of Europe with its many painful chapters and seriously strive for pluralism and democracy. The knowledge of the terrible suffering caused by ruthless persecutions (often driven by blind religious zeal), violent revolutions and world wars must never be suppressed on the road towards reconciliation. It serves as a reminder for all of us that genuine freedom can only be achieved by truth and action in line with what our conscience tells us is right.

3. The religions are called upon to *devote their strength to the creation of a new Europe*. This strength stems from the mystical experience, the ethical values, the message that gives meaning to life, the social conscience of the religions, and their great potential to motivate both individuals and communities. These elements have shaped the identity of Europe and borne valuable fruit in the form of religious rites, sacred art and culture.

4. The religions should be advocates of *a way of life which brings happiness to all human beings* and should raise their voices in contemporary Europe wherever this way of life is endangered by narrow-mindedness, egoistic consumerism and a one-sided economic orientation.

5. As we reflect on the roots of this continent, our special attention should be paid to the Mediterranean region: throughout history, it has played a particularly significant role in the encounter of religions and civilisations, and will continue to do so in the future.

6. In consideration of the negative effects of a world-wide European colonialism, the religions should never lose sight of the *global* effects of European integration. The just distribution of goods among all people and nations, the reverent stewardship of our planet, and the moderate use of the possibilities of science and technology must be included among the goals pursued by a united Europe.

### PAX ROMANA

#### Dialogue : Buddhism and Catholicism

An interesting lecture taken from

**2009 International Conference: TOWARD A NEW PARADIGM, SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: WHAT PERSPECTIVES ?**

**Reflections from a Buddhist-Catholic Comparative Perspective**, Mr. Paul Hwang, Coordinator of Centre for Asian Theology and Solidarity, UCAN Journalist, South Korea

Dialogue: Christian and Buddhist Cognitional Theories

The Second Vatican Council put the stress on renewal and updating. Its aim was to meet the challenges of the modern world through dialogue. Therefore the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC), a voluntary association of bishops' conferences in Asia (founded in Manila in 1970 during the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Philippines), is willing to foster solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of the church and the society in Asia.

Although the situation there is difficult for the Catholic Church due to the structure of the population, only 2.3% being Christian and although the communication with other local structures is failing because of extreme economic, social and political problems, the Catholic Church still has to realize its mission.

The dialogue consists of three ways of communicating: the dialogue with the poor, the dialogue with other Asian religions and the dialogue with Asia's diverse cultures. Based on the Vatican documents on Dialogue, issued in 1991 by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue – the dialogue of life, the dialogue of action, the dialogue of theological exchange, and the dialogue of religious or spiritual experience – dialogue means emphasizing the collaboration between people of diverse cultures, living in an open and neighbourly spirit, deepening the understanding of different religious heritages to share the religious experiences rooted in diverse religious traditions.

Its goal is proposing a basis for structuring a global community. This leads to an exploration of "beliefs" and "faith" (which is proclaimed to be only the Christian faith) – to a juxtaposition of Buddhist and Christian theories. Therefore it seems to be necessary to elaborate what the term "spirituality" means. As a result of the research "spirituality" was found to be both cognitive and volitional awareness and a commitment to a transcendent dimension, and that it cannot proceed without a kind of community, and though it is not naturally theist, it has to be lived and boosted by sets of religious practices. At the same time, the human soul is defined as having intrinsic human consciousness which generates culture, religion, systems of meaning and values.

But trying to find the similarities might bring disillusion; there are great differences between the Christian and the Buddhist understanding of the nature of God and the Buddha: apart from other differences, the Christian "man's loving union experience of God without losing the human

soul as an entity” contrasts with the Eastern religious “pursuit of an absolute union with the Ultimate“, where any difference between subject and object totally disappears.

Only shared beliefs and common values could ultimately support community – and beliefs and values are spiritual, thus a generic spirituality could be the solution.

That universal community could only lie in the very humanity that all people share and the appeal must be to the human spirit and its innate structures.

**Dagmar PARHOVÁ**

## **PAX ROMANA EUROPE**

In the information documents sent by Pax Romana Europe, one can notice a convergence between the concerns of European organisations and those of SIESC, which really proves our involvement in topical thoughts.

– A voluminous dossier produced within the frame of the Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe, dated last June, on the “pedagogy of the intercultural, inter-religious, inter-convictional dialogue”, a practical follow-up to the Whitebook of 2008 “Living together in equal dignity”. That was the topic of our meeting at Agrigento in 2008.

– Articles of the Educational Bulletin Education of the Council of Europe of June 2010 on “Education to citizenship and the human rights”, the topic of the meeting at Strasbourg in 2009, and on “The formation of history teachers in a multicultural society”, one aspect of the topic of Agrigento.

For a leaflet about the members of Pax Romana Europe, Wolfgang Rank has provided a presentation of SIESC.

Those who would like to get the documents of Pax Romana Europe by e-mail, can ask Wolfgang Rank ([info@siesc.eu](mailto:info@siesc.eu)) for them. They can consult the documents of the Council of Europe on the website ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)) and find information on Pax Romana Europe on the website of Pax Romana ([www.icmica-miic.org](http://www.icmica-miic.org)).

**Yves CALAIS**

## **NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS**

### **Germany VkdL**

#### **Jubilee General Assembly of the VkdL 2010 at Koblenz – 125 years of commitment for Christian principles in schools and education**

Pluralism and relativism determine the thoughts in our society and have questioned values and attitudes.

That was the topical theme the Verein katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen e.V. (VkdL) dealt with at its **Jubilee General Assembly at Koblenz from June 18th to 20th, 2010**. There the VkdL had been founded by Pauline Herber 125 years ago.

In his talk the speaker *Dr. Christoph Böhr* stated : Freedom needs the courage to interfere and to stand up for the truth – against majorities as well. Our time needs voices that speak up showing profile and value orientation – be it opportune or inopportune. If truth is at stake, we must not fall silent. In that context Dr. Böhr praised the commitment of the VkdL, which always spoke up at difficult times, too, which stood up for truth and the Christian image of man, as e.g. at the time of the NAZI regime or against the dictatorship in the GDR.

#### **During the members’ meeting two resolutions concerning school politics were passed :**

The declaration “*Learning together for a longer time – the first step to a uniform comprehensive school*” pleads for preserving a differentiated school system, which for every pupil keeps open an appropriate education. As children are very different in their abilities and talents, a uniform comprehensive school as planned by certain ideologues cannot fit the human diversity in education. The uniform comprehensive school contradicts the Christian image of man!

The reform of special schools is subject to the resolution “*Special schools also necessary in future – promoting centres of competence for developing measures of integration!*” The VkdL rejects the abolition of special schools, as planned by certain politicians, it demands, however, the promotion and the development of pedagogical and therapeutic offers in the form of special schools assisted by centres of competence.

In the delegates’ meeting the federal executive was elected. *Studiendirektorin i.K. Roswitha Fischer* was re-elected as federal president unanimously as well as the other members of the executive: Dr. Monika Born, vice-president, *Hildegard Zwiener*, secretary, and *Nelly Friedrich*, treasurer.

On the second day of the general assembly the participants made a trip to Boppard and visited the grave of the founder of the association Pauline Herber. In the church of the Carmelites a commemorative plaque for Pauline Herber was consecrated, which reminds of this important woman and the VkdL as well as its work. With a holy mass in the church of the Carmelites the official part of the federal general assembly was closed.

## The new formation for pedagogical professions

In Austria there is an intense discussion about the future form of formation of persons in pedagogical professions. In a comment on a ministerial report the VCL has stated some basic conditions for new regulations:

- Neither in the pedagogical field nor in specialist subject knowledge and subject didactics a reduction of standards demanded up till now must be accepted. We find that promise in the recommendation “LehrerInnenbildung NEU”, but we don’t see it realized in some concrete proposals in the report.

- A five-year formation of teachers of secondary education is international standard, the share of specialist subject knowledge rarely amounting to less than seventy percent – at least in the formation for the upper forms of secondary education. If Austria wanted to follow the international trend, it would be necessary to put more emphasis on the specialist subject formation in all forms of teachers’ training, even those at universities, - contrary to what is often publicized – as the practical year of introduction (after the studies) is also part of the formation.

- A reform of the formation of teachers of secondary education can only be an improvement if it is set at master level. That’s why we demand master studies for all teachers. For future teachers at AHS (secondary grammar schools) we, in any case, demand master studies at universities.

- What is needed, is a teacher training of the SAME VALUE on a maximum level, preparing for the various tasks in the best way possible, but definitely NO IDENTICAL formation of all teachers. The demands on teachers are so diverse that they must be trusted to specialists: A primary school child, a child with special needs of support and a young adult who will soon take the leaving exams – they all have different strong and weak points and needs. Only specialists can deal with them in an optimal way.

- A future teacher training must open “ways out”. As a consequence to the continually rising life expectancy again and again the idea of a higher retiring age is introduced. But for health reasons some teachers will not be able to perform this psychically highly stressing profession for four decades or longer.

- Professional practice in the course of the studies is welcome, we however reject master studies parallel to professional performance in the form recommended by the report. That would make the profession extremely unattractive, if you want to achieve a formation of high quality. It would take you longer in the teaching profession than in any other profession to achieve a complete formation and, connected to it, probably adequate payment as well. We from our part propose to insert a relevant blocked practical part into the frame of master studies lasting four semesters on principle.

- New ways of formation will undoubtedly have effects on the position of new teachers in employment and payment regulations. Those must be negotiated in social partnership between the persons and institutions appointed and called to it.

**Isabella ZINS, President of the VCL**

## A long life

In the last issue of SIESC-Today, we welcome the birth of a new teachers’ association in Serbia. Best wishes!

In the present issue I announce: ACMEC - *Action Catholique des Membres de l’Enseignement Chrétien* - is closing. An association is born, another one is dying. We are leaving a strong testimony which will be published and means so that others may carry on with the mission.

In 1936, *l’Union Spirituelle des Professeurs laïcs de l’Enseignement Libre* was only composed of a few lay members who were working along with religious teachers in schools owned by congregations. These enthusiastic teachers used to say they were «fiercely secular» but faithful Christians. After the war their little group started meeting again and, in 1945, they became *le Mouvement des Enseignants chrétiens*, and then ACMEC in 1965. They offered pedagogical and spiritual aid and training. They did so well that ten years later they had created teams in nearly every diocese.

In 1959, the State and the Church signed agreements that gave this co-called *Enseignement Libre - Free teaching* - an official status and financial means. These agreements made practical daily life easier for those lay teachers. But a new and constant struggle started in the laic French Republic of the time so their role and task would be recognized and accepted inside the education and teaching landscape. They took an important part in the creation and organization of the present *Enseignement Catholique* and little by little many of them were called to the head of congregational and parish schools. At the beginning, the spiritual and pedagogical training was one of their basic aims. Today, the training department of the *Enseignement Catholique* has taken over most of the task. We may consider to have fulfilled our mission though evangelization is a never ending task and will always need new energy.

The bishop responsible for the French Catholic associations insisted on one last task: «Do not close without leaving a written testimony on these lives at the service of teachers and students and do not forget the impact of such a work on the personal life of the members of your association.» Among the senior members we could collect evidence on the struggles, dedication and joys that made their lives. It would give a soul to a story that otherwise would just sound like history. We have been advised to take time, think it over and decide peacefully.

Our chaplain ended by saying: «Above all, give it a happy end, open to the future. You leave something important behind you, an experience, a history and you hand over the mission to others. Let them carry on with the work of spreading the Gospel and tutoring teachers. End up with a celebration that will symbolize this passing of the baton between the past and the future generations.»

**Nicole BALU - ACMEC**

## L., professor, has had to confront the “expulsion” of two of her pupils ...

**Tuesday, 20/04/2010:** “Why are Tamila and Magomed not at school? They didn’t seem ill yesterday ...”, their comrades ask themselves. ... Several times during the day one or the other is astonished about their absence. Premonition? At the exit the information is given to me by a mother, an eye witness: the family was arrested in the afternoon, parents in handcuffs, children in tears. On Wednesday I collect information. The Chechen family is in a retention centre. They should be “readmitted” to Poland very quickly. The news hit me like a punch of a fist. But I must very quickly reflect how to announce it to my pupils.

**Thursday, 22/04/2010:** At last the news of T.’s and M.’s arrest is already circulating in the rows. The despondency, the sadness is perceptible. And the questions arise. “Where are they? For how long have they gone? When do they come back? Do they go to school? Why have they been arrested? What evil have their parents done?” No answer to those questions. ... Insecurity gains on all pupils and the need to communicate with T. and M. comes up: I propose to them to send photos. We also send pictures and a short note by fax. The day is heavy for all.

**Friday, 23/04/2010:** The judge has not set the family free: They will be sent back to Poland sooner or later. How to explain the rules of “Dublin 2”<sup>\*</sup> to the children? The disturbance of the pupils is very great. Some are mute, others want to understand. The pupils once more prepare a parcel with the works T. and M. have left in the classroom. They ask me if you can phone them. So we call. Some exchanges, touching and softening for the pupils: T. and M. haven’t “disappeared”, they still exist somewhere (but in a place not to be explained: “Why are children in prison?”). Each one is bad at concentrating on his/her work, the day is interrupted by the returning question: “Why?” And each one leaves for a weekend with always the same questions.

**Tuesday, 27/04/2010:** I learn it in the afternoon: The family have been embarked in the morning, the parents haven’t refused and are in Poland at that hour. And again the questions: “What will happen to them? Where will they live? Will they stay there? But they don’t speak Polish, they will have to learn it? ...” Questions to which I really have no answer! ... To enable each one to leave the sadness and to understand that after a departure, a separation there always remain remembrances I propose to draw or write down one of these remembrances of T. and/or M.. We make a book out of them. ... “My daddy often says life is hard, but there, for T. and M., life is not gentle at all”, concludes a pupil of 9 years. And some weeks later, certain pupils can still not make up their minds for the cut and would like to send a drawing, a present or to write to Tamila and Magomed ...

<sup>\*</sup> The rules of “Dublin 2” offer to each state of the Schengen area the possibility to send back an asylum-seeker into the first country of that area where he/she was registered, as it also offers to each state the possibility to grant this same asylum-seeker the right to ask for asylum. (Note: The French government has, within that frame, established rules which come into effect under those circumstances.)

shortened from an article in Lien nr. 171, June 2010

## From educational emergency to educational challenge

Why do we talk about emergency, about educational crisis? Is the education wrong? Or the method of implementation? Are values in crisis? Or those who preach them?

The difference is between saying and doing. Between the proposal and being a witness.

The result of these contrasts is manifested macroscopically in young people, characterized by restlessness, anxiety, confusion. And, together with young people family, school, church, legal authority, politics, trade unions, the labour world seem to be in crisis.

Therefore distrust in everything spreads. Man loses his shine. He adapts to the prevalent existential system, highly dehumanizing.

We are facing uneasiness among young people. It has developed as an epidemic disease. The symptoms are daily events that are expressed in the contrast between power and weakness, between freedom and slavery, between intelligence and stupidity.

We are facing *diseases* which should be cured by means of a *health education* which must pass through a critical examination of how we pursue the socially shared values and possibly for a consequent ethic conversion.

The first conversion must take place in the family where there is a *compatibility of cohabitation* characterized by parental acquiescence to the ongoing needs of children, a convergence of interests in the use - sometimes exasperated - of property, a disposable income, although limited, which is used to satisfy every request.

The income disposability is a kind of *family cash dispenser* to which everyone can access, as in a supermarket, where everything is available, but already *preselected*. That is an offer to grasp, not something to conquer! The *preselection* calms down the possibility, the willingness and the commitment of a choice, typical of the past generations of young people. The *preselection* is imposed by the *market*, by advertising, by the adaptation of youth groups, which multiply the *trends*.

That’s why the *massification* spread together with *the culture of temporariness*. It becomes important to look, *to have!*

Indeed, there is confusion between the well-having that produces weakness, exposure to easy influence, fragility and the *wellbeing*, which is expressed by comparison, involvement, alternative risk, insight, and commitment.

This context highlights a situation of emergency in education.

In front of the *educational emergency* we must respond with an *educational challenge* which aims to recover and sustain *what is valuable*, that is:

- **the richness of the intergenerational contact** between young and adult people, which is educational when it is authentically human, genuine and sincere although problematic;
- **the need to design, plan and create** the conditions relevant for the formation of the human being of tomorrow.

We should be able to find a balance between responding to the many questions of the present day (computer, information technology, communications, globalization, etc.) and what is valuable from the past and history, in order to *select* a culture adapted to the times and mindful of its roots.

**Youth summer camp Ecumenica**

This camp is not only a religious one, but mainly a cultural and social one. Besides the daily talks given by religious and laic personalities, we try every year to instill in young people the love for the good and beauty, for prayer and communion, for reflection and meditation, by involving them, in a modern way, in manifestations of spirituality, culture and society, from liturgies, colloquia, prayers to trips, acting, contests, journalism, movie projections.

(...) Thus in 2001 over 150 young people were given the opportunity to be journalists for one day, by taking interviews, applying questionnaires and writing articles on different subjects. (...) In 2004, the young participants distinguished themselves through a prodigious theatre work, creating little pieces of art and direct them. (...) In 2006 especially the ECUMENICA magazine was continued, which we try to write both during the camp and after it is finished. (...) In 2008, we celebrated 10 years of Camp Ecumenica. All of us were feeling more mature, more responsible. (...)

One could say that the main characteristic of the Camp Ecumenica has been the forming of opinion formers, the education and training of young people and their attendants – priests, catechists, teachers, nuns, so that all our activities then should be applied in the regions where these people come from. And all that in the spirit of religious and social tolerance, in the spirit of multiculturalism, in a country scarred by inter-religious hate, by a big contrast between the poor and the rich, characterized by strong traditionalism and a weakened democracy.

As sons of the Christian Church we have the duty to make Jesus Christ and His teachings known to the people and to convince the youths to live by his new commandment: "Love one another!"

That is the motivation of our camp, through which we want to enable the young people, regardless of their faith, to meet, to get to know and to learn, to look in one another's eyes serenely and see Christ in the other one.

Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Protestants – we all have the same chance to be saved. We will achieve it in so much as we learn to live the Holy Teaching together. And we can't accomplish it by living separately, each one defending his/her church, preaching or listening to God's word and then forgetting it as soon as we step out of the church in the street. What Jesus teaches us in his Church, we must live it in our houses, in the streets, at school, or at work, everywhere. We could only achieve it by putting language, cultural and religious differences aside and putting Him, our benefactor, in the first place in our lives.

That mosaic of activities, fortified by friendship and love, only highlights our conviction that you find God in games, dance or music, always through others, who you learn to respect, or, even more simple, that He finds you when you laugh, jump, sing or write.

**Mia HODIŞ – project coordinator**

**Anton Martin Slomšek Institute**

The institute was founded on 1 September 1996 by the Diocese of Maribor, which got repossession of the buildings and premises that once served a religious purpose. The institute is situated on the outskirts of the town, on Vrbanska Street, at the foot of the hill of Kalvarija. The building, whose former surface area covered 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, doubled its size after reconstruction, which included a brand new sports hall.

The size of the central building along with other premises encouraged the Archdiocese (1) to draw a plan of a future inter-generation educational centre that would operate within the Anton Martin Slomšek (2) Institute and comprise – after a gradual integration - the following constituent units:

- the existing Montessori Nursery called the Children's House
- the existing Dormitory for Grammar School students
- the existing Student Hall of Residence
- the existing Grammar School which moved from its previous location in 2008
- the existing Music and Ballet School, founded in 2008
- a future primary school whose founding will only take place if there is government's consent to provide a 100% financing of private schools
- a future old people's home – by 2010
- various adult educational programmes – by 2010

The entire centre is designed to create and promote a spirit of mutual benefit and dependence between all generations.

Furthermore, the premises and their location offer a wide variety of recreational activities, which calls for an analysis of options the sports hall and other sport grounds provide.

The general idea is to form a network of inter-generational relationships, which means tightly interwoven programmes offering reciprocal assistance and experience exchange based on the principle of solidarity.

The system would offer a place of work as well as a possibility of lifelong learning to the middle generation which is most active and expected to produce maximum input at work. What is more, the centre on Vrbanska Street would represent a safe, activity-based day-care/care for children and elderly family members, who would benefit from quality programmes with a clearly defined value system.

Interwoven systems mean firmer guarantee of the Institute's economic stability. For the latter purpose the Archdiocese of Maribor has founded the "Skalina" company, which is in service to all the AMS Institute units' operation.

**Ivan Janez ŠTUHEC, PhD,  
headmaster of the Institute**

Notes: (1) The diocese of Maribor was made an archdiocese by Benedict XVI. on April 7th, 2006.

(2) Anton Martin SLOMŠEK (1800-1862): first Slovenian saint, beatified by John Paul II. in 1999, and first bishop of Maribor, he contributed decisively to the development of teaching in the Slovenian language in the Austrian Empire. He has become patron saint of Slovenian teachers, parents and catechists. He said that "school, home and church must march hand in hand". Cf. SIESC-Today nr. 35, January 2004.

### **Celebration of the 20 years' anniversary**

The Union of Christian Pedagogues of the Czech Republic celebrated 20 years of its existence last month. The celebration took place in Prague and many important persons who collaborated with the Union within the past years were invited. Dr. Věra Bokorová, founding member and first president of the Union gave her contribution on the history of the Union.

The decisive impulse for the establishment came from our then Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Tomášek. It was a consequence of his effort to help the post-communist Czech scholarship. He asked the members of the World Union of Catholic Teachers to collaborate. The members of this organization came to Prague and together with the constituent members of the UCPCR visited several schools in former Czechoslovakia and the Ministry of Education to find out the burning issues to be solved.

Then the UCPCR was founded as a non-profit organization based on voluntary work and the first seminar was held soon afterwards; the UMEC lecturers came here to speak about the new ways of teaching religion at primary schools in the Czech Republic. UCPCR then concentrated on teachers' education and the renewal of democratic school phenomena while asserting Christian spiritual values. The organization went on with the work on gradual school reform and continually tried to introduce values in the frames of education. The summer seminars dealing with such topics, taking place in turn in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, became a tradition. Teachers could come here to share the community, spiritual support and professional assistance.

After the introductory lecture speeches of prominent guests and honorary members of the Union followed. The participants could also hear greetings of foreign friends and patrons, such as Mag. Wolfgang Rank, the president of SIESC. He underlined he had had several opportunities to watch the Union work and estimated its contribution and the cross-border collaboration with Slovakia nowadays.

At the close of the meeting Mgr. Dagmar Parohová, the present president of the UCPCR, expressed her hopes that, in spite of the small number of the members, the Union should make an indispensable contribution to the contemporary development of the Czech society, which seems to have lost presenting and adequately asserting the possibilities and instruments based on spiritual values. She showed her vision of the future development by establishing more intense mutual collaboration with other Christian organizations.

A short flute concert performance closed down the event.

**DAGMAR PARHOVÁ,**  
president of UCPCR

#### **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**