



ECSWE NEWSLETTER

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The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

Contents

Invitation to the Symposium “Pluralism in Assessment”

15th January 2016, University of Luxembourg

TTIP-Update

ECSWE should continue its efforts at the national level

Report from the Lifelong Learning Week

30th November 2015 – 4th December 2015

Report from the Council Meeting

2nd– 4th October 2015, Bratislava, Slovakia

Domestic report

Slovenia



Editorial



Dear Friends of the European Council for
Steiner Waldorf Education,

Towards the end of the year, we would like to share some news with
you:

- We warmly invite you to our Symposium on “Pluralism in Assessment” on 15th January 2016 in Luxembourg.
- If you are interested in our work on TTIP, you may read, why we should now focus our efforts at the national level.
- This year, ECSWE played an active role during the Lifelong Learning Week in the European Parliament

- Dominik Dluhoš and Julia Kolinichenko report on our Council meeting in Bratislava 2nd – 4th October 2015
- Iztok Kordiš reports on the situation of the Slovenian Waldorf movement

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year

Georg Jürgens

Executive & Administrative Officer

European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

Symposium on Pluralism in Assessment

15th January 2016, Luxembourg



The results of the PISA studies contributed to the growing reliance of governments on standardised tests. This trend coincides with growing levels of stress in the classroom and less time for creative and self-organised work.

What effects do standardised tests have on the quality of teaching and the well-being of students and teachers? Can we find assessment methods that support students' learning outcomes and their well-being holistically?

If you are interested in finding answers to these questions, we would like to invite you to our [Symposium Pluralism in Assessment - Exploring Alternatives to Standardised Testing](#) on 15 January 2016 in Luxembourg.

Friday, 15 January 2016, 9.00 – 16.00
University of Luxembourg
Campus Limpertsberg
162a, avenue de la Faiënerie,
L-1511 Luxembourg



Registration and
further
information:
www.ecswe.net



Registrations are open. Tickets are available from 0 € excluding catering and from 15 € including catering.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Luxembourg.

TTIP Update

ECSWE should continue its efforts at the national level



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As reported in earlier issues of our newsletter (see [here](#) and [here](#)), ECSWE, The [European Forum for Freedom in Education \(effe\)](#) and the [Lifelong Learning Platform \(LLL\)](#) have been actively lobbying the European Parliament for a carve-out of non-profit educational services from the scope of TTIP. This resulted in the European Parliament calling the European Commission

*“to ensure with a general clause the right of EU Member States to adopt or maintain any measure with regard to the provision of all educational and cultural services **which work on a non-profit basis and/or receive public funding to any degree** or state support in any form, and to ensure that privately funded foreign*

providers meet the same quality and accreditation requirements as domestic providers”.

What remained open is how the European Commission would react to this proposal and if further lobby activities might be necessary. This had now become clear:



On 27 October, the Lifelong Learning Platform sent a [small delegation](#) to meet with EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström’s Advisor, Jolana Mungengová. Georg Jürgens was a member of this delegation and represented

both ECSWE and effe. During the meeting, Jolana Mungengová made clear that the European Commission is committed to “*exclude education services which receive public funding or State support in any form*” from the scope of TTIP, while the decision to exclude other forms of education rests on Member States. The Member States are therefore responsible for deciding what is public and private by means of funding and state support and may additionally declare national reservations on market access for privately funded services. According to the Commission, a general and EU-wide exclusion of non-profit education services is not possible for legal and political reasons.

It therefore depends on the public funding or state support if a service will be treated like a public service. **If a Member state wishes to exclude education services which are privately funded, national reservations must be declared in the agreement.** A national reservation on privately funded education services as such does not prevent foreign educational services from

operating in a country. It simply means that they are subject to the national rules and the other existing international agreements. Consequently, national reservations simply preserve the possibility of national regulation in any given sector.

Thanks to public pressure, the Commission finally published its [Services and Investment offer](#) and we may now critically evaluate both the EU-wide and national reservations. Such reservations may concern the following four modes of service supply:

- 1) the cross-border supply of education services (e.g. offering e-learning services across borders),
- 2) the consumption of education services abroad,
- 3) the commercial presence of foreign education services in the country, (e.g. branches of for-profit primary and secondary education services), and
- 4) the presence of natural persons (e.g. foreign teachers working abroad).

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As can be seen on pages 151-153 of the [Services and Investment offer](#), the following EU Member States have so far declared national reservations on market access for privately funded primary and/or secondary educational services: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia. These reservations differ in both scope and nature.

We may therefore conclude that after celebrating an initial success in the European Parliament, following up on these efforts with the European Commission has confronted us with a rather complex situation that may require individual and tailored lobby efforts at the national level.

The individual reaction should take into account

- 1) the legal status of the schools in our member countries (public/private/third sector),
- 2) their funding (public/mixed/private),
- 3) the question of whether a country has already declared national reservations for privately funded primary and secondary education services and
- 4) if these reservations are protecting the interests of our schools or not.

Some countries do not offer public funding to independent schools, and despite of the official stance of the European Commission, uncertainty remains as to how fail-safe the EU-wide carve-out of publicly funded education services really is. Missing national reservations might therefore result in the “commercial presence” of foreign for-profit providers, which could eventually become an unwelcome competition for domestic schools. This may be the reason why several countries demanded national reservations in this field.

We should also be aware of the implications in the field of assessment: On the one hand, the liberalised cross border supply of educational services has potential with regards to offering foreign national qualifications in another country (clearly interesting for us, as the case of the New Zealand [Steiner School Certificate](#)). On the other hand, critical NGO’s like the [Corporate Europe Observatory](#) see the risk that US-based education companies want to use TTIP for pushing questionable products like high-school admission tests into the European market.

Each country therefore has to carefully evaluate the risks and the potential of the current setting and decide if lobbying for

national reservations makes sense in the given political context.

ECSWE will follow up on the meeting with the Commission by addressing detailed written questions to Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. Depending on the answers to these questions, we may decide on further actions at the European level. Furthermore, ECSWE will prepare a detailed briefing, giving recommendations to its members as to how to proceed nationally.

Georg Jürgens

Executive & Administrative Officer
European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

Report from the Lifelong Learning Week European Parliament, December 2015



ECSWE actively participated in the Lifelong Learning Week 31st November – 4th December 2015, which was organised in European Parliament upon invitation of the Lifelong Learning Platform.

Apart from the launch of the new **Manifesto** [Building the future of learning in Europe](#), this year's key topics were

- [Debate: Education in Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and Citizenship](#)
- [Guidance and counselling in taking validation to the next level](#)
- [Expert debate: Media literacy: XXI Century challenge](#)

From Tuesday 1st December until Friday 4th December 2015, ECSWE provided an info-table at the Civil Society Meeting Space on the 5th floor of the European Parliament in Brussels to inform on ECSWE's activities



Visitors were provided with information on [Waldorf education](#), received [invitations](#) to our upcoming *Symposium on Pluralism in Assessment* on 15th January 2016 in Luxembourg and were offered a personal copy of the Brochure [Struwwelpeter 2.0](#) in English or German

During the [Expert debate on Media Literacy, XXI Century Challenge](#) on 3rd December 2015, chaired by MEP Carlos Zorrinho from Portugal, ECSWE had the opportunity to

- present the [Struwwelpeter 2.0](#) booklet on *Media competency and Waldorf education*
- explain why "*later media competency is rooted in earlier media abstinence*";
- explain what we consider to be a holistic and age-appropriate media curriculum;
- clarify why that implies not using electronic media in classrooms before the age of 12; and finally
- to raise awareness that the recent [Council conclusions on the role of early childhood education and primary education in fostering creativity, innovation and digital competence](#) might endanger the freedom of Steiner Waldorf schools to follow their own media curriculum.

The main elements of the [7 minutes presentation](#) included:

- a brief introduction of the developmental approach of Steiner Waldorf Education as described by Henning Kullack-Ublick on pages 6-9 of the *Struwwelpeter 2.0* booklet
- the distinction of indirect and direct media education as developed and described by Edwin Hübner on pages 10-13 of the booklet
- and the implications of this distinction for the media curriculum as outlined on pages 14-17 of the booklet.



Our presentation followed a presentation by Prof. Jacqueline A Marsh from the [DigiLitEY](#)-project which calls for an early instruction of children in the use of electronic media. This stark contrast provoked many interested questions from participants sympathising with one or the other approach.

Although some critical voices were heard, the overall reaction was either neutral or positive. Our call for freedom to follow our own curriculum was widely supported and even approved by Prof. Jacqueline A Marsh.

After the Expert debate, the Lifelong Learning Platform invited its members to the **first session of the new working group on Digital Learning**. The following key priorities have so far been identified for the working group.

- Presentation and exchange of best practice and initiatives in the area of digital learning/digital literacy and learning and teaching technology;
- Generating (support for) joint advocacy in the above mentioned areas;
- Develop policy recommendations in the above-mentioned areas.

Participants are now asked to reflect on what they could contribute to such a working group.

Georg Jürgens

Executive & Administrative Officer

European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education

ECSWE Council meeting

Bratislava, 2nd – 4th October 2015



This time we met in the last warm and sunny days of autumn in a picturesque place on the outskirts of the capital of Slovakia. We were welcomed in the cozy yard and the building of the private primary Waldorf School in Bratislava.

On Friday morning the conference “Challenge of Creativity” was held in collaboration with ECSWE and APSWS (Association of Friends of Free Waldorf Schools of Slovakia). It started with anecdotes from the first graduate of the school and his father, followed by a walk through the school building. After the break we listened to the speeches of Peter Neurath and Emil Pales, about the importance of integrated teaching and learning in schools in Slovakia in the 19th and 20th century. Mr. Burjan

spoke about leaving the space for creativity in schools.

The ECSWE Council meeting on Friday evening started with a presentation of the Bratislava school, the Slovakian Waldorf movement and the teacher training course.

The movement in Slovakia started 23 years ago with the support of some teachers from the Netherlands and in 2001 the first school with 20 pupils opened. For some time the school worked as an experiment, which finished in 2013 with positive reviews. Nowadays there is a big demand for enrollment but the school can take in only one third of all applications to class



one. The opening of a high school is not allowed for the time being, but the present reform in education gives hopes to change the situation. Two schools, two kindergartens and about 35 individual members are united in the Association. One new school in Bratislava is starting its way towards self-management now. There is a 3-year Waldorf teacher training course in Bratislava, run in cooperation with the University of Krems in Austria. Many people are interested in the training, but unfortunately it's still difficult to find teachers for the school. This year the first teachers, who already work at the Bratislava school, will probably finish their studies.

This presentation was followed by the activity reports of our guests:

- “Friends of Waldorf Education”, (WOW-day action, the essential Characteristics of Waldorf/Steiner Education – a working document).
- “Software AG Stiftung”, (supported the Waldorf movement for 15 years very intensively, investing millions of Euro).

Saturday started with an artistic activity, eurythmy, followed by a review of the previous Council meeting in Yerevan: The Armenian representative reported that the ‘Aregnazan’ Steiner school of Yerevan was the only school in the country that participated in honoring the memory of victims of genocide and asked the questions of how to overcome and go beyond this national trauma. There were two talk-shows with ECSWE members and guests on TV which had a big resonance at the state level. The number of applications to the school doubled, so they are looking for a second building to open a branch-school.

Steiner School Certificate (SSC): The guests from New Zealand (Karen Brice-Geard and Glen Saunders) presented the history of the SSC, its implications for quality assurance in the upper schools in New Zealand and its extension to some European countries. At present some schools in the UK, Germany and Austria are offering the SSC. A large amount of time was given to discussion and questions. The Diploma group within ECSWE continues to work on it.

ERASMUS+ Project “Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills” (ACTS): The project leader (UK) and the partner countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway) presented the project. The potential for cooperation with the Diploma group and the SSC should be explored.

The task of the working groups this time was to look deeper into the working paper “Essential Characteristics of Waldorf/Steiner Education” issued by the International Forum.

On Sunday morning the ECSWE survey on school readiness was presented, further analysis is needed.

The European Portfolio Certificate (EPC): This year a graduate from Ljubljana was admitted to Belgrade University in Serbia without exams, just with the EPC. Participation in the project is open to all schools. Further information can be found on www.epc-group.org . New folders were printed; they are in the ECSWE office ready for distribution info@ecswe.net

A domestic report from Slovenia was presented; see on the ECSWE website www.ecswe.net

Dominik Dluhoš

Asociácia priateľov slobodných waldorfských škôl, Slovakia
Representative to ECSWE

Julia Kolinichenko

Association of Waldorf Initiatives in Ukraine
Representative to ECSWE

Domestic report

Slovenia



Waldorf education in Slovenia has now a tradition of 24 years and is very well accepted in society, has a good reputation, good working conditions and constant good cooperation with other pedagogical institutions, the education ministry and local communities. At present there are 14 kindergartens, 4 primary schools and 1 upper school with all together 1247 pupils. Most of the schools and kindergartens are members of the national Association. The interest for Waldorf education is constantly growing, especially in Ljubljana and Žalec, a small city about 70 km from the capital. In the Ljubljana school there are 610 pupils at all levels (kindergarten, primary school, upper school); alongside this there is also a music school with 177 pupils.

Our curriculum is state recognized. Waldorf schools are non-profit private schools which are state supported from 85% to 100% according to national standards, which means 65% to 85% real costs. The rest is covered by parents and donations. The buildings for some schools are assured by the local community, some are rented. The state has no representative in the schools' boards. By the decision of the constitutional court in spring 2015, all the primary schools (state or private) should be financed equally, however the corresponding legislation is still in the making.

The main task of the Association for the Development of Waldorf Schools and Kindergartens of Slovenia is to organise teacher and kindergarten training courses. Both courses are 3-year part-time weekend courses with all together 85 students. The lecturers come from Slovenia and many other European countries (Norway, Denmark, England, Holland, Austria and Germany). The training courses are vital for providing enough educated school and kindergarten teachers for the growing needs for more and more places in Waldorf schools and kindergartens. The teacher and kindergarten training course is connected with the teacher training course in Zagreb, Croatia. This means some joint working weekends, help with lecturers and exchange of experiences.

Another important task of the Association is quality care, which includes mentoring young schools and kindergartens and professional cooperation. This work is strengthening the need of kindergartens to work together. At the moment the Association is in the process of changes so that it will be able to incorporate broader demands and tasks than before.

As a part of our public activities, an international pedagogical conference titled Challenges of Modern Education was organized in

April and held in Ljubljana's major congress centre with around 300 participants. Part of these activities is also the exhibition Living line, which was for the first time shown in September 2014 in the town hall of Ljubljana. This year the exhibition travelled to Osijek, Zagreb (both Croatia) and to Sarajevo (Bosnia and Hercegovina), in January 2016 it will continue its tour to Luxemburg.

Ljubljana, December 2015

Iztok Kordiš

Zavod za razvoj waldorfskih šol in vrtcev, Slovenia

Vice-President, ECSWE



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*The views expressed are those of the writers
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