

Introduction

The European conference, "Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education" was organised by the DARE network within its EU-funded project Democracy and Human Rights Education in Adult Learning in Vienna (14-16 November 2008). 230 people from 37 European countries representing the broad field of NGO practice, research and policy level attended the event in order to come closer together around the core competency of civic education.

The aim of the conference was not just to produce another statement on the importance of intercultural dialogue in Europe, but to set the focus on practical challenges for the work of NGOs in the field of EDC/HRE.

When we began planning the conference, we decided to widen the topic of interculturality to a more diversity-oriented approach. Especially in this field of education, interculturalism should not be reduced to a buzz word or slogan, but should aim to achieve much more.

The conference had three main purposes for the DARE Network: 1) to offer an opportunity for further networking, 2) to offer professionals further education and trainings adequate and fitting to the diverse approaches and structures of NGOs in the field of EDC/HRE, and 3) to enable DARE to be a forum for discussion between scholars, practitioners and policy makers.

To realise these aims, we focused mainly on 3 items:

- Intercultural dialogue as an operational task of NGO work: hands-on trainings in thematic fields of intercultural dialogue (Workshops F1-6, S1-4)
- Intercultural dialogue as structural task for NGOs: challenges related to the working structure of NGOs (Discussion Group 2)
- The European policy frame in EDC/HRE as a challenge for the work of NGOs: working on a better connection between educational praxis, research and policy (Discussion Group 1)

2008 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, 2009 is the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. With this conference we made a substantial contribution to both goals from the perspective of EDC/HRE.

This documentation offers a multi-media overview of the sessions and workshop of the whole conference. All presentations, as well as the minutes of each session/workshop, the orangelog reports, the evaluation of the conference and a photo-documentation can be found in the printed materials and accompanying DVD, which contains 2 documentary films. The documentation can be downloaded as a book, as well as divided into the single workshop pieces on <www.dare-network.eu>.

We wish to extend a special thanks for his organisational work to Reinhard Eckert at our Partners Zentrum POLIS. Without his work, we would not have been able to make this conference come true! Thanks also to all workshop leaders, moderators, researchers, etc. and to all the helping hands that were active in the background.

Georg Pirker, Anne Stalfort

For further information on DARE and on the EU project, Democracy and Human Rights Education in Adult Learning, please visit www.dare-network.eu or contact Georg Pirker at pirker@adb.de

Opening of the DARE Conference

Speech by Olöf Olafsdottir, Head of Department of School and Out-of-School Education, Council of Europe

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear participants,

It is a great pleasure for me to greet you on behalf of the Council of Europe. I should like to thank the organisers for inviting me to speak here, at the opening of the DARE Conference.

Only a month ago, the Council of Europe organised, in its headquarters in Strasbourg, a Forum on "Civic Partnerships for Citizenship and Human Rights Education", which some of you attended. In their final declaration, the participants of that Forum recognised the fundamental importance of a broad co-operation among international, regional and local institutions, governments, parliamentarians, human rights commissions, civil society organisations, media and education practitioners in the field of Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE). They asked the Council of Europe to continue to support and promote such partnerships.

I am certain that this meeting can further develop the discussion which took place in Strasbourg. The partnerships we speak about have one main goal: to establish a sustainable culture of democracy and human rights throughout the European continent, through education.

This conference, which is devoted to the theme "intercultural dialogue – a challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education" is taking place on the banks of the Danube, this river that flows through so many European countries and has had an important role in creating cultural contacts among its citizens. The history of Europe shows clearly that such contacts have not always been a story of intercultural dialogue and understanding, on the contrary. Just a few days ago, we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I. And there have been other wars fought in Europe since that date, and some of them very near us in time. By saying this I am just reminding us of the fact that our discussion here is also a part of the process of building a peaceful Europe, where the human rights of each and every person are respected, and the first of them is the right to life. Sometimes it is as if this was taken for granted, but maybe we need to be reminded of this now and then.

The Council of Europe, born out of World War II and its atrocities, has always had democracy and human rights had as its basic principles and objectives. The values they are built on are the foundations of our organisation. The Council of Europe has also strongly promoted the respect for and the promotion of cultural diversity, and has intensified its work on this issue over the last few years. Europe has always been an intercultural continent – this is rooted in our history – and has become increasingly intercultural in the last decades, through migration. In May this year, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. As it says in the title of the White Paper, this document sets out how we can live together "as equals in dignity".

The White Paper was negotiated over almost two years by the 47 governments of the Council of Europe and has therefore received strong political validation. A wide-scale consultation was held before the negotiations on the text actually began, including with NGOs, and partners from regions outside Europe. The outcome is a forward-looking model for managing cultural diversity. The White Paper argues that our common future depends on our ability to safeguard and develop human rights, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and its protocols, in democracy and in the rule of law. It argues that we must support mutual understanding, that such a mutual understanding is key to Europe's future and that of its neighbours.

The White Paper does not support a response to diversity by accepting the coexistence of segregated communities, separated from each other by mutual ignorance and stereotypes. On the contrary, it must be emphasised that European identity is based on shared fundamental values, on the respect for common heritage and cultural diversity as well as the respect for the equal dignity of every individual. The process of writing and negotiating the White Paper created a useful debate which was extremely important for the member states of the Council of Europe, and in itself a crucial educational process.

There are many anniversaries to be celebrated this year, and there is also lot of hope for a new vision of society in spite of the economical crisis we are going through. The election process in the United States of America has been of a crucial importance also for Europe and has shown the strength and the possibilities of the democratic system. One of the anniversaries to be celebrated this year is that of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is sixty years old. Never before had such a clear-cut document declaring the freedom and dignity of all human beings been adopted by the nations of the world. It is quite normal that the implementation of human rights and democracy takes some time. When we consider - taking only one human right - that thirty per cent of the world's population are considered to completely lack access to freedom of expression, free press and opinion-forming, we can consider that we have a long way to go – and a lot of work to do - before fundamental human rights apply - in practice – to everyone in the world.

In Europe, we are lucky to have a strong system for protecting our human rights and defending us against discrimination, both in our member state legislation and at the European level. The European Convention of Human Rights created the Court of Human Rights, which in case-law interprets the Convention in the light of present day conditions. The Council of Europe has adopted many other treaties which safeguard our human rights, such as the European Social Charter and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. They have their own monitoring mechanisms.

However, the existence of the Court and other monitoring mechanisms alone it will not create this culture based on values, those of democracy, human rights and intercultural understanding. If we are together here today, it is because we believe that the attitudes and skills needed to put these principles into practice should be taught and learned, practised and maintained throughout life. It is through democratic citizenship and human rights education that we need to make the language of Human Rights more relevant to each and every person and more user-friendly.

Through its EDC/HRE project, which was set up in 1997, the Council of Europe is developing tools and systems for its implementation. The most recent one is a comprehensive framework for the development of competences for teaching citizenship and human rights education. There is also a tool on democratic school governance which has met with great interest in many member states, since it is obvious that an undemocratic school will have difficulties in explaining to the students that democracy is a good thing. Another tool on quality assurance in education for democratic citizenship and human rights was drafted a few years ago. There are some manuals for teachers which are also being developed, and you may have seen the postcards and posters of these outside this room. From the beginning, the EDC/HRE project has worked closely with representatives of NGOs; they have actually been part of the steering groups of the project and will continue to be.

Besides the EDC/HRE project, the Council of Europe has also initiated a specific project on policies and practices for teaching sociocultural diversity, which seeks to address key issues in pre-service teacher training and introduce common principles for managing diversity at school. These may prove very useful for developing further the principles set out in the White Paper. Previously, we had also dealt to some extent with the question of religious education and produced a reference book for schools on this. We have also, through our projects on history teaching, dealt with the question of “the image of the other” in textbooks and other materials for schools.

The network of EDC/HRE coordinators, who are representatives of the governments, was set up in 2002. This network has now become strong and sustainable, it is working very well; it even has its sub-networks. The network is well aware that intercultural education is embedded in its work on democracy and human rights education.

A very promising new development is the creation of the Wergeland Centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship which will be set up in Oslo by the Norwegian government in close cooperation with the Council of Europe in the beginning of 2009. A memorandum of understanding between the Council of Europe and the government of Norway regarding this Centre has recently been signed. The Centre will deal with teacher training, information and research in these fields.

I hope that this conference will provide a useful opportunity to exchange views and experiences about these important issues, also with the EDC/HRE coordinators. I hope that you will learn more about the work of the Council of Europe, and that you will be able to use some of our tools to assist you in your

work, and that you can give us good ideas to continue and develop our project, not the least for building the partnerships I was speaking about.

The White Paper which I presented to you earlier, is in itself a guide for policy-makers and practitioners. However, the process of intercultural understanding is a long and difficult one, since there is often so much misunderstanding. But it will come about through the teaching and learning of intercultural competences, which includes empathy, the capacity to listen and to understand the point of view of "the other". In this process, we constantly need to provide spaces for dialogue on intercultural matters, however sensitive and difficult they may be.

Since I have been speaking about European culture – and our common history - which is fortunately not only about wars, but also about the creation of the human rights philosophy, I wish to finish with a personal story which shows to how great an extent we live in a continent which has always had a shared culture, through interactions and through exchanges, even in its most remote places far from the waterways of the Danube and from Mitteleuropa.

When I was a little girl, I lived in Northern Iceland, not far from the polar circle. I was a great reader, not in the least because of the long winter evenings and nights in that part of Europe. This may seem strange today, in times of multimedia and instant exchanges on the internet and in times of the "demo-games" and "polipedias", which we heard about yesterday. My favourite authors included the Danish Hans Christian Andersen, the Swedish Selma Lagerlöf, the German Grimm Brothers, the British Charles Dickens and the French Victor Hugo. I read their books again and again with a lot of pleasure. One of my favourite books was *Ruslan and Ljudmila* by the Russian Alexander Pushkin, who was himself – as I was to learn later – the grandchild of an African slave, brought to the court of Peter the Great as a gift of the then Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. I still remember the pictures in my edition of *Ruslan and Ljudmila* and know some of the poems by heart, in Icelandic. I also loved the Turkish stories of Nasreddin Hoca which gave me a glimpse of a world I knew so little about.

I wish to pay an homage to the translators who brought to me these literary worlds, at the same time so far away and yet so close. They were so close because the stories were based – as it says in the White Paper – "on individual human dignity, embracing our common humanity and common destiny".

Therefore let me conclude by a quotation from the last section of the White Paper, on "The way ahead". It says: "The Council of Europe invites all other stakeholders to continue what has sometimes been described as the White Paper process... the emerging model is a work in progress and a work of many hands. It involves wide responsibilities for public authorities at all levels, for civil-society associations and all other stakeholders."

I am looking forward to working with you in this process and wish you a good and productive conference.

Thank you for your attention

Opening speech by Manfred Wirtitsch, Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture

Distinguished guests (...)

Welcome on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Culture and the Arts.
It is a pleasure of being able to host three conferences in the framework of the Democracy Initiative of the Austrian Ministry for Education:

The 14th Meeting of the EDC/HRE Co-ordinators of the Council of Europe, the meeting representatives of University Teacher Training Colleges and the meeting of DARE-Representatives : DARE Network of Democracy and Human Right Education in adult learning

As we were told yesterday evening by my General Director Mdme. Strohmeyer, Madam Dr. Claudia Schmied, Federal Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture, will not be able to attend this meetings and has to be apologized. As you may know, Madam Schmied is taking part at the negotiations between the Social Democrates Party and the Austrian Peoples Party to build a new government after the parliamentary elections this late September. This negotiations are still at a very important stage as all the media are reporting. Probably the negotiations could be finished these days.

However, I am proud of hosting all of you at this meetings of the EDC/HRE Co-ordinators of the Council of Europe, all the relevant colleagues of the Austrian University Teacher Training Colleges and the Representatives of the DARE Network of Human Rights Education in adult education. In June 2007, the Austrian Parliament passed the so-called 'democracy package', which provides, inter alia, lowering the voting age to 16 years at any level: local, "Bundeslaender" - provinces of Austria, national and European level. Since then Education for Democratic Citizenship after a couple of years again turned to be one of the priorities in the Austrian educational policy. By the way, the age for running as a candidate is still at 18.

The Democracy Initiative seeks to empower first-voters, to raise awareness and to establish efficient teaching and learning of democratic citizenship in school and in initial and in-service teacher training institutions.

As an important international part of the Democracy Initiative this three Meetings are organised in Vienna. It is also intended to give both Austrian Educators and international representatives the opportunity to discuss the challenges and chances given by the changes introduced with colleagues from all over Europe. Even more important of course is the possibility of exchanging good, better and at least best practices and establishing new contacts.

But let me line out two major aspects of the Democracy Initiative:

Subject Citizenship Education

Citizenship education this early September has been implemented as a **half to half compulsory part** of the history curriculum **in grade 8**. Referring to the early voting age of 16 this step to strengthen Citizenship Education is very important and supported by a huge range of offers on material and training.

Skills-oriented teaching

The aim is to develop a political maturity, which enables integration into political life without third-party guidance – e.g. the ability to stand up for one's beliefs or to perceive responsibility as a voter. And we have to be aware: this issues still have impact on in-service teacher trainings as well as on the learning environment in schools. And in the field of adults citizenship education we are promoting and supporting projects as for instance "voting at 60".

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I hope that this meetings can contribute to the further efforts on Citizenship Education as well as Human Rights education both in formal and non-formal Education in Europe and our common effort on Networking European Citizenship Education and Human rights education.

I wish you a pleasant stay in Vienna and a successful meeting.

Thank you for paying your attention!