



ESCWE NEWSLETTER

No. 42 | July 2014

The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education



Meeting in Cluj-Napoca

Alberto Caballero
(with support from Detlef Hardorp)



The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education met in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) on the weekend of May 16th to May 18th. Council members worked together on different topics, continuing the work carried out in the previous meetings.

Moving to Brussels

One of the main concerns of ECSWE is being present at the important meetings, conferences and colloquiums that take place in Brussels with a high frequency, especially at those which are closely related to the fields of work the Council has developed. Until now, some of the country representatives present in the Council took responsibility for most of this advocacy work and reported to the Council afterwards. It has been clear that any group or organization which aims at being represented in the European Parliament needs also to have a close connection with representatives of those groups and a high

knowledge of the inner workings of the relationships among people working in the European Parliament field. After taking into account all these aspects, the Council was determined to take a step towards getting closer to Brussels, and in order to do so it was necessary to move the central office from Forest Row to Rue du Trône, in Brussels. This decision also meant hiring a new secretary for the Council and the key task was finding the right person to take on all the aspects of the work that the Council requires in terms of interests, relationships, skills involved in the job, knowledge of the inner work of the European Parliament and the ability to be a central person in the representatives network. After a thorough search, the Board of the Council found the right person to take on the job, someone who ran the office of an outgoing member of the European Parliament. Not only has he got knowledge of the inner workings that takes place in the Parliament through his work experience, but he is also a former Waldorf Student, son of two Waldorf teachers. The ECSWE Council would like to welcome Georg Jürgens to his new job and wishes him all the best.

Getting even closer to the movements in the educational field in Brussels will also mean opening new windows to the work and connection of the countries present in the Council.

A new member of the Council

Croatia has become a full member of the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education. We are very pleased to welcome this new member country to ECSWE. (see separate article)

Information on the European Portfolio Certificate

The European Portfolio Certificate project Coordinator Margareta Van Raemdonck explained to the members the situation of the project at its current stage of implementation. As of now, there have been slow movements in the new dissemination phase of the project, but the group has released two documents to make the Portfolio Certificate more accessible to schools who want to participate. The first document is a revision of the letter of agreement by which the school agrees to comply with the standards set in the project. Margareta put great emphasis on the second document, a self assessment tool, which refers to the standards set in order to ensure the quality and good practice in the assessment of the projects within the schools which give out Portfolio Certificates. It is highly important that each national federation checks that the translations made of the official Guidelines are correct. If there are several schools working with the Portfolio within one country, it will be important in the future to directly involve the national federation in the coordination.

Information on the Diploma Project

A second important project which is under development and supported by ECSWE is the Diploma Project. This Diploma would be granted after successfully completing upper school studies as established by the Waldorf curriculum and at a level that allows access to higher education. This type of Diploma already exists in Flanders, Norway, Sweden and New Zealand, and Waldorf graduates in those countries are recognized as having acquired all the knowledge, skills and competences required by their legal authorities to access university studies. Furthermore, since these countries are signatory countries of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, students who receive the certificate are eligible to apply for University entrance in any signatory country without having to go through national exams, if they have sufficient command of the language of that country. Students from the aforementioned countries have been admitted to universities in countries like Germany. Recently, this has included those who attained the new New Zealand Steiner School Certificate (SSC), which was first awarded at university access level less than two years ago. The diplomas awarded in Flanders, Norway and Sweden are owned by the State and can only be awarded to students fluent in Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish respectively. The SSC is an official fully state accredited qualification in New Zealand that is owned by the New Zealand Federation of Steiner Schools; it can also be awarded in other languages in other countries. Two schools in England are already working with the SSC at level 1 and more schools will begin in England in the autumn. The coordinator of the ECSWE support group, Detlef Hardorp, is working together with Karen Brice-Geard of the New Zealand Steiner Schools Federation and is also developing a plan of action for the European schools to work on further developing the learning outcomes for the Certificate, delivery guidance, assessment tools, continuing professional development, legal matters... It is possible to pilot the Certificate in more countries (for example Germany). However, it is still necessary to translate all the material and set up structures to mentor teachers. Financially, the project has been supported by the "Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen", which the Council would like to thank for their help.

School readiness and school entrance age

Another focus of the Council meetings are discussion groups which work on pedagogical issues, trying to find a common view on important topics concerning child development and well being in different stages of their life. In this meeting the central points were school readiness and school entrance age. It was a really enlivening experience listening to other representatives speak about how legal aspects work

in their countries and what possibilities they find when it is agreed by teachers and parents that a child is still not ready for school entrance. Practices and legal aspects are quite different among countries, but whenever it is possible to delay school entrance for children who would benefit from one more year in kindergarten, it is up to parents to decide whether they want their children to stay in kindergarten or go on into primary education. On many occasions parents decide to move their child into primary school, and the question arose where the pressure to go into primary school comes from. This question also raised the concern on transitions, developmental learning, the idea of early education as a part of educational life and the therapeutic aspects of Waldorf pedagogy. It was a common view that we still have to work more on this field in order to achieve a written outcome that could be of use to schools and parents.

20 Years of “WOW-day”

This year the WOW-day celebrates its 20th anniversary; there is going to be a one week celebration in which all schools are encouraged to look for creative and participative ways of raising money for this worldwide initiative launched by the “Freunde der Erziehungskunst”. This festivity, which takes place every year in September - coinciding with the inauguration of the first Waldorf School - seeks to raise money to help developing initiatives in countries with lesser economical possibilities. As always, it is important that there are individual coordinators in each country to trigger participation among schools. All material has been sent to schools and is also available at www.freunde-waldorf.de.

ECSWE – change of the office

There is a time in every organization when changes are necessary. ECSWE has been going through such a period since 2013. The final act will be the change of the office location.



After many years of having two offices (one in Great Britain and one in Brussels), ECSWE will now focus all its energy onto the European capital of Brussels and the office there. The office in Great Britain will be closed by July 31st. We thank Chiara Carones and Patrice Sullivan who have been working at the office in Great Britain for their efficient and supportive work for ECSWE. Chiara has been working for ECSWE for 10 years and has played an important part in the growth of ECSWE. Patrice has been working for ECSWE for 5 years and beyond her administrative task put a lot of energy as editor into the publishing of the QoC books.

From August 1st the office in Brussels:

ECSWE
Rue du Trône 194
1050 Brussels
Belgium

will be permanently occupied. A young man will take on the task.

Here his presentation:

GEORG JÜRGENS

born June 10th, 1984 in Herdecke, Germany, I grew up in a Waldorf environment. My parents both studied eurythmy and my father's job as eurythmy teacher brought our family to Fulda and later to Ulm, where I attended the Waldorf kindergarten and the local Waldorf school. After several years in Ulm, we had to move again. My father, who had decided to become a curative eurythmist, found a new job at the Steiner School in Gröbenzell, a little town close to Munich, and the family followed him in 1992.



While moving again was not easy, I was lucky to attend a young Steiner school with dedicated teachers and parents. I still have fond memories of my school years, which offered a form of education addressing not only the mind but also "heart and hands". This approach contributed to forming an open-minded and liberal personality and has provided me with inspiration ever since. Where else does school offer such a variety of practical and artistic activities?

After leaving school in 2004, I headed north. Young male Germans were still obliged to serve in the military and exemptions would only be made for conscientious objectors, who had to perform a compulsory community service instead. This gave me the opportunity to serve in an anthroposophical home for mentally handicapped people in Hamburg. Once more, I was impressed by the sense of community and the positive atmosphere, which I experienced among my colleagues and the residents of the house.

Working in the home offered an interesting perspective, but after my mandatory service my strong desire to study Political Science prevailed. Regensburg, in the South of Germany, became my new home.

While studying Political Science I learned Czech and spent five months in Prague. After my period abroad, I worked at the Institute of Political Science as an academic assistant. Looking for new opportunities, I finally arrived in the office of MEP Gerald Häfner, a former Waldorf teacher and member of the German Greens. In his office, where I was

first a trainee, and later the head of office, I gained a deep insight into the work of the European Parliament and the political life in Brussels.



At the end of 2013, I learned that the European Council of Steiner Waldorf Education intended to open a permanent representation in Brussels and I instantly knew that this was the new challenge, I was looking for. Waldorf education has changed my life and, looking back, there is nothing in my life that has shaped me more or that I am more grateful for. I see this position as my opportunity to give back the fulfilment, life opportunities and wonderful experiences that I myself had the chance to encounter.

I have already started to meet future colleagues and partners in Brussels and I am confident that my experience from inside the European Parliament and my background as a Steiner pupil will ensure that I can represent Waldorf education well.

Georg Jürgens

Croatia

Hrvatska (means “Croatia” in Croatian) is the latest new member of European Union. It has 4 million inhabitants with four larger cities: its capital Zagreb with over 1 million inhabitants; Split and Rijeka as two Mediterranean ports, and Osijek, in the north-east plane area.

Our country has many lovely rivers, abundance of drinking water, clear and beautiful Adriatic Sea, diverse relief and climates, cultural and historic heritage – a small country with abundance of potentials and diversity.

Croatia became an independent state after the dissolution of Yugoslavia at the beginning of 90ties in the last century. Its borders on the East meet very different cultures and religions than those on the West. As a transitional and a post-war state, it has slower dynamics of social and economic development.

Waldorf Education was first introduced in Croatia in 1982 by pedagogues Nada and Mladen Maljković who have run a Waldorf kindergarten in Zagreb for 7 years. The late 80-ties saw the inauguration of the first Waldorf Seminars in Croatia and Slovenia, and in the 90ties “Waldorf Societies” in Zagreb and Split were founded.

More and more Waldorf lectures and workshops were given in bigger cities. Individuals went abroad attending short or longer courses. In 1993 a Waldorf School in Zagreb and the Waldorf Society in Rijeka were founded. New three-years-seminars for Waldorf pedagogues in Zagreb and in Rijeka were organized and led by Tobias Richter, Lothar Steinmann and Matthes Riepe. Thanks to Bozidar Bonacic, pedagogue and psychotherapist, and the Pedagogical Academy from Zeist, Split also opened its Waldorf Seminar for kindergarten teachers, led by Mario Hoffhuis in 1994.

The 90ties and the beginning of the third millennium was the period of the most rapid development of the Waldorf movement in Croatia: Waldorf kindergartens or Waldorf groups in state kindergartens being established in Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Dubrovnik. This happened with big enthusiastic help and support of Waldorf foundations, schools, kindergartens and individuals from Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. In 2000 a Waldorf School in Rijeka was founded.

Few years later a new Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar in Zagreb led by dr. Slavica Bašić and Tobias Richter was organized in the frame of the Institute for Waldorf Pedagogy (IWP) which is active to this day. In 2009 IWP had a new leadership and a Program “School for Tomorrow” whose pedagogical leader is David Brierley, Norway. IWP offers education to students not only from Croatia, but also from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia. Its students bring new impulses to their home towns - a Waldorf kindergarten in Belgrade, Serbia, was established in 2013 while a whole day care in Sarajevo, B&H, is opened within the already existing Waldorf kindergarten “Jabuka” (Apple).

At present, the Waldorf Education Movement in Croatia covers:

- 2 Waldorf Schools (1-8 grades), in Zagreb (87 pupils) and Rijeka (50 pupils)
- Waldorf kindergartens: one in Rijeka (60 children), three in Split (100), one in Samobor (30), state kindergarten with Waldorf group in Zagreb (20 children), more than 3 in Split, one in Rijeka (elements of Waldorf programme, 50 children) and one in Dubrovnik
- IWP -Teacher Training in Zagreb , 20 kindergarten teachers, 20 teachers
- 5 Waldorf Societies (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Varaždin)
- Initiatives in Osijek and Čakovec

Almost at the same time of Croatia entering into EU, the Association of Waldorf Institutions and Initiatives of Republic of Croatia (SWI) began to exist as a national association of Waldorf Schools, kindergartens, various Waldorf societies and individuals, with short name in English: Waldorf Alliance Croatia.

Its aims are:

- Promotion of Waldorf Education in Croatia
- Cooperation with umbrella institutions for Waldorf Education worldwide and cooperation with other institutions on well-being of children and adults
- Preservation of identity, image and reputation of the Waldorf Education in Croatia
- Encouraging dialogue and cooperation among all members of the Alliance, and the institutions and organizations that promote Waldorf Education in Croatia.

Financing of Waldorf kindergartens in Croatia is responsibility of local government and differs from city to city in criteria and amount. The amount per child is less than for state kindergartens but much more than for the children in Waldorf elementary schools in Croatia which is around 10% of the amount given to state schools. Croatian educational law doesn't know pedagogical pluralism yet. In these circumstances Waldorf schools in Croatia and their friends find two goals: more than before to support well-being of the children and society generally, and to create cultural, educational, and economic projects assuring self-sustainment of the schools.

Brief report on ECSWE / INSWAP meeting, January 2014

Mariam Francq

A recent meeting between our two organisations took place in The Hague where the board of ECSWE and two representatives from INSWAP met to discuss the history and the future of their cooperation and friendship.

INSWAP found out on this occasion that it had taken ECSWE 10 years to gain a legal status and gradually achieve its present undeniable position and efficiency in the European SW landscape.

This fact was certainly an encouragement to the coordinating group of INSWAP who is becoming more and more conscious of the eventual necessity to move towards the creation of a legal entity with a board composed of member states with a National Parents Association. So far, and probably for some time to come, not all of the participating countries have a NPA and yet they are welcome to attend and bring many worthwhile ideas and projects to discuss and share. We do realise however, that in order to become more and more credible on the international scene, all member countries will be encouraged to form NPA's and therefore be officially represented. Individual participants who wish to be active out of pure personal interest and motivation, will definitely not be excluded, but logically, would not be in a position to be considered as an official delegation representing their country.

INSWAP's future is still wide open, for our objectives and our strategies have yet to be defined and refined in order to pinpoint our priorities which are, of course, directed towards the support and the promotion of SW schools for as many children worldwide as possible. In order to achieve our goals, we definitely need as many parents worldwide as possible... So may more and more SW parents feel implicated and come and join us!

European Commission and Global Partnership for Education Pledging Conference

Chiara Carones

The Global Partnership for Education and the European Commission co-hosted on June 26 the Second Replenishment Pledging Conference of the Global Partnership for Education, a multilateral body committed to ensuring every child has access to a quality, basic education.

It brought together more than 500 key players in education to show their commitment to education by making solid pledges at the conference.

Why

To ensure that the right of all children to a basic education is fulfilled! The benefits of education to health, economic development and stability are clear, yet aid funding for education has fallen by an average of five percent each year since 2010.

Still, 57 million children do not go to school and more than half of them are girls. A further 250 million children drop out of school or are unable to perform basic literacy and numeracy tasks by the time they reach grade four.

Girls are more likely than boys to drop out, and girls from poor families in rural areas are least likely to have access to education.

Joint letter to European Council on children's rights in future EU Home Affairs strategic guidelines

ECSWE, as a European stakeholder for education and training, was signatory of PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants) joint letter to the European Council calling for children's rights to be strengthened in future EU Home Affairs policy.

As the European Union is developing its strategic guidelines on the future of Justice and Home Affairs policies, 38 leading organisations in the fields of human rights, health, education and social inclusion, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, OHCHR and the European Network for Ombudspersons, are calling on the European Council to use the opportunity to advance on its achievements and commitments to every child, including migrant children in vulnerable situations, by making children's rights a strategic and actionable priority for Home Affairs policy in the coming years.

Unfortunately, the conclusions of the European Summit were quite disappointing and there was no mention of child rights protection!



EUROPEAN
COUNCIL FOR
STEINER WALDORF
EDUCATION

ECSWE

Rue du Trône 194
1050 Brussels
Belgium

ecswe@waldorf.net
www.ecswe.org

Registered in Brussels.
AISBL 898.707.869

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

ECSWE Newsletter is produced by Chiara Carones.
Design by Žiga Vuk - www.zzigc.net