

SIESC - TODAY

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EDITORIAL

Master, not reject

When legislation seems to sacrifice human dignity to economic interests or school seems to be led merely to service to the market, resistance against the spirit of the time appears to be necessary. It's not always a question of recommending rejecting the contemporary world. Affirming that the world is totally bad means offending God, its creator, who has trusted its administration to man. Being aware of our great responsibility of announcing the Gospel, we will take it upon us to listen to the world attentively and we will scrutinize history in order to try to discern "the signs of the time" in it.

In a dialogue with modern cultures for a more meaningful life, we will emphasize the values of disinterested service. While the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening, we will be able, by political, associative or personal commitment, to help the poor materially, to unite against misery, to work for maintaining social peace and realizing solidarity. Such a programme can seem difficult to be realized. Supported by our confidence in the Holy Spirit, we will take the risk of decisions after a close examination of the various economic and political dimensions.

In the field of teaching globalisation is obvious in the mobility of persons and the expansion of English. It's important to reflect on the linguistic and cultural challenges of internationalisation. School must indeed make humanity emerge in everyone by helping him/her to enter into a culture, whose most natural vehicle is the mother tongue, a particular way of seeing the world. It is necessary to preserve the richness of these visions of the world and to enrich oneself from them by means of dialogue.

The relations between human beings are also established in a virtual form and some could say that the internet controls the world; informing ourselves about the new technologies, we will be able to teach the youth to make a mastered and profitable use of them. The Gospel will help us educators in our task of making human beings. By means of a well-reflected pre-schooling we will help the children coming from disadvantaged families. By inciting all our pupils to putting questions, we will contribute to freeing them from being conditioned by society. By genuine relations to our pupils we will succeed in getting to know and supporting their talents and thus give everyone chances in his/her fields of competences.

Agnès ROSE

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SIESC-European Federation of Christian Teachers

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Meistern, nicht ablehnen

Wenn die Gesetzgebung die Menschenwürde den wirtschaftlichen Interessen zu opfern scheint oder die Schule zum bloßen Dienst für den Markt eingesetzt erscheint, wird Widerstand gegen den Zeitgeist notwendig. Es geht nicht immer darum, Ablehnung der zeitgenössischen Welt zu empfehlen. Zu behaupten, dass die Welt ganz schlecht ist, heißt Gott, ihren Schöpfer, zu beleidigen, der dem Menschen ihre Verwaltung anvertraut hat. Wenn wir uns unsere große Verantwortung bewusst machen, das Evangelium zu verkünden, werden wir aufmerksam daran gehen, auf die Welt zu hören, und werden die Geschichte durchforschen, um darin „die Zeichen der Zeit“ zu erkennen.

Im Dialog mit den modernen Kulturen für ein sinnvolleres Leben werden wir die Werte eines uneigennütigen Dienstes heraus stellen. Während die Kluft zwischen Reichen und Armen sich vergrößert, werden wir durch politisches, gemeinschaftliches oder persönliches Engagement den Armen materiell helfen, uns gegen das Elend zusammenschließen, für die Bewahrung des sozialen Friedens und die Verwirklichung der Solidarität arbeiten können. Ein solches Programm kann schwer umzusetzen scheinen. Unterstützt durch unser Vertrauen auf den Hl. Geist, werden wir das Risiko von Entscheidungen nach einer aufmerksamen Prüfung der verschiedenen wirtschaftlichen und politischen Dimensionen eingehen.

Die Globalisierung im Bereich des Unterrichts zeigt sich deutlich in der Mobilität der Personen und in der Ausweitung des Englischen. Es ist wichtig, über die sprachlichen und kulturellen Herausforderungen der Internationalisierung nachzudenken. Die Schule muss in der Tat in jedem/r das Menschsein sich entwickeln lassen, wobei sie ihm/ihr hilft, in eine Kultur einzutreten, deren natürlichstes Medium die Muttersprache ist, eine besondere Art, die Welt zu sehen. Man muss den Reichtum dieser Weltansichten bewahren und sich durch Dialog daraus bereichern.

Die Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen bilden sich auch in virtueller Form und manche konnten sagen, dass das Internet die Welt kontrolliert; informieren wir uns über die neuen Technologien, dann werden wir die Jungen lehren können, gemeisterten und nützlichen Gebrauch davon zu machen. Uns als Erzieher wird das Evangelium bei unserer Aufgabe helfen, Menschen zu machen. Durch eine überlegte vorschulische Erziehung werden wir den Kindern aus benachteiligten Familien helfen. Indem wir alle unsere Schüler/innen zum Nachfragen aneifern, werden wir dazu beitragen, sie von der Konditionierung durch die Gesellschaft zu befreien. Durch echte Beziehungen zu unseren Schüler/innen werden wir es schaffen, ihre Talente zu erkennen und zu fördern, und werden so jedem/r Chancen in seinem/ihrer Bereich an Kompetenzen geben.

Agnès ROSE

Maîtriser, non rejeter

Quand la législation semble sacrifier la dignité de l'homme aux intérêts économiques ou que l'école paraît mise au simple service du marché, la résistance à l'esprit de l'époque apparaît nécessaire. Il ne s'agit pas toutefois de préconiser le rejet du monde contemporain. Affirmer que le monde est totalement mauvais,

C'est offenser Dieu son Créateur qui l'a confié en gérance à l'homme. Prenant conscience de notre grande responsabilité d'annoncer l'Évangile, nous nous mettrons attentivement à l'écoute du monde et scruterons l'histoire pour essayer d'y discerner les « signes des temps ».

Dialoguant avec les cultures modernes pour une vie plus pleine de sens, nous mettrons en avant les valeurs de service désintéressé. Alors que les écarts entre riches et pauvres s'accroissent, nous pourrions par un engagement politique, associatif ou personnel aider matériellement les pauvres, nous unir contre la misère, travailler au maintien de la paix sociale et à la réalisation de la solidarité. Un tel programme peut sembler difficile à mettre en oeuvre. Soutenus par notre confiance en l'Esprit Saint, nous prendrons le risque des décisions après un examen attentif des différentes dimensions des économies et des politiques.

La mondialisation, dans le domaine de l'enseignement, se manifeste nettement par la mobilité des personnes et l'expansion de l'anglais. Il importe de réfléchir aux défis linguistiques et culturels de l'internationalisation. En effet l'école doit faire émerger l'humanité en chacun en l'aidant à entrer dans une culture dont le véhicule le plus naturel est la langue maternelle, manière particulière de voir le monde. Il faut conserver la richesse de ces visions du monde et s'en enrichir par le dialogue.

Les relations entre les hommes se font aussi sur le mode virtuel et certains ont pu dire qu'internet contrôle le monde; informons-nous des technologies nouvelles, nous pourrions apprendre aux jeunes à en faire un usage maîtrisé et profitable.

Educateurs, l'Évangile nous aidera dans notre tâche, faire des hommes. Par une préscolarisation réfléchie, nous aiderons les enfants des familles défavorisées. En incitant tous nos élèves au questionnement, nous contribuerons à les libérer des conditionnements de la société. Par de réelles relations avec nos élèves, nous réussirons à connaître et à promouvoir leurs talents et ainsi donnerons des chances à chacun dans son domaine de compétences.

Agnès ROSE

57th International Annual Meeting

Brussels, July 25th to 30th/31st, 2012

“Position and role of religions and churches in a Europe of multiple convictions”

Finding yourself in a quarter of Brussels-East called “Chant d'oiseau” (Bird's chant), that's already an invitation full of happiness; in a Franciscan house, the “Chant d'oiseau” arouses one more resonance. An excellent meeting place where we were 75 participants from 13 European countries, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine, with a guest from Congo.

At Brussels the topic Europe suggested itself. The question of religions in what is still the construction of Europe could only be clarified by means of a programme of especially studious work.



« Brussel, Grand-Place/Grote Markt »

The five talks and the language groups

Father MADELIN, from the Jesuit bureau at Brussels and Strasbourg, representative of the Holy See at the Council of Europe, starts our reflection by his talk on “The religious exceptionalism of Europe”. This exceptional characteristic is the consequence of the particular religious history of Europe and its centuries of Christianisation and Christendom. Today secularisation happens quickly there, and the Church is progressively marginalised to the benefit of public and private institutions; indifference is spreading. That new situation starts off a different future, God is greater than the Catholic Church and than Europe! Christianity is becoming more personal and more responsible, the Church thus is gaining freedom, Europe is full of trumps and the faith in one living God is becoming good news again. But that takes time.

On Friday **Mr Mohammed JAMOUCI**, professor at Gent University and member of the Muslim Council of European Cooperation, explores the “Potentialities of a European Islam”. The Muslim religion and Muslim ways of life have been introduced in Europe because of the durable existence of an important immigration of labour force and because of conversions of Europeans. The speaker shows how the new generations having grown up in contact with Europe live an Islam which finds step by step, but not without frictions, its place in a multireligious situation, where the Muslims are no more immigrants, but Muslim Europeans.

The talk by **Mgr Joe VELLA GAUCI**, of Maltese origin, counsellor on religious freedom for the Commission of the Episcopates of the EU (COMECE), contributes another element of reflection with “COMECE’s Response for Conscience Protection and Religious Freedom”. The speaker gives an account of international actions of the COMECE for the support not only of Christian communities, but all religious minorities being oppressed or persecuted. The COMECE intervenes regularly with European states to make them claim reciprocity of the freedom which Europe, in accordance with its constitutional principles, grants to all religions.

On Saturday the morning opens with the talk by Professor **Louis-Léon CHRISTIANS**, professor of the law on religions at the Catholic University of Louvain: “Religions and schools: Learning diversity at the meeting point of the EU and the Council of Europe”. As a law expert endowed with a very appreciated sense for pedagogy, he emphasizes the problems submitted to the European Court of Human Rights, an instrument of the Council of Europe, concerning the teaching of religions and religious symbols in the school houses of the EU. Dealing with several cases, such as the presence of crosses in class rooms in Italy, he shows how demand of respect to the convictions of everybody and all and non-discrimination are criteria which allow to overcome passionate and emotional reactions without exits.

Then Brother **Gabriel NISSIM**, Dominican expert on European questions, exposes “The Situation and the Role of Religions in the Construction of Europe; the Contribution of Christians”. With great fervour he describes and analyzes the role of Christians in the construction of Europe, in its beginnings, of course, but especially later on through the contribution of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church and the reflections of Protestant churches; for a lot of Europeans that contribution has now been submerged by the wave of neoliberalism. The religions have to emphasize, and still more strongly, the values of disinterested service, of reconciliation, of solidarity, of the common good.

.../...



« Louvain-la-Neuve, Notre-Dame de l'Espérance »

A summary of the conclusions of the language groups by **Catherine LE COZ** and **Christine ANTOINE** was presented on the last day.

Fears and inquietude were expressed. In certain eastern countries Christians are objects of ridicule; a little everywhere criticism of the churches is frequent, sometimes aggressive. In the western countries there is fear of a return to preconciliar practices. The problems posed by bioethics and the questions of sexuality cause sorrows as well as the political monopolizing of Catholic morality by the extreme right. The fear of Islam is boosted by the media. Individualism diverts from political commitment.

Signs of hope are given by the active participation of lay people in the life of the Church, by ecumenical and interreligious dialogues, by the development of a public opinion within the Church especially in Austria and in France.

Strong points support hope: development and importance of direct personal relations and initiatives of little groups unexpectedly expanded, quality of religious and interreligious formation, solidarity in actions, acknowledgement of the Human Rights.

The visits, conviviality and prayer

A simple enumeration: the historical centre and the Townhall, the European Parliament and the Cathedral of Saints Michael and Gudula, a walk from the Park and the Royal Palace of Brussels to the Grand-Place, passing by the very beautiful church of Notre-Dame des Sablons in its flamboyant Gothic style; and also the dinner at "La rose blanche" beside the Grand-Place. A good glimpse of the centre of Brussels.

The optional excursion took a part of us first to a visit of the historic town of Leuven, where in 1425 the grand University of Louvain was founded. The grave tensions of languages in Belgium provoked its splitting. A Flemish-speaking university stayed at Leuven in Flemish country; a French-speaking university was established in Wallonian country in 1972, where there was nothing but fields before and where a new town, totally given to pedestrians, was constructed, Louvain-la-Neuve. Today forms of collaboration between the two Catholic universities have come into being. We visited the church Notre-Dame de l'Espérance, whose architect, fortunately, made us partake in the concept and the symbolics. In Europe it's always a question of hope on the way.

Conviviality among the participants was easy in the house, in the park, in the language groups, in the dining hall, during the bus rides and the visits. Due to moments of shared life the problems of other countries which seemed far away from us become very near like ours. At the Sunday mass in the near parish

church contacts were established with the inhabitants of the quarter.

Common prayer punctuates the days; it is always sober and attentive. For the beginning of the day it had been prepared by language groups. During the week a mass of our community was celebrated in the parish church on the day of our arrival, at the cathedral before its guided tour; a word liturgy was presided on some other morning by the same person from among us who also led the prayer in the church at Louvain-la-Neuve.

A very beautiful symbol had marked the opening session. Following the text of a poem which associates colours with our countries colleagues representing them poured sand of various colours one after the other in a spherical vase. When the vase was turned upside down, it formed a composition full of movement and harmony without being mixed; and we sang, "May peace come to our earth, God's peace for the nations."

Thanks without an end to Ana Maria Bascopé, who realized quasi alone on the spot in Brussels, from the beginning to the end, all the work of preparation and organisation for the success of that very beautiful 57th annual meeting.

You can find the complete texts of the talks and the summary as well as other information on SIESC in our three languages, English, French and German, on our website www.siesc.eu <<http://www.siesc.eu>> .

Yves CALAIS



« during a break »

increasing, therefore experts opened discussion on the position of Slovene in the teaching-learning environment and suggested new interdisciplinary studies on the complex issues of the usage of languages in the teaching and learning contexts.

The status of English appears transparent in secondary education where it has been a teaching language in the *International Baccalaureat programme and in the selected courses of European classes*, the programme offered by larger grammar schools. The use of English in both programmes should above all facilitate international mobility to Slovenes and open study possibilities for foreign students. At university level, the official language policies have been less transparent, mainly due to the greater impact of mobility of teaching staff and students on the study context. The research indicates that high fluctuation may tend to promote the usage of English even in contexts where Slovene as a mother tongue should be the

only language of communication. The objection to such a situation is well grounded as the academic and professional language areas are essential for the natural growth of any language. Thus new language policies are required. Interdisciplinary expert groups are expected to elaborate measures that could improve the status of Slovene as a mother tongue in (higher) education without closing the door to foreigners who would like to study in Slovenia.

Darja MAZI-LESKOVAR

• Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 99-125

(1) inclusive, editor's note : including children with handicaps and/or language deficits

NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Germany VkDL

The Catholic Church and the Third Reich

116th Federal General Assembly of the VkDL at Münster

In hardly any other era of German history human dignity was trampled on as badly as during the Third Reich. The Catholic Church, too, had to take up a position. Not only the dignitaries of the Church, but also the Catholic associations were confronted with the question: "Adaptation, Distance or Alternative?" **The 116th Federal General Assembly of the Verein katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen e.V. (VkDL)** at Münster (June 22nd to 24th, 2012) dealt with "Witnesses of the truth during National Socialism". Emphasis was not only given to the committed struggle of Cardinal Graf von Galen against the brown regime of injustice, but also to Edith Stein's warning, who had already early noticed the thoroughly inhuman developments in the Third Reich. But also the principled attitude of the then president of the association Maria Schmitz backed up the members of the VkDL and helped them bear a lot of reprisals and professional disadvantages. **The lecturer Prof. Dr. Karl-Joseph Hummel**, head of the research institute of the Commission for Contemporary History at Bonn, stressed the difficult situation of the Catholic Church and analysed its strategy as "cooperative antagonism" "in order to save the conditions most important for pastoral care in institutions and to spare the German Catholics the alternative of having to choose between state and church. (*Lecture in: "Katholische Bildung" 10/2012*)

In that context one should see the resolutions of the VkDL as "resistance against the zeitgeist", for in them the VkDL again and again admonishes the high priority of human beings during social developments, e.g. if there is a question of the relationship between man and economy :

**"Man and economic growth" –
Resolution of the 116th Federal General Assembly of the
VkDL**

Human dignity must be the basis of all legislative measures — in the economic area as well. (...)

Examples : (Editor's note : The following ones refer to formation, two others deal with abortion and euthanasia with respect to economy.)

– There are more and more urgent demands to hand small children as soon as possible over to **state care outside the family**, so that mothers are available again for the labour force without longer interruption, although it has been proved that this solution has negative effects in the long run.

– **Financial grants to families** who want to educate their children themselves are reduced to a minimum.

– The **public unified (comprehensive) school** for all children, irrespective of their talents and likings, counteracts the personalisation and individualisation of the citizens.

Though sound economy and enough jobs are important for a functioning society, the human dignity protected by the law must not be sacrificed to that.

Therefor the VkDL demands that politics in all their decisions take the human being in all his/her phases of life into consideration, especially in phases in which he/she cannot defend him/herself, has not got a lobby and is no potential voter.

Remark : There were other resolutions on "Inclusion 3: Inclusion requires knowledge on handicaps"; "Use demographic developments to the advantage of children!" and "School must not become a plaything of party policies!".

VkDL, September 2012

The advantage of formation

“Against a mere being taken into service of school for the market we need a school forming personalities and transmitting culture. Whoever only sees in formation what can be used and measured, makes a mistake which Karl Popper denounced as reductionism in his criticism on Positivism. On the contrary formation is partaking in culture, too. And formation has a value above usefulness, even if that amounts to a paradox. That paradox consists in the fact that what is above usefulness diminishes potential productivity at the moment, yet its advantage consists in the fact that reflection, that the Muse (the goddess) and Leisure („Muße“) are extremely productive for the individual and the community in the long run.” (Josef Kraus) (editor’s note : contemporary German *pédagogue*)

As these effects are realized only after some time and therefore not measurable immediately, the politically responsible persons of today do not look into the direction of “what is above usefulness” under the pretext of “guaranteeing quality”. They prefer turning to what claims to be easily measurable. Tests of standards of formation, reading tests, centralized leaving exams may be important: that those external tests contribute to an improvement of performance, may be seriously doubted because of the experiences abroad. They rather lead to the effect that the “Muse and Leisure (“Muße”)” disappear from the curricula and that only what is measurable will be imparted in the future. Perhaps even with the purpose of sacrificing the individual development of the pupils themselves to the education to adaptability ?

Jochen Kautz (editor’s note : professor at Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, near Bonn) demands a “moratorium of reforms in the educational system” and a „revival of democratic, pedagogical and scientific reason in open discussions among colleagues, in public, at meetings, and especially in schools and universities“. I can only agree to that: From my point of view, too, it is necessary that scientists, parents, teachers, and all citizens demand back the “sovereignty over the educational system” and do not leave the field to the “questionable goorooos of formation” or “masters of self-presentation”, who, for reasons not explainable, or perhaps the better explainable, are granted presence in the media. Critical, independent, enlightened thinking is in demand! That’s exactly why it’s important to fight for the preservation of the Austrian grammar schools and to speak up for their further development in quality. Let us direct, at least within the schools, the focus on teaching as the central function and on teacher-pupil relationships! Let us try hard every day to inspire our pupils, to encourage them to putting questions, to impart new knowledge to them! Let us help them to consolidate important contents in a sustained form and first of all: Let us get involved in pedagogical relationships to our pupils, so that we succeed in recognizing and supporting their talents – without being afraid of demanding respect and achievement and setting limits!

Isabella ZINS (abbreviated from an editorial in VCL-NEWS)

Ethics and practices in state-schools

*Meeting of colleagues in activity, August 2012 in Brittany **

Pierre Ognier related the history of the teaching of morality at school in state-education from its origins to its disappearance. This teaching, different from the religious one without refuting it, soon came up against difficulties from both masters and the Church. Being more and more brought into disrepute owing to the appearance of new doctrines, it gradually disappeared after the Second World War as a result of the decline of values, the conflict between private and state-schools, the ideological revolution of May 1968. Civic education replaced it.

Maggy Nass wondered about the validity of ethics in the present-day school. For her, ethics educates without making uneducated, is not imperative, is lived out day to day, is not a school-subject but a common theme which indicates a way. It does not limit itself to control uncivil remarks, but goes through an exemplary behaviour. It is advisable to define the common objectives and establish **a code of ethics, the keystone of school**, to give opportunities to each in accordance with his / her skills.

Guy Coq gave a philosophical and pedagogical perspective. At present, morality as something that can be evaluated is badly thought of. **Ethics aims at a life good with and for the others in fair institutions.** The educative places are the family, associations and school. The latter must generate humanity in each child so as to help him / her enter a culture, enable a society to last. As education is based on influence, school helps everyone position himself as a seeker of meaning. In state-education, the Gospel must help the educator in his / her task, which consists in making his / her pupils into men and women. Education is based on a relation of confidence. The institution produces an authority acting as guarantor for education, justified by the duty to take the child into the world which precedes him / her. In the face of the obstacles, the crisis of morality, the wave of individualism, the task of school is to institute moral points of reference and free the young from the forms of conditioning imposed by society. « Let us dare to say no, though it is sometimes difficult, but uttering it advisedly helps the child find the place of his / her wish and take care of it » (from an article by Catherine Terni in La Croix)

Olivier Joncourt reminded us that **Christianity is not so much a code of ethics or morality as a relation to the God of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.** Christ, a real trainer for his disciples, made them into apostles in three years. Through the «Word » of the Gospel made of terms, but also of gestures, attitudes, looks and even sometimes of silence, Jesus sets an **example**. All that he does is **free** : healed people are not recruited. He changes the logic of the Old Testament for the ethic of a relation based on Love-Agape-Caritas. His pedagogy, through the Passover, integrates the failure. It is a « **resuscitated pedagogy** ». It is not forbidden to have convictions, utter them, live them out personally, have them lived out and

respected. Our acts must reveal our heart. A number of Christian values have joined our heritage. Let us suggest them to our pupils. Let us suggest an ethic of both personal and collective responsibility, an ethic of convictions, an ethic of the true relation.

Summary of by Michèle LESQUOY

* The unabridged version of the report is to be found in French on the website of CdEP: www.cdep-asso.org
Heading: actualité, sessions, Vannes

Beyond fear and loneliness : christian hope

The exit from the crisis that is gripping Europe and the world and oppressing us cannot be just a political and economic one. For it is also a crisis of culture, values, morals, ethics.

In order not to allow fear to oppress us and not to feel we are lost in the vortex of globalization – which is shaking our world, our general and particular, international and local, common and individual social circumstances -, it is useful to refer to the heritage of values which are the «roots» of Europe.

Now it is just our European cultural heritage which reminds us that the Christian faith can be a «point» of strength for «recovery» by supporting the individual and common capacity of hope: by illuminating the mind, comforting the heart, strengthening the will. History teaches us all that.

Christian hope is, in fact, something more than a mere utopia: it doesn't imagine realising an ideal perfect world, which doesn't exist anywhere, on this earth. Hope examines history and tries to capture in it the «signs of the times», the signs of a future and a humanly and historically sustainable development in a horizon of transcendence. And that for a double reason: because we rely on the creative and life-giving willingness of God, who works in our world through the Holy Spirit, and because we trust in the «historical fact» of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, salvation of the world and energy of a renewed world.

Saying that our world is all ugly and bad is means offending God, who created it and made MAN his «vicar» and «servant», who should keep it, cultivate it, improve it by means of his free initiative, whereas - unfortunately – he often ruins the world and reduces it to the sad «flowerbed that makes us so ferocious» (Divine Comedy, Paradise XXII, 151). It means offending the Holy Spirit that the Lord has «infused» into our hearts and that is present in the world to «complete» the work of salvation and redemption by Jesus. (...)

The Christian commitment to the search for the «kingdom of God» (...) does not only «work» for Catholicism, but for the good of everybody.

Moreover, Christian hope – just because it is based on the «gift» of God, of the living Christ and on the light and power of the Holy Spirit - can never be fanatical. The «seeds» of the Spirit are spread everywhere. The Church and the other Christian churches have no monopoly on the truth about man and history. The interreligious and civil dialogue is not just an «option». It is an obligation, a necessity.

In this horizon of meaning lies our «civil» commitment - as teachers of Christian inspiration - for the education and training of our students' consciences.

It's indeed a question of helping to extend the fields of our rationality, to reopen it to the great questions of truth and good, to combine with one another literature, arts, sciences, technology, philosophy, theology, in full respect of their own methods and their reciprocal autonomy, but also in the awareness of the intrinsic unity that holds them together.

Isn't that a humanly and civilly worthy task that we should commit ourselves to for revitalizing the culture of our time ... and helping Europe to «regain» itself ?

Don Carlo NANNI

Slovenia DKPS

DKPS Responds to the challenges of the time

The Pope proclaimed the year 2012/13 the year of faith. DKPS joins this mission through its activities.

– In early autumn we celebrated Slomšek Day entitled: «Our Home Country is Our Beloved Mother.» It's our mission to teach young people to love their home country. Bishop Šturm warned believers to stop playing a double life – that is playing one role in the church and another outside it.

– In October we joined the biblical marathon entitled: «Do't Be AFRAID; Just Believe!» That is a one-week, 24-hour lasting continuous reading of the Bible. We are proud that all local communities of DKPS joined the marathon and it's the teachers who spread the word of God around Slovenia. We believe that knowing the Bible means general education and it should be used in teaching as it is the task of teachers to prepare students for professional and private lives.

– In November the magazine Education (Vzgoja) and its editor Father Silvo Šinkovec, spiritual leader of DKPS, participated in editing the book : *Experiencing the Absolute in Slovenian Literature* by Vladimir Truhlar. This is an important book for Slovenians. It made a breakthrough, because it was not allowed to talk about religious topics in Slovenia, especially not in education, culture and literature. Vladimir Truhlar in his book, published in 1977 and now reissued 2012, reveals transcendence in Slovenian writers. Admitting transcendence at schools is still a taboo nowadays.

– An autumn rich in events offered us participation in a panel discussion on the safe use of the internet as well as participation in the seminar: *Retired Teachers, Ambassadors of Secure Internet Behaviour*. We are not aware enough that everything we put on the internet stays there. In Slovenia, already most of the 6-year-olds can use the internet. Access to pornography is very easy in Slovenia. Anorexia, bulimia and the loss

of interest in school work can often be the result of sexual abuse. As future ambassadors we learned where to complain and how to live active citizenship.

– In Slovenia Facebook is used by 700,000 Slovenes while there are 900 million users of Facebook in the world. Today young people think that if you are not on Facebook you are dead. The well-known Slovenian theologian Marko Rupnik said that there existed theological proof that Christ would not waste time on the internet. Moreover, he thinks that the internet controls our world. Personal information,

photos, confidential information should be protected and accessible only to people we trust. Consequently, teachers and parents are given a new task to teach the youth internet safety.

I invite you to learn about new technologies and contribute our share to a responsible, safe and beneficial use of the internet.

Magdalena JARC

NEWS FROM PARTNER ASSOCIATIONS

Poland KIK

Common Message to the Peoples of Poland and Russia

In August 2012 the President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Józef Michalik, Archbishop of Przemyśl, and the Patriarch of the Russian-Orthodox Church Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill have ceremonially signed a document, very important for both sides, in Warsaw : *The Common Message to the Peoples of Poland and Russia*.

The document consisting of only 150 lines has been elaborated by a committee of representatives of the Polish Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church during three years. Each and every sentence was thoroughly discussed so that both sides would "understand the partner in the way he understands himself". (...)

The highest representatives of the Polish and Russian episcopates speak in their own names in the document they signed. They express their wish: *"We are entering on the path of a sincere dialogue in the hope that it will contribute to healing the wounds of the past, overcoming mutual prejudices and misunderstandings and strengthening us in the quest for reconciliation"*.

They also call for the attention of their own churches: *"We appeal to our faithful that they should ask forgiveness for harms, injustices and any wrong done to the others. We are convinced that this is the first and most important step to rebuild mutual trust, without which there is no permanent human community or full reconciliation"*.

Forgiving does not mean forgetting, of course. Memory constitutes an essential part of our identity. We also owe it to the victims of the past that have been tortured and sacrificed their lives for their fidelity to God and their home country. But forgiving means renouncing to revenge and hate, participating in building harmony and brotherhood among people, our nations and countries, which is the basis for a peaceful future".

In this part of the document we find the thoughts and words, expressed by the participants of the SIESC Annual Meeting in Warsaw in 2011. But almost half of the *Message is a part entitled Together, facing new challenges*. There it says: *"Today, our nations face new challenges. Under the pretext of guarding the principle of laicity and defending freedom the moral principles based on the Ten Commandments are questioned. Abortion, euthanasia, same-sex unions, which one tries to present as one of the forms of marriage, are promoted, a lifestyle of consumerism is pushed, traditional values are rejected and religious symbols are removed from public. We also often meet with manifestations of hostility against Christ, his Gospel and the Cross, as well as attempts of excluding the Church from public life. Wrongly understood laicity takes the form of fundamentalism, and in fact is one of the varieties of atheism."*

Some commentators, also from among the liberal-thinking Catholics, see in it an expression of the rejection of the contemporary world, but nevertheless they show their joy because of the creation of such a document. They also express their hope that this is the beginning of common initiatives of both churches and both nations, which would lead to their real reconciliation.

Malgorzata WOJCECHOWSKA

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

Welcome to St. Pölten in Austria

Dear members and friends of SIESC !

In 2013 SIESC returns to Austria. At St.Pölten, the capital of Lower Austria (www.st-poelten.gv.at <<http://www.st-poelten.gv.at/>>), we will enjoy the hospitality of the diocesan house of formation **St.Hippolyt** (www.hiphaus.at <<http://www.hiphaus.at/>>). The house offers all conveniences necessary for a SIESC meeting on the premises.

The meeting will take place from July 25th (evening) to 31st (morning), July 30th being destined to an optional excursion.

The following topic was chosen for the meeting : **“Chances, challenges and risks of pre-school support for the development of 3 to 6 year-old children”**. Scientific research (e.g. of neurolinguistics) confirm that for some aspects of the development of human beings the age from 3 to 6 is the most opportune time span. In the countries of Europe that task, which is essential for the children and society, is noticed and realized by the parents and the institutions of formation in very different ways. In that context especially children

from families at a distance to formation and also families of migrants must be taken into consideration. Listening to and spreading proved and also unusual ideas in this field ought to interest teachers of all age groups, but also parents and grandparents and, generally speaking, responsible-minded citizens.

In groups using 3 or 4 languages and in workshops themes and ideas of the topic will be further developed.

At St. Pölten there is a Baroque town centre to be explored besides the modern administrative quarters, near to St.Pölten there are convents and monasteries worth a visit (Herzogenburg, Lilienfeld), at a greater distance Klosterneuburg and Mariazell, the most famous Austrian place of pilgrimage in its mountainous environment (the place of the Magna Mater Austriae, but also the destination of pilgrimages of Hungarian and Slav peoples).

VCL-Austria and SIESC cordially invite you to come to St. Pölten.

Wolfgang RANK

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

Europe – a project of peace – realization of peace ?

The Nobel Prize Committee has awarded the Peace Nobel Prize 2012 to the European Union. Should we rejoice at that, be surprised or doubt the meaningfulness ?

The people living in the EU today and being 67 years or younger have never experienced a war in their countries as long as they were members of the EU. That's something that never before happened in nearly all of these countries in European history. That has become the most natural thing of the world for the younger ones so that they don't appreciate it enough. Wars or armed conflicts in the media, fictitious ones, but also real ones in large parts of the world, seem to be too weak reasons for appreciating peace in their own countries duly. That is perhaps more natural for the inhabitants of the countries which still experienced revolutions or wars in a multi-national state falling apart some years before their joining the EU, as we learn when meeting colleagues of our member associations in these countries.

After the horror of World War II peace was obviously of overriding importance for the politicians making plans for a different Europe and explicitly or implicitly realizing principles and ideas of the Catholic social doctrine in doing that. Preventing or abolishing economic reasons for a war, that was the primary effective measure, e.g. by eliminating coal and steel as reasons of conflict. Reducing dangerous nationalism and doing away with negative stereotypes, especially in education and

formation of the younger generations of today, was and is an indispensable and permanent contribution to a peaceful development (and a special task of Christian teachers, which SIESC has always supported). Nowadays it's problems of the widening of the gap between richer and poorer strata of the population as well as between groups having jobs and those being unemployed which become the focus of attention. That's why it is becoming of overriding importance to maintain social peace by effective measures and realizing social rights and at the same time to see and realize solidarity with the inhabitants of member states which at the moment are worse off as an obligation in the community of the EU.

We observe developments in our municipalities, regions and states critically, we again and again complain about them, but we take these authorities for granted and appreciate them more or less. It should be equally natural to observe critically, to utter our opinions, but also to maintain and to appreciate on principle the achievements of the EU.

Thus we may on the one hand rejoice at the longstanding peace and must on the other hand consider the Nobel Prize as an encouragement and as a mission in a permanent project not yet finished for a long time, which needs our collaboration.

Wolfgang RANK

PAX ROMANA

Declaration by the PR workshop on New Evangelization *

The workshop was held in Rome from October 3rd – 7th, 2012. Its aim was to contribute to the work of the synod. The organizers realized the need to strengthen the relations of new evangelization to the intentions of the Second Vatican Council and wished to cause more effective involvement and stronger mobilization on new evangelization.

We believers, being part of the universal church,

– should realize the great responsibility of announcing the Gospel ;

– should enable the poor, the youth, indigenous people, women and others - who often aren't listened to - to be on an equal footing in the possibility of participating in evangelization through inculturation. This gives space to local churches to work more actively ;

– should watch the different dimensions of economies and policies to fight the structures of evil and enhance transformations of cultures for a common good ;

– should listen actively to the world and “discern the signs of the time”.

Evangelization is becoming a question of dialogue between cultures, traditions, religions, and generations, not only a top-down transmission of the message. We ought to be more audacious to take the risk of decisions, as we are guided by the Holy Spirit.

According to Jesus Christ's way of living and acting,

– we Christians should materially help poor people in the world for whom charity is the best evangelization.

– We should create and keep up the dialogue with the modern cultures concerning the issue of “truth” as a proposal for a more meaningful life.

– We also should accept the existence of religious pluralism in the contemporary world and create a platform of interreligious dialogue on the grassroots level.

These are the ways to become active agents of new evangelization at the local, national and global levels in communion with the local churches and the fathers of the synod.

Pax Romana commits itself to reflect and act on new evangelization and implement the recommendations coming out from the synod.

Dagmar PAROHOVÁ,
November 2012

* - Editor's note: complete text of the Pax Romana declaration on the internet « Pax Romana Declaration on New Evangelisation »

PAX ROMANA EUROPE

“For a Europe of Human Rights, uniting against misery”

The Conference of the International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe organized a conference on the occasion of the International Day of the Eradication of Misery at Strasbourg on October 17th, 2012. Pax Romana Europe was obviously invited there and took part.

“The legal instruments for the eradication of misery are there; it is a question of putting them into practice, with resolution and in the long run”, the invitation said. Putting them into practice is the real question. And we know well that the International Day and conferences, remarkable as they may be, are no realization of a real programme, but only reminders of the necessity, the urgency and the possibility of action. We know well that misery cannot be reduced without a profound transformation of economic and social structures and long work of education; we have good reasons to doubt that it can be “eradicated” one day, that means that one can make it disappear down to its roots.

Those manifestations should not serve as alibi actions for the public authorities, who certainly have this concern, which is, however, no prior commitment. It's up to us citizens to remind of the urgent necessity. It's up to us as human beings among the human beings, and for every reason as Christians, to contribute in the multiple associations whose objective it is, by means of tenacious activity. The famous chapter 25 of the Gospel according to St. Matthew offers us all the ultimate meaning of it.

Yves CALAIS

International mobility and the language of teaching and learning

International mobility and the choice of the language of teaching and learning at the secondary and tertiary levels are correlated to such a degree that the increasing mobility of students and teachers has been generating discussion about the importance of the mother tongue in the learning-teaching environment. The issue of the choice of language used in the education process is vital since languages are the most powerful instruments developing individual and national identity (Gee, 2000)*.

UNESCO has symbolically confirmed the role of the mother tongue by proclaiming February 21st as the International Mother Language Day in 2000. Additionally, it regularly launches a slogan, related to an aspect of the role of the mother tongue. The 2012 slogan is “Mother tongue instruction and inclusive éducation (1)” (<http://www.learningteacher.eu/news/2012/02/international-mother-language-day-2012>). It highlights the importance of the mother tongue in the education process and encourages the member states to promote education in the mother tongue. This is the encouragement Slovenia needs when reconsidering the languages of teaching and learning. These are Slovene, the national language, Italian and Hungarian, the minority languages with full official rights in the bordering bilingual regions. However, English, as the language of the globalised world has also found its way in a few teaching environments. Its role seems to be