



With this news, ECSWE team wish you all a joyful Christmas and Happy New Year

1/ Croatia: C. Clouder at the Waldorf School in Rijeka Prospective meeting with the Minister of Education

On the 19th and 20th of October 2005, Christopher Clouder was invited by the Waldorf School in Rijeka to meet representatives of: teachers, parents, the City and County council authorities.

The aim of the visit was to explore together possibilities to improve Waldorf status/position in the Croatian school system and to facilitate state financial support.

The centralised educational system in Croatia prevents local governments from investing more of their state budget in alternative and private schools. Mr Clouder was asked by the City and County Council representatives respectively to have a meeting with the Croatian Minister of Education in order to raise awareness about Waldorf Education and push for a change of the national law towards more freedom of local Governments to support alternative schools. It is hoped that a meeting with the Minister of Education be organised soon and they will write to him in support of the request.

The City Council will explore the possibility of paying a larger regular amount to the Rijeka school to cover its bills. The County Council that has given very limited financial support to the school in the past, is willing to continue supporting the school and agreed to send a report about the support given to the school to the Minister of Education.

2/ “Salon de l’education in Paris”: report from Werner Govaerts

The “salon de l’education in Paris” is a big event with 2000 stands. During the 4 days event they received more than 500.000 visitors.

The ECSWE presence was part of the EUCIS-LLL network stand (European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning) and of the “La ligue de l’enseignement”.

The debate about European policy concerning lifelong learning was focused on the objectives of the European Commission:

- all reforms have to proceed in efficiency and equity
- the early drop out has to be fought
- social exclusion and unemployment has to be tackled

After the official dinner there was a meeting with the European Commissioner for Education, Jan Figel, to present all the members of EUCIS-LLL. ECSWE was presented as well. The EUCIS-LLL president, Jean-Marc Roirant, also general secretary of the French Ligue de l’enseignement, was very interested and impressed by the ECSWE presence at the meeting.

3/ Report on discussions with EFFE (European Forum For Freedom in Education) on 3rd - 4th October 2005.

EFFE is a network of 3000 associated member organisations and 700 associated persons. Its mission is pluralism and freedom in Education.

After mutual introductions, cooperation at a number of levels was discussed.

1. Formal cooperation: ECSWE has its office in the Steiner Foundation's building in Brussels. Its situation is ideal for work with European institutions. There was discussion on how the room available could be shared without losing a necessary degree of independence. These considerations are of a technical and financial kind: having one's own telephone, name plate etc.

2. Working together at certain levels was also discussed. The advantages are obvious. EFFE can benefit from ECSWE's years of experience in Brussels, while for ESCWE it would be an advantage, on the basis of a EFFE permanent presence in Brussels, to be more fully informed about the educational politics and the current mood there.

As far as our common aims are concerned, actions and tactics could be adjusted and important political issues could in future be better and more productively examined from more points of view. So, for example, until the end of the year opinions on the matter of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in the Commission could be discussed both by the ECSWE and EFFE.

The aim of the EQF is to establish Europe-wide 8 levels of Qualifications in education and vocational training.

4/ "Networking European Citizenship Education" conference

2005 was the "European Year of Citizenship through Education". At the end of the year, the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture and the European Educational Network for Democracy and Human Rights (DARE) looked back on "National Experiences - European Challenges" in a public conference in Berlin December 2 -4 under the heading of "Networking European Citizenship Education". Detlef Hardorp of the ECSWE took part in the conference and networked with members of NGOs as well as with members of the European Commission that were present. As always, the most valuable exchanges take place in the breaks, when human beings just happen to meet - and find that they have quite a lot to say to one another. At the banquet in the wake of Frank O. Gehry's extraordinary fishlike architectural sculpture off the Pariser Platz, Detlef Hardorp found himself seated next to a journalist from Prague who, in the course of an intense conversation, cited Steiner's concept of life cycles before he knew from what organisation his neighbour came. The dinner neighbour on the other side was delighted to meet someone working for Steiner Waldorf Education: In her native country of Sweden she had come to acquire the highest respect and regard for an education that warmly looks to more in the human being than what meets the eye. And a member of the European Commission was quite enthused to hear about the projects that the European Steiner Waldorf educational movement is embarking upon regarding the development of an individualised competence based European qualification. In the end, politics is made not only by parties and governments, but also quickened by citizens who share common ideals.

5/ ECSWE leaflets

Dear members, new ECSWE leaflets have been printed and are available for anybody who would like to receive them. Donations for the printing and postage would be most helpful.

6/ ECSWE Council meetings

20-22nd January 2006 – Amsterdam

19-21st May 2006 – Avrona ,Switzerland.

15-17th September 2006 – Avignon

Proposed:

19-21st January 2007

Other dates of interest:

Baltic ECSWE meeting, 10-12th February 2006 – Tartu.

INTERTEC, 3-6th May 2006 – Järna.

“On the Edge” conference, 27- 29th June – Lillehammer.