



Far to the East

In September the ECSWE meeting was held for the first time in its history in Russia – Samara city. The Council was invited by the Samara Waldorf school – one of the first Russian Waldorf schools (17 years old). Samara is on the east coast of Volga river (Greenwich + 4 hours).

There were representatives from 13 different Waldorf National Federations. Besides the ECSWE Council working sessions, other meetings with the local government had been set up with the purpose of their making a closer acquaintance with Waldorf education. Questions of the healthy interaction of Waldorf schools with the surrounding community were considered.

Christopher Clouder, ECSWE chairman, met the Minister of Education of the Samara area and they agreed on future joint activities between ECSWE and the Ministry. He also gave a lecture to Waldorf parents on "Education for the Future".

Trevor Mepham, Co-director of Steiner BA programme at the University of Plymouth and Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, lectured on "Modern Education" to students of a state university and met lecturers from the University.

Geseke Lundgren, Co-Chairman of the International Association of Waldorf kindergartens gave two lectures on the "Problems of Children in the Modern World" to parents, kindergarten teachers and administrators of Samara



A splash back for the classroom sink, designed by Samara upper school girls

school. The Centre for Development of Education of Samara organized a visit to two Samara kindergartens for her.

A round table on "Quality in Education" was organized with scientists of the Samara state university, directors of the Samara schools, the mass-media, parents and teachers. For directors and teachers of university an exhibition about the Waldorf school had been organized.

From ECSWE, the following people participated: Trevor Mepham, Christopher Clouder, Nana Goebel – Chairman of the board of Friends of Waldorf Education, Christoph Fucke – Chairman of the board of International Association in Waldorf Pedagogy in Central and the East Europe (IAO), Orjan Retsler – CEO of the Rudolf Steiner University College (Sweden).

Walter Hiller – Software Stiftung, shared his long time experience in this area, as he was previously responsible for public relations in the Bund der Freien Waldorf Schulen of Germany.

To facilitate the informal acquaintance between ECSWE representatives and Waldorf parents, senior pupils and teachers, a boat trip along



ECSWE representatives in Samara

the Volga river was organized. Former Waldorf students and present students assisted the ECSWE Council as translators during all the meetings. It was an opportunity to see the practical results of our work at the school!!

ECSWE's visit enabled us to create a partnership and a deeper relationship with representatives of the local educational world at all levels and showed that Waldorf education could be an answer to many questions arising in contemporary schools. It is necessary to be able to use clear modern language for parents and to be convincing for scientists. In Samara members of ECSWE have shown, in practice, how to build a productive relationship with the community surrounding the school as partners. We hope the new relationship between ECSWE and the Samara educational community will prove even more fruitful in the future.

Sergey Ivashkin
Samara School

WORKING GROUP OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE QUALITY OF CHILDHOOD

In December 2006, ECSWE together with the European Deputy Karin Resetarits and the Alliance for Childhood European Network Group set up a Working group on Quality of Childhood.

The Fourth session was held on the 16th of May: 'The Child: his/her Networks and Neighbourhood, based on the work of



the Dutch psychologist René Dijkstra.

The Fifth session was held on the 20th of September 2007: "The Start of Formal Learning" with John Bennett, the author of the OECD Study "Starting Strong".

Full reports available at ECSWE website <www.ecswe.net>.

Worldwide vacancies

ECSWE is offering a new service to schools worldwide. School vacancies can be sent via email to ECSWE secretariat ecswe@waldorf.net to be uploaded to our website www.ecswe.net.

The vacancies will be online for 3 months unless they are renewed.

New WREN Site

We have moved the new WREN site and incorporated it into www.ecswe.net. This has been done for ease of access and also to facilitate the administrative task. If anybody has knowledge of research papers in any language, that are as yet not included, we would be grateful for any information. We hope it will prove to be a useful service for the movement.

Lisbon conference

"Choice of School versus Social Justice: Dilemma or Mirage?" was the topic of a high level symposium hosted by the Geneva based organisation OIDEL in Lisbon on September 7-8 2007. A full report will be circulated soon and will be published on ECSWE website. ECSWE was represented by Christopher Clouder and Detlef Hardorp.

ELIANT - European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy

After a three-month preparatory phase, the campaign has collected 211,017 signatures from 86 countries since February of this year! www.eliant.eu/lang/en

Teachers need good education too! The European Commission proposes to improve the quality of teacher education in the European Union

The European Commission has set out proposals in a new Communication (COM(2007) 392 final) to improve the quality of teacher training in the EU. High-quality teaching is a prerequisite for high-quality education and training, which are in turn a powerful determinant of Europe's long-term competitiveness and capacity to create more jobs and growth. If adopted by Member States, the proposals agreed today will ensure that the EU has the highly-educated workforce it will need to face up to the pressures of the 21st century.

Ján Figel', the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said "Better teaching and learning are critical for the EU's long-term competitiveness, since a highly educated workforce is a more efficient workforce. I believe we need to ensure that the EU has high-quality teachers if the Member States' education reforms are to be a success. However, as studies show, there are worrying developments across the EU, with most Member States reporting shortfalls in teachers' skills, and difficulties in updating them. In today's Communication, within the scope of its competences, the Commission is urging Member States to address these problems by proposing a set of common guidelines and principles for action".

To prepare their pupils for the EU's increasingly knowledge-based society, teachers are called upon to teach a new range of skills, which

often require new teaching methods. Moreover, teachers are increasingly called upon to teach classes that have pupils from different cultures, mother tongues, ability levels and levels of special needs.

However, many teachers report that they are uneasy about using new technologies in the classroom. Furthermore, analysis by the European Commission shows that current systems for teacher training and education in the Member States are often failing to give teachers the training they need. Indeed, in some Member States there is little systematic coordination between different elements of teacher education, which leads to a lack of coherence and continuity, especially between teachers' initial professional education and their subsequent induction, in-service training and professional development.

Further, the Commission's analysis reveals that investment in continuous training and development of the teaching workforce is low. For example:

- In-service training is compulsory in only 11 Member States;
- Where in-service training exists, training generally amounts to less than 20 hours per year, and is never more than five days per year;
- Only half of the countries in Europe offer new teachers any systematic kind of support (e.g. induction, training, mentoring) in their first years of teaching;

The Communication provides Member States with a number of broad orientations for developing policies and practices. These include:

- ensuring that all teachers have access to the knowledge, attitudes and pedagogic skills that they require to be effective;
- ensuring that provision for teachers' education and professional development is coordinated, coherent, and adequately resourced;
- promoting a culture of reflective practice and research among teachers;
- promoting the status and recognition of the teaching profession; and
- supporting the professionalisation of teaching.

The document is available on request by email from ECSWE.

European Commission Public consultation "Schools for the 21st century"

The European Commission has decided to launch a public consultation to identify those aspects of school education (such as schools and key competences, schools and social inclusion and the role of teachers, among others) on which joint action at European Union level could be effective in supporting Member States in the modernisation of their systems.

If you wish to make a contribution to this consultation please:

- 1 read EC Consultation Document (available on request by email from ECSWE);
- 2 create a MS Word (or compatible) document;
- 3 write in any official language;
- 4 state clearly at the start of your contribution your name, the name of the organisation you represent (if any), and the reason for your interest in the school (e.g. parent, pupil, teacher ...)
- 5 decide which of the questions in the document you wish to respond to;
- 6 set out your opinions in no more than 4 pages of A4 (12 pt);
- 7 send your completed text by e-mail only to the following address:
eac-schools-consult@ec.europa.eu,
no later than 15 December 2007.

European Parliament: news from the Cultural Committee

2008: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

It will turn the spotlight on creativity: focus on the cultural dimension of education, and highlight how education can promote creativity in the broadest sense.

"Rights of the child" Report

The report focuses on the need for concrete projects:

- Help lines
- Measures to protect children from violence
- Support existing networks and organisations that work with children's rights

The right to education is a precondition for the positive development of children.

In the debate other themes were addressed: protection against alcohol and drugs; the role of sport (movement, overweight).

ECSWE
Rue du Thrône 194
B-1040 Brussels
Belgium
Registered in Brussels
ASBL 60732003
www.ecswe.net

Correspondence
ECSWE
Kidbrooke Park
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5JA, UK
Tel. +44 1342 822115
ecswe@waldorf.net

The views expressed are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of ECSWE.

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Efficiency and equity in the European education and training systems.

The EP requested Prof. Marc De-meuse, Institut d'Administration scolaire Université de Mons-Hainaut (Belgium) to give a critical analysis of the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled "Efficiency and Equity in European education and training systems" (COM(2006) 481 final). On the basis of this analysis, the Commission's recommendations are examined and further recommendations for action are made.

Regarding economic growth, pre-primary education has the highest rate of return of the whole life-long learning continuum.

Free access to higher education does not necessarily guarantee equity.

There is a strong need of a culture of evaluation within education and training systems.

Early pre-school education is important especially for disadvantaged children

Social competence must be a part of the education. We must have teachers who are educators. We must care about the educational environment.

There is too little remedial training
The documents are available on request by email from ECSWE <ecswe@waldorf.net>.

Örjan Retsler
ECSWE: Sweden