

# SIESC - TODAY

English Edition

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## ÉDITORIAL

### Fraternity, responsibility

Living fraternity in everyday life asks for patience, gentleness, sometimes conciliatory meditations. Called to live together with others who don't share all our convictions, we sometimes get to know ruptures due to prejudices. Therefore we again feel the need for well spread correct information which will bring back truth. That is not a question of neglecting the differences between one another, but of allowing an enriching dialogue as well in the neighbourhood as with the believers of other denominations, with non-believers or between citizens of European countries. Thus it is important that the European teachers themselves should be well formed and acquire competences of citizenship.

By means of education adults are invited to make the youth enter into a world which is new to them. The diverse school systems make a formation adapted to various orientations possible. One can try to make the contents taught attractive, but knowing that the game is a pedagogical resource among others. Making children eager for reading, making them regular readers can help them not to fall into the traps of virtual reality or to analyse how irresponsible and egoistic behaviour of human beings destroys our planet.

We have to deal with numerous challenges in front of a generalised indifference. Taking on one's responsibility means realizing one's freedom taking into account the laws of the community. Practical life can put us in front of difficult decisions. It is always necessary to judge the situations in a realistic way and to remember our basic values. Let's not forget that every single human being is loved by God. Whatever he/she is, I must see a brother/a sister in him/her. Let's listen to Pope Francis, who speaks up for justice and peace, a dignified life for all, a fair economy and the preservation of the "common house". Let's thank him for his work for a merciful Church paying attention to the weak, the poor, those who flee violence. And ourselves, let's live as brothers and sisters with everybody.

Agnès ROSE

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## SIESC–European Federation of Christian Teachers

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## Fraternité, responsabilité

Vivre la fraternité au quotidien demande de la patience, de la douceur, parfois des médiations conciliatrices. Appelés à vivre ensemble avec d'autres qui ne partagent pas tous nos convictions, nous connaissons parfois des ruptures liées à des préjugés. Nous ressentons alors le besoin d'informations correctes bien diffusées qui rétabliront la vérité. Il ne s'agit pas de négliger les différences entre les uns et les autres, mais de permettre un dialogue enrichissant aussi bien dans le voisinage qu'avec des croyants d'autres confessions, des incroyants ou encore entre citoyens de pays européens. Il importe donc que les enseignants européens soient eux-mêmes bien formés et acquièrent des compétences de citoyenneté.

Par l'éducation les adultes sont invités à faire rentrer le jeune dans un monde nouveau pour lui. Les systèmes scolaires diversifiés permettent une formation adaptée aux différentes orientations. On peut chercher à rendre attrayante la matière enseignée, mais en sachant que le jeu est une ressource pédagogique parmi d'autres. Donner envie de lire aux enfants, en faire des lecteurs assidus pourra les aider à ne pas tomber dans les pièges de la réalité virtuelle ou à analyser comment le comportement irresponsable et égoïste de l'homme détruit notre planète.

Nous avons de nombreux défis à relever face à l'indifférence généralisée. Assumer ses responsabilités, c'est mettre en oeuvre sa liberté tout en tenant compte des lois de la communauté. La pratique peut nous placer devant des décisions difficiles. Il faut tout à la fois estimer les situations d'une manière réaliste et nous rappeler nos valeurs fondamentales. N'oublions pas que chaque être humain individuel est aimé par Dieu. Quel qu'il soit, il me faut voir en lui un frère. Écoutons le pape François qui intervient pour la justice et la paix, une vie digne pour tous, une économie équitable et la préservation de la «maison commune». Remercions le d'oeuvrer pour une Eglise miséricordieuse attentive aux faibles, aux pauvres, à ceux qui fuient la violence. Nous-mêmes, vivons fraternellement avec tous.

Agnès ROSE

## Geschwisterlichkeit, Verantwortung

Geschwisterlichkeit alltäglich leben verlangt Geduld, Milde, manchmal versöhnende Überlegungen. Gerufen, mit anderen zusammenzuleben, die nicht alle unsere Überzeugungen teilen, erkennen wir manchmal Brüche, die auf Vorurteile zurückgehen. Wir spüren dann wieder den Bedarf an gut verbreiteten korrekten Informationen, die die Wahrheit wieder herstellen. Es geht nicht darum, die gegenseitigen Unterschiede zu vernachlässigen, sondern darum, einen bereichernden Dialog ebenso in der Nachbarschaft wie mit Gläubigen anderer Konfessionen, mit Nichtgläubigen oder auch unter Bürgern europäischer Staaten möglich zu machen. Es ist also wichtig, dass die europäischen Lehrer/innen selbst gut gebildet sind und Kompetenzen im Bürgerbewusstsein erwerben.

Die Erwachsenen sind aufgefordert, durch Erziehung und Bildung die Jugendlichen in eine für sie neue Welt eintreten zu lassen. Die unterschiedlichen Schulsysteme machen eine an un-

terschiedliche Orientierungen angepasste Bildung möglich. Man kann versuchen, die Unterrichtsinhalte attraktiv zu gestalten, aber im Wissen, dass das Spiel eine pädagogische Möglichkeit unter anderen ist. In Kindern Verlangen zu lesen zu wecken, sie zu regelmäßigen Lesern zu machen, das kann ihnen helfen, nicht in die Fallen der virtuellen Welt zu fallen oder zu analysieren, wie das verantwortungslose und egoistische Verhalten von Menschen unseren Planeten zerstört.

Wir müssen uns zahlreichen Herausforderungen stellen angesichts der allgemeinen Indifferenz. Verantwortung übernehmen, das bedeutet, seine Freiheit zu verwirklichen und dabei die Gesetze der Gemeinschaft zu berücksichtigen. Das praktische Leben kann uns vor schwierige Entscheidungen stellen. Man muss zu jeder Zeit die Situationen realistisch einschätzen und sich an unsere grundlegenden Werte erinnern. Vergessen wir nicht, dass jeder einzelne Mensch von Gott geliebt ist. Wie immer er ist, ich muss in ihm einen Bruder/eine Schwester sehen. Hören wir auf Papst Franziskus, der für Gerechtigkeit und Frieden, für ein menschenwürdiges Leben für alle, eine faire Wirtschaft und die Bewahrung des „gemeinsamen Hauses“ eintritt. Danken wir ihm dafür, dass er für eine barmherzige Kirche wirkt, die achtsam ist für die Schwachen, die Armen, diejenigen, die vor der Gewalt fliehen. Und wir selbst, leben wir geschwisterlich mit allen!

Agnès ROSE

## SIESC'S LIFE

### 62nd International Meeting of SIESC in VICHY from 24 to 29/30 July 2017

Another SIESC meeting was held in Vichy from 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July bringing together 73 participants from 12 different countries, including about thirty members of the French host team. We had the pleasure of welcoming a new couple of Poles, two Albanian ladies, a nun and a Catholic school director, two Bosnians, a Norwegian -our youngest and first time participant, not forgetting Slovenes, Italians, Austrians, Germans, a Spaniard, two Romanians and two Luxembourgers.

This year's theme was "Fraternity, a challenge for our time". It is a term that is part of the French motto: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" even if we insist less on this last element. During the meeting we were able to live this fraternity not only through conferences and language discussion groups, but also to experience it on a daily basis.

#### Conferences

The first conference "Educating to fraternity" given by Béatrice Moulin, trainer at the ESPE (Higher School of Teaching and Education) of Moulins and philosopher of education at the Blaise Pascal University of Clermont Ferrand, proposed definitions of the term fraternity as used in education and told us about the teaching of



Vichy Opera

morality that had recently been introduced in the French curriculum. She went on reflecting on the current practice of educating to fraternity in French schools and on its stakes for education. One of the missions of education is to introduce young people into a world, which is new and unknown to them.

Presented in the form of PowerPoint, the second conference of a sociologist Jérôme Lagoutte, who was unfortunately detained at the last moment, was on "The concept of fraternity in French law." This rather technical presentation recalled the historical phases in which the concept of fraternity was introduced into French law.

The third lecture by a theologian, Bertrand Dumas, was on the theme "Brotherhood: a divine promise in little human steps". The conference explained the concept of fraternity in theology through the teachings of the Fathers of the Church and showed how this notion had evolved over the centuries. It also emphasized on the strong links of the idea of brotherhood to hope, patience, gentleness, and its distinct contemplative dimension.

### Working groups and SIESC's life

The linguistic working groups, which followed the conferences, allowed us to reflect in greater depth and also to discover, through the diversity of the participants' origins, their way of living or understanding fraternity in the different countries. These fruitful exchanges enriched us enormously.

One morning was devoted to the practical aspects associative life. If the finances are doing well enough thanks to the surplus after the Cluj meeting, the question of the succession to the presidency of Wolfgang Rank remains very topical.



Conference

An appeal was also launched to translate the contributions to the e-letter and articles from SIESC-Today, to find a correspondent for Pax Romana and deputy for the matters of ecumenism, who would assist and stand for Yves Calais.

A small group was created, with the intention of bringing together, through the SIESC, of younger colleagues from different countries in order to help them meet, observe the school life in other countries and ultimately, to allow young colleagues to participate in SIESC meetings.

### Visits, Prayer, Conviviality

As always, this meeting made us discover a new place, a region and its heritage thanks to the availability of colleagues from the area: Vichy, the spa town, its Opera, its buildings from the time of Napoleon III, the Allier and its banks, the Chantelle abbey where we had the privilege to join the sisters during

Vespers and where Johanne, the Norwegian, found a sister she had met some years ago in an abbey around Angoulême; Lapalisse castle where, welcomed in its church by the local parish priest, we had a beautiful break of prayer, Moulins, the city and the National Centre for Stage Costumes as well as Souvigny and its former abbey.



Lapalisse castle

We were also able to pray together every morning during the Lauds, before the interventions or during the masses said by the national chaplain of CdEP, Daniel Moulinet.

Once again this year's SIESC meeting proved to be rich and fraternal, allowing everyone to forge new ties. Our lodgings at the sports centre were also very pleasant and hospitable and the setting, in the middle of the sports fields and on the banks of the Allier, allowed for moments of relaxation.

We have a little thought for Marie-Françoise one of the French participants, whose unfortunate accident on the first day in Vichy forced her and her husband to return to Marseille; we hope that her fractured foot healed quickly.

Thank you to the organizers for this meeting.

Catherine LE COZ

## Next SIESC meeting at Trier from July 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Topic: "Law – freedom – responsibility"



sions can we draw thereof for a responsible life as Christians today?

By freedom in a democratic state under the rule of law we first of all think of a sphere protected by the state within which the individual can develop freely. But what is the relationship between the laws of the community and the freedom of the individual? Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that freedom without obedience to the law meant arbitrariness, obedience without freedom meant slavery. In responsibility both are realized, obedience and freedom.

We will illustrate the concepts from various perspectives:

- **From a political-philosophical point of view:** In the course of history two often antagonistic tendencies were balanced: the "will for more power" on the side of the state and the endeavour of the individual to enlarge the scope of freedom against possibilities of intervention by the state. Some stages in the long evolution of this concept of freedom from the Middle Ages to the present will be the topic of the lecture.
- **From a pedagogical-psychological point of view:** Work with children and youngsters displaying behavioural problems demands high pedagogical intuition and courage to use unorthodox procedures. But how are single case decisions, exceptions and particular regulations argued, how are they legitimated against the impression of arbitrariness and subjectivity? A play of thoughts with a very concrete connection to practice and a plea for the "other view" in everyday pedagogical activity.
- **From a theological point of view:** What concepts of law and freedom does the Bible communicate to us and what conclu-



**Trier** is situated in the central **valley of the Mosel**, near the border to Luxemburg. It is the oldest German town. Nowhere else north of the Alps can the times of the Romans be experienced as authentically as here. **Nine UNESCO world heritage sites** are found at close distance: Porta Nigra, the amphitheatre, the imperial baths, the Barbara baths, Constantine's basilica, the Roman bridge, and the Column of Igel near Trier, Trier cathedral, and the Church of Our Lady. We will discover the traces of this rich historic past, but also important cultural monuments of later epochs. The Church of the Benedictine abbey e.g. is a place of pilgrimages and hosts the **only tomb of an apostle north of the Alps**, namely the tomb of the apostle Matthew.

The **optional excursion** at the end of our meeting will take us to Luxemburg, to the European centre at Kirchberg, to the museum of the fortress, to the old town of Luxemburg, then to Echternach, the main place of "Luxemburg's Little Switzerland", so attractive for tourists.

SIESC and the preparatory team invite you cordially.

Wolfgang RANK, President of SIESC

Gisela GERHARDT, Vice-president of SIESC



## To the memory of Marius Boldor



**Marius Boldor** was born at Dej in Romania on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1963. He attended the school in his native town, then the Faculty of Electronics and Communication of the Poly-

technic University at Cluj, where his first formation was that of engineer. In 1990, after the fall of Communism, he could follow his true intellectual vocation by studies at the Philosophical Faculty of Cluj University and he became a teacher of philosophy and human sciences in 1995.

In 1993 he married Monica and they have two daughters, Maria and Lucia.

From the years 2000, he became a member of AGRU and after a short time president of AGRU Cluj, a responsibility he took until his sudden death on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

In AGRU he always was an optimist presence, he created stability in the work groups and in general he stood for conciliatory mediation and patient and serious research.

As an active teacher he was co-opted by Cornelia Frișan to represent AGRU at the meetings of SIESC. So he began to participate in the meetings since 2013, at St. Pölten, then at Kranj, at Rome, at Cluj – as an organizer and host –, and finally at Vichy in 2017.

Always discrete, he also accepted to be president of the teachers' section of AGRU and member of the Council and even vice-president of SIESC.

His passions were numerous, he was a great reader and translator of philosophy and theology. Thus, he has translated several important books of Catholic thinking of the 20th century into Romanian, works by Maritain, Cardinal Henri de Lubac, Jean-Luc Marion.

He was a connoisseur of the cinema, he liked classical music, but also jazz or progressive rock, he was interested in everything that happened around him.

But most significantly Marius stays in our minds as a friend and our glad remembrances will accompany him to the house of the Father.

Requiescat in pace!

Alin TAT

## INTERNATIONAL LIFE

### For Pope Francis

In the past year the pastoral initiatives of Pope Francis and their theological justification were under vehement attack by single persons or groups in the church. That even results in the accusation of heresy.

That development must be regretted, first of all, when the criticism is hypocritical or malicious, and it invites to positioning oneself. That's why it seems important and necessary to me to state and to pronounce again and again that we are grateful for his courageous and theologically well-reasoned activities. First his modest behaviour, his impressive gestures, and his decisions pointing the way must be appreciated.

In a few years he has succeeded in reshaping the pastoral culture of the Roman Catholic Church in accordance with its origin in Jesus. In exemplary form he speaks up for a just and merciful church, for a synodical church and a church which cares for the weak, the poor, and those fleeing violence. He sees the church as a field hospital on the margins of life. His concern is every single person loved by God. When encountering others, a merciful and not a legalistic interpretation of law shall have the last word.

For the Catholic Church and beyond he speaks up for justice and peace, for the participation of all in a life of dignity and justice, for a fair economy and for the preservation of the "common house".

Together with a down-to-earth estimation of the situation in Europe he believes in the "soul of Europe" and demands of Europe to remember its fundamental values and to realize its particular tasks for the whole world.

My only personal encounter with Pope Francis is unforgettable, when I could participate in a morning mass at Domus Santa Martha and he afterwards spoke with us about a request in the interest of the lay people in the Church. He impressed us all by his frankness and his amiability. And in the end he said: "Pray for me."

It must be hoped that the change in the Church initiated by the Bishop of Rome cannot be reversed in the interest of the members of the Catholic Church and in the interest of the whole world.

Since October 2017 there exists a website [www.pro-pope-francisc.com](http://www.pro-pope-francisc.com). There you can support an open letter to the Pope, which expresses thanks, support for his aims and his activities, and the promise to pray for him.

Wolfgang RANK, President of SIESC

### The power of words or the connection of the past, present and future

The present as the intersection of the past and the future, offers various possibilities to look back in time and to project the future. In some contexts it enables to envisage what is over and what is going to take place as a continuum. Even more, the present and the word with which it is represented seem to gain new dimensions. Despite its volatility, *chronos* appears as *kairos*. If such a happy change occurs when observing the life of an association, the impression arises that the essence of what occurred in the past is still there in the red thread of words that will echo also in the future. Very much like the words in the newsletters of Pax Romana ICMICA/MIIC, narrating what happened in the recent years.

Images and words have been revealing that Pax Romana continues to promote peace, education and human rights. This aim represents the red thread uniting the past activities of this movement with the present and the future. Newsletters report on various challenges from all over the world, among which on indifference that Christians had to face in Europe, Asia and Africa in 2016. Short interviews reveal the specific aspects of this issue in Ukraine, Nepal and Kenya. The interviewees stress that they expect to be heard and helped. Cannot similar words be used to present the situation in 2017 and, unfortunately, in some places also in the years to come? On the other hand, wasn't the special impact of the idea of charity, marking the discourse of Catholics in 2016, an echo of similar responses given long ago?

Since most of the text in newsletters are short reports, generally only some basic information about events is given. Thus no follow up events to the 2016 Assembly of Pax Romana, organised in Barcelona are presented, even though it would be particularly interesting to be informed about the actions undertaken after the conference. In particular because target readers in other temporal and spacial contexts may tend to think that the importance of an event lies in the commitment related to the contemporary world and the future. Besides, with the engagement in mind it would be much easier to measure the impact of the event on the general reflection and future action. However, what is crucial is that even the short pieces of news confirm Pax Romana's commitment to its ideals. Accordingly, the movement recognizes its social responsibility, which is obvious also from the November 2017 Newsletter. There is a short piece of news telling that the Barcelona Pax Romana group published its call for the dialogue in the Catalunyan crisis. The organization's social engagement is further stressed in the presentation of the conference »Human dignity, security and the future of Europe: Christian contribution«, organized, together with the Ukrainian Obnova, in Lviv. Thus, the old question about responsibility and cooperation. Very much like in the past, when Pax Romana highlighted various issues of commitment. A red thread, a thread of words, keeping alive the past, active the present and aware the future.

Darja MAZI-LESKOVAR

## NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

GERMANY - VKDL

### Denominational - cooperative religious instruction is not the solution!

*The VkdL warns against diluting one's own faith*

In a detailed statement for the "Tagespost", the VkdL made it clear that religious instruction according to the ecumenical agreement of Berlin and Brandenburg will not be constructive.

All new conceptions require reflections on the task of the regular school subject 'religious instruction', taught in most counties. If the target of this subject, as in other teaching subjects, is the widening of knowledge about various religions and confessions, then many different models of instruction can be applied. (...) This subject should be called 'instruction on religion', which nowadays for many children means their first contact with religion.

But if we want a teaching subject 'religious instruction', it differs from other teaching subjects. Of course it includes content-based knowledge about the Bible and the teachings of the church, but it also renders the teacher's religious beliefs. (...) The danger is that existing differences between the various confessions are not distinctly pointed out, leaving the impression that they do not exist. It distorts any access to one's own religion, creating indifference instead of detailed knowledge. (...) It is therefore mandatory to teach the clear and valid dogmas of the church.

One cannot help feeling that this enforced conformity is the desired goal and should be realised by means of denominational - cooperative religious instruction even as early as in primary school, leading to a wrong concept of ecumenical Christianity. If religious instruction - especially at primary school level - is to compensate for the absence of religious instruction at home, denominational - cooperative instruction will not be able to achieve this. Religious instruction should be more than knowledge about religions and should embed the pupils in one confession and one church.

Religious instruction does not address the mind only, it also appeals to emotions and experience, requiring the participation of the parents, preferably even before religious instruction starts. The sacrament of First Communion, for example, takes place at primary school age. A teacher of religious instruction can inform all the pupils about it, but only Catholic children can receive and experience it. Becoming rooted in a religion requires experiences which one cannot get as a spectator, but only through active faith and inner participation. If we want to educate children for a successful ecumenical and interreligious coexistence, it is adamant to be rooted in one's own confession. (...) Only then may profitable dialogue take place and there is no danger of the blurring

of contours and the levelling-out at the lowest level possible. (...) But one cannot take the second step before the basic first one, even if the organisation of denominational education is not simple in the light of diminishing participation. It requires strong convictions and dedication and is a challenge for committed head teachers and those setting up time tables.

## AUSTRIA - VCL

### Some realistic remarks on the Austrian school system

*The president of VCL Isabella Zins presented important quotations concerning the Austrian school system in VCL-NEWS. Some examples:*

#### For diversity in the public school system:

Austria's position gains from a diverse public school system and doesn't need – as demanded by OECD – still more undergraduates and graduates, but more well-schooled skilled workers:

Diversity with regard to great differences of experiences and development:

“Children enter school with differences of experiences and development of up to three or four years. What effects can the same kind of instruction for all have, as it is still usual in a lot of schools – and will probably be even promoted by standardization?” Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hans Brügelmann, “Vermessene Schulen – standardisierte Schüler” (2015), p. 49

For an increase in value of vocational training:

“Countries with a dual vocational training show indeed better results on the labour market. More dual vocational training in a country leads to less youth unemployment – in Austria, too. The federal countries with a lot of beginning apprentices at the age from 15 to 16 have the lowest numbers of unemployed 20 to 24-year-olds.” Mag. Thomas Mayr, CEO of the Institute for Formation Research of the Economy, Der Standard online on 2 November 2015

Already now very dramatic shortages with apprentices and vocationally qualified young people:

“In addition to that there exists no serious study prognosticating even approximately a demand of fifty percent for university graduates in the future. But rather there exist already very dramatic shortages with apprentices and vocationally qualified, not with university students and graduates.” Univ.-Prof. Dr. Julian Nida-Rümelin, bildung-wissen.eu on 14 April 2015

Persons having finished their apprenticeship are urgently sought on the labour market:

“Entering their job persons having finished their apprenticeship

get € 1.900.-, a pay more than double compared with workers who have only passed obligatory schools (about € 800.-). Having passed an apprenticeship job beginners find a job after 43 days on an average, persons who don't undergo further training search for about 220 days on an average.” Arbeitsmarktservice (ed.), “Spezialthema zum Arbeitsmarkt” in November 2016, p. 7

#### For the German language as a key to integration:

Knowledge of German is the precondition for successful participation in ordinary teaching in primary and secondary schools. With respect to migration and integration Austria faces one of the greatest challenges in all Europe:

50 % of the 10-year-olds with migration background don't have sufficient listening skills:

“Difficulties in understanding the spoken German language (listening comprehension) especially attract attention in children with migration background: 26 % of them don't reach the standards and a further 36 % achieve the learning objectives only partially. [...] That means a systematic disadvantage for this group of children in the overall teaching, which is primarily enacted by means of the language.” BIFIE (a federal institute for research, innovation and development) (ed.), “Standardüberprüfung 2015 – Deutsch, 4. Schulstufe, Bundesergebnisbericht” (2016), p. 86

Isabella ZINS

## FRANCE - CdEP

*In its last edition, Lignes de Crêtes published a challenging notice, with humour : which part are we ready to play towards the edification of the Kingdom?*

### Situations vacant

Managing Team of a multinational company widely established for many centuries over the five continents, a leader in its working sector, with (alas !) mainly senior executives

#### IS LOOKING FOR

Men and women, age unimportant, and above all as fast as possible ;

- bakers and pastrycooks to be the leaven in the dough and the salt of the world ;

- gardeners to sow the Word and have Hope bloom everywhere ;

- well diggers to find the Spring of Life and give humanity something to drink ;
- drivers of public works vehicles, to help Faith raise mountains ;
- fireworks specialists and pyrotechnics specialists to have the flame of charity burn high and steady ;
- financial experts to reassess the poor in spirit and make everyone's talent bear fruit ;
- cleaners to wash the sin of the world ;
- masons and plasterers to unseal the doors of our tombs ;
- carpenters to take away the beam in our eyes (instead of caring about the straw in our neighbour's)
- boxers to multiply and share out breads and punch loaves (but only on the left cheek !)
- ethnologists to teach how to be lambs among wolves and to be as cautious as a snake and as ingenuous as a dove ;
- legal experts to distinguish what belongs to Caesar from what belongs to God ;
- heralds to proclaim the Good News ;
- lifters to raise the heavy burdens weighing on peoples' shoulders ;
- physiotherapists to pull everyone up ;
- Lift-specialists to take us to heaven ;
- divers to swim in the holy water basin (or lobster pot) of Rome ;
- midwives to lighten and guide all these gentlemen and help them deliver a loving and maternal church ;

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## The training of the European teacher

During the last UCIIM Congress held in Rome in January 2017, one of the study groups was dedicated to Europe. First of all, the participants wondered whether nowadays the EU still has a meaning and what it is. They reflected on the evolution of the deep-seated conditions starting from the moment when the Community was born and the expectations it then raised, up to the spread of the phenomenon of euroscepticism.

In order to overcome the existing breaks and to demystify all prejudices in both directions, the need for more diffused and more correct information arose together with the awareness that when this is true, the attitude towards Europe is much more positive.

Teachers of the group reported on different particularly enriching and stimulating experiences. That is why, in order to contrast Euroscepticism, which is often only the result of slogans, a Euro realism was proposed, built on research and on a more direct knowledge of events, but especially on the awareness of the deep essence of peoples and of those who are part of them.

According to these reflections shared by the group, in the awareness of its long tradition of attention to Europe and European Education, the request was made to the UCIIM to devote a special study unit to this theme. A Europe department coordinated by Maria Vittoria Cavallari has therefore been set up within the Association's Culture Committee.

The Commission began its work by:

- sending an online questionnaire to educational institutions to determine their knowledge and attention to European issues;
- proposing training for Italian teachers in the area of Citizenship skills;
- collecting and disseminating information and documents useful to support teachers on European topics through the UCIIM website, whose leader is Ms. Elena Fazi;
- identifying some European projects to join in as partners.

Its aim is also to carry out the project for the training of the European teacher that was presented at the 60th SIESC Meeting (Rome, July 2015).

For all these activities, a collaboration with other associations or individual European teachers is to be welcomed.

Maria Vittoria CAVALLARI



## How to make a foreign language more attractive?

There are obvious advantages to the use of games in pedagogy. Their mimicry (anticipation of the adult world), their capacity to pass on culture, and their character of socialization tool encourage the initiation to verbal pleasures. (...) Making the language live in action and in interaction, a game allows the participants to express themselves in the foreign language and not be satisfied with mere reproduction of textbook language. (...) The game has also a number of important emotional advantages because it allows the player to overcome egocentrism, to take a leadership position, to multiply contacts, to learn to manage collaboration, agreement, and opposition. It presents cognitive benefits, such as developing of mental structures through the enhancing of intelligence, observation, motivation, critical thinking and the faculties of analysis and synthesis.

Although the game offers an interesting way to expand the panoply of pedagogical offer, it will never be a panacea. With all its benefits it remains yet another educational resource among many others and is subject to the same rules and restrictions. It should neither be idealized nor demonised. We should simply make an attempt to better understand how games work in order to exploit them better to our means. (...)

Although the playful attitude of a game is its most prevailing characteristic, the material, the rules and the context must also contribute. How to promote this attitude, this intimate conviction of the player governing his or her own actions, which allows him to engage body and soul while keeping his detachment? Attractive, strong, robust and well-designed equipment; clear, interesting and dynamic rules; a relaxed atmosphere do not guarantee anything, but they largely contribute to and favour the desired attitudes.

When we play in class, we do not play games, we simply play. Among the many categories released by game specialists, there are games of pretence. But also when we pretend in a game, we are still playing! In other words, the games on offer must remain games and not pedagogical trickery. I'm thinking here of teachers so concerned about slip ups that they interrupt a game activity as soon as they lose absolute control. A well-prepared educational game provides a place for the unexpected. We must not be worried by the thought of not having planned everything: the playful environment is very restrictive and offers a surprising potential for self-regulation.

Learners must be players and not be played, or worse even used only as counters in a game. Certain teachers become so attracted to games that they introduce them to class without considering whether the learners will be the subjects or the objects of the game. The teacher may choose to stand aside during the game or play alongside the learners, but he should never allow the game to endanger the psychological stability of the students in his class. I am thinking here of some deviations in the use of role-plays, which may easily slip into the field of psychotherapy in the hands of an untrained animator. The play universe also includes cruel or humiliating games, which must be avoided at all costs. The teacher must therefore take care not to abuse his power to turn learners into his personal toys.

Cristina Alexie (Slatina)

## Improving Reading Culture

In Slovenia, Reading Badge project has been carried out for the 58<sup>th</sup> time. All along the school year, primary school students read a selection of books, they present them to their mentors, and then, they are rewarded with a book. At the conclusion of the project, schools invite the authors to introduce themselves to students and speak about their book and body of the work. At the end of their primary school education, pupils are rewarded with an additional book if they were avid readers for nine years.

In Slovenia, the Church and the state are separated, thus, public schools do not offer religious education, but students are taught Morals and Ethics. However a religious education can be organised by the parish priest (...). For the last sixteen years, those students have had the opportunity to take part in the Slomsek Reading Award and about 3000 of them participate every year (...).

Thanks to public and school libraries, the Slovenian Book Agency promotes reading by distributing books to primary and secondary students. The project aims to encourage authors to produce original Slovene work and publishers to include contemporary Slovene authors in their publishing programmes, and, of course, young people to read Slovene literature. When elementary or first-year secondary school students have read a book, they are invited to the library. They discuss the work they have read, its author, present the library's structure and projects and are invited to come regularly.

This year, students read Miha Mazzini's novel *Zvezde vabijo* (Invited by the stars) which highlights the issue of virtual and imaginary world. This masterfully crafted exciting reading takes us on a thrilling and fun adventure. We are faced with the traps of virtual reality (...) through a series of pop culture references, obsessions of the modern consumer society and nostalgic impressions (...).

Secondary school students read *Planet, ki raste* (The Planet that doesn't grow) by Lucka Kajfez Bogataj\*. In her latest book, she draws our attention to the destruction that mankind recklessly and selfishly inflicts on the planet Earth, our only home. Man's actions are interconnected and lead to climate changes and a number of disturbance (...). Today's generation possesses the political and economic power, however, its slow transition towards a carbon-free society and a circular economy is a threat to all future generations.

\* Lucka Kajfez Bogataj is a researcher in meteorology and climatology, a recipient of many awards as a member of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and the Peace Nobel Prize in 2007, together with Al Gore.

Karmen KOPRIVEC

Last minute: We have learnt that Yves Calais, Honorary President of SIESC, has died on January 16th.

We join Françoise and their near relatives in their grief and promise to be with them in our thoughts and our prayers.

We will pay tribute to Yves extensively in the next edition.

In spite of the pain caused by the disappearance of Marius and Yves, we wish you, fortified by our hope in Christ risen from death, a happy and blessed year 2018.

### **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**