

■ N E C E ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

n e w s l e t t e r

News Information Conferences
Reflections Introducing Projects

01/13

Euro-Med Cooperations: Face to Face, Hand in Hand
Announcement: NECE Conference 2013
Introducing: Europe and Me
Good Practice: Hello Europe
Call for..., Political News, Information, Events



EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

The dynamics of the European Union are changing fast. Take a look at the latest results of opinion surveys conducted by the renowned Pew Research Centre. And consider the gloomy conclusion of the report: 'The European Union is the new sick man of Europe. The effort over the past half century to create a more united Europe is now the principal casualty of the euro crisis. The European project now stands in disrepute across much of Europe.'

We believe citizenship educators are facing at least two major challenges resulting from this state of the European Union. **Firstly**, Europe's ongoing economic crisis has engendered a crisis of confidence in the European project. Fewer and fewer citizens are prepared to transfer power and competences to 'Europe'. The democratic deficit of the European Union has now become more and more visible and contributes to the backlash in support for the EU. **Secondly**, the economic crisis is dividing Europe and may ultimately lead to the breakup of the EU. Centrifugal forces are pulling Europe apart, separating the French from the Germans and the Germans from everyone else. Southern nations such as Spain, Italy and Greece are becoming ever more estranged as evidenced by their frustration with Brussels, Berlin and the perceived unfairness of the economic system.

For decades citizenship education has defended the European project and its historical significance without raising any doubts. Controversies about the desirability of further European integration, the lack of transparency, the problems of the decision-making process and other issues were (by and large) carefully avoided. NECE and its partners believe it is time to deal with these issues more aggressively. The focus of this year's NECE conference (in short 'NECE 2013') in **The Hague (November 14-16, 2013)** will be the problems of democracy and citizen participation in the EU.

We invite you to discuss with us the future of the European Union as the frustration and disillusionment of citizens is growing and what we can contribute to democratize the EU? **For further information see the 'Announcement' section of the Newsletter below.**

And 'innovation' and 'relaunch' aren't just catchwords for what's going on in the EU. We have also decided to revamp this Newsletter, and as a first step we've added a new section in this issue entitled EU-RO-MED Cooperations. Further readjustments are on the way. We ask you to take a few moments to fill out the attached questionnaire and send it back to us latest by May 31, 2013 – so we can start thinking about the changes our readers would like to see in the next issue!

Happy reading and a wonderful summer! Stay in touch!



Petra Grüne & Christoph Müller-Hofstede
Federal Agency for Civic Education

Content:

Euro-Med Cooperations

Face-to-face, hand-in-hand

by Canan Kalac, Abdelghani Bakhach,
Karen Cojocar and Ilhame Ouhammou _____ p.2

Announcement

NECE Conference 2013 _____ p.3

Introducing

Europe & Me

by: Olimpia Parje and Philip Wallmeier _____ p.4

Good Practice

Hello Europe

by: Senne Dehandschutter _____ p.6

Political News

_____ p.7

Information:

Call for..., Events, Publications _____ p.7

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NECE Correspondents

EURO-MED COOPERATIONS

This section offers interested citizenship education stakeholders the opportunity to present Euro-Med cooperation projects. These could be projects inspired by the conference in Córdoba, like the first example, but also forthcoming citizenship education Euro-Med cooperations. The new section also offers the chance to publish requests and calls when searching for cooperation partners, as well as a forum for announcing upcoming conferences and events in the field of citizenship education in the Arab world. Please send your proposals to: nece@lab-concepts.de

Face-to-face, hand-in-hand

Face-to-face, hand-in-hand: New Cooperation between German and Moroccan Citizenship Educators

By Canan Kalac, Abdelghani Bakhach, Karen Cojocarú and Illhame Ouhammou

Over the course of time, cultures become more diverse and sophisticated, leading to advances in society. Globalisation means cultures mingle more often than they once did. Now more than ever, intercultural understanding has become a topic of the utmost global importance. A recent exciting meeting of cultures has led to the development of a project to promote this understanding. It arose from a collaboration set up at the NECE (Networking European Citizenship Education) conference, held in Cordoba in 2012, between the Netzwerk Bildung und Religion e.V. from Germany and Morocco's Youth Association for Culture and Development. Intended as an informal academic programme, the project will invite a group of 20 experienced and qualified teachers from Germany to participate, and will seek to make contributions to both NECE policy development on individual and group mobility of European people across the Mediterranean region, and to long-term policy development in the field of intercultural and interreligious education and understanding.

By sending the teachers to stay with families in Morocco, and through them teaching groups of Moroccan students on a daily basis, the programme encourages face-to-face interaction. Our aim is to give Moroccans a more comprehensive and practical understanding of German culture and help them build German academic and communication skills, while at the same time fostering opportunities for European citizens to truly understand the nature and beliefs of Islamic societies by looking beyond misconceptions portrayed in the international media and stereotypes perpetrated in non-Islamic societies. A further goal of the project is to develop real friendship between the two countries. The programme will be recognised by the Moroccan government, which will grant the educators a certificate as proof of their development in – and contributions to – the fields of intercultural and interreligious understanding.



The project is currently aimed at young people with few opportunities, and is structured to help them develop personal skills and intercultural competencies by, for example, increasing their understanding of contemporary German culture, improving their academic and communicative skills in German, providing information on German cultural values and accessing resources for further study on German culture.

The concrete objectives of the project are: to create a common knowledge base about existing cultural and religious exchanges and their impact on individuals and societies, to generate knowledge on how to improve the educational impact of volunteer programmes, to share and promote best practices in the fields of intercultural and interreligious learning, to encourage dialogue and cooperation in the fields of cultural and religious exchange between practitioners and researchers, to advocate for school framework reforms and to make educational establishments aware of the benefits of youth mobility. Most importantly, it will seek to build and foster authentic emotional connections, interpersonal relationships and friendships between members of the organisations of the host country and visiting countries.

The outcomes of this project will be offered to universities for use in their teacher training programmes to enable them to promote and understand more about Islamic culture and religion, as well as to encourage teachers to open themselves up to different cultural perspectives, broaden their personal horizons and to pass on their experiences to students in their everyday school lives. We envision the project as a pioneering peace education project, and hope that by disseminating its experiences further afield, the programme will bring the global community one step closer to universal peace.

If you are interested in attending the project or want to tell us what you think, please contact:

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ANNOUNCEMENT



NECE Conference 2013

14 - 16 November at ProDemos in The Hague, the Netherlands



The European Union and the promise of democracy: What can citizenship education and civil society contribute?

At the focus of this year's NECE Conference are questions involving the further development and reshaping of the EU, which can only be a success if it is based on democratic participation and the effective involvement of civil society.

This will have consequences for citizenship education in Europe, as it means critical testing and reflection for European policy campaigns, discourses and projects in the face of crisis.

The NECE initiative invites education specialists, activists from social movements and multipliers from the fields of politics and business to The Hague to discuss and debate the new common responsibilities for citizenship education and civil society.

More information will be available shortly at: www.nece.eu
You can pre-register at:
nece-thehague2013@lab-concepts.de



Kars Veling, Director of ProDemos – House of Democracy and the Rule of Law

"Today, the task of encouraging citizenship is more relevant than ever, and I'm certain that all the partners in NECE – like us at ProDemos – feel the urgency of citizenship education in their everyday efforts. Even more so as the crisis all over Europe puts societies under pressure, and throws up challenge after challenge for democracy. The European Year of Citizens 2013 underlines the importance of involving people in all our countries in the European project. So there are many reasons to focus in our next conference – which will take place a few months before the EP elections on 22 – 25 May 2014 – on citizenship education from a European perspective. As you know, the 2013 NECE Conference will be held in The Hague, the hometown of ProDemos (<http://www.prodemos.nl>). This beautiful city is also the centre of governance in The Netherlands, as well as home to many institutions aimed at improving international justice and peace. I am looking forward to the conference in The Hague, not just for the pleasure of seeing friends, but also first and foremost to learn from the experiences of colleagues from countries all over Europe."

INTRODUCING

In every issue, we introduce organisations that are actively involved in the field of citizenship education.

Europe & Me

Europe & Me has now been in existence for five years. Originally founded within the framework of the “Studienkolleg zu Berlin”, our organisation has developed in an amazing way since it was first set up, reaching out to hundreds of thousands of people over the years. Recognition of our work culminated in the 2011 Charlemagne Youth Prize. Our headquarters are in Berlin, even if our editorial office is wherever our editors happen to be. Our regular editorial board meetings take place every two weeks online, though we also try to meet in person at least once a year. “Europe & Me” is a completely non-profit project. We have an editorial board and a large numbers of contributors from all over Europe. All of our contributors and editors work on a voluntary basis. Since there is no hierarchy within the editorial board, all decisions are taken consensually -- and often they have to be unanimous.

NECE:

What is the idea and concept for your magazine? The interactive image of the body on the website in particular is quite interesting – what was behind that?

E&M:

One of the general ideas behind creating the magazine was to make Europe more personal for a young European public. Most often Europe is associated with the EU – a political organisation. We, on the other hand, understand Europe simply as a kind of state of mind that impacts everyone who lives here. Following this train of thought, Europe & Me is a magazine “for all of you”. It’s not just about EU politics. This is why the sections of the magazine

correspond to different body parts, which in turn stand for different views and aspects of Europe: from politics and culture to travel and sex. The different sections are accordingly: Brain, Heart, Diaphragm, Baby, Legs and the 6th Sense.

NECE:

Why do you focus on the emergence of a young European public? How do you achieve your aims? Give us an example by describing one of your projects and the methods you used to realise it.

E&M:

We believe that the emergence of European institutions and a growing interconnectedness between European countries demands an understanding of issues that does not stop at national frontiers. To tackle the problems and chances that arise in today’s closely interconnected world, we need to look beyond the borders of the states we live in. To achieve this aim, Europe & Me has a strict principle that we call “transnational journalism”: every article that is published in the magazine must be relevant to at least two people from two different countries. This principle goes hand-in-hand with our multinational pool of editors and contributors. For example, when we covered the debates about immigration from Romania to the UK, a British and a Romanian contributor wrote about these discussions together. By covering an issue that clearly matters to a wider European audience in this way, we were able to contribute to a real dialogue about people’s fears, as well as possible or existing problems. It’s our hope that this genuine dialogue will contribute to the construction of a peaceful Europe in a bigger way than many EU institutions have done in the past.

Sixth Sense, which is another way of saying “keen intuition”, is the blogging platform that brings our transnational approach to current affairs. Along with live reporting from exciting events around Europe, ‘6th Sense’ has regular columns covering a range of topics from political debates to European films you shouldn’t miss. It’s also where we publish reader submissions.

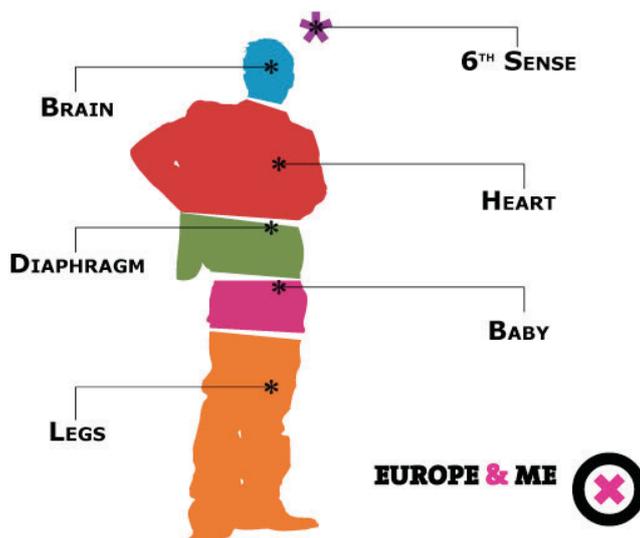
Brain contains articles in which our writers think seriously about Europe. Here the reader will find busted myths, criticism of politicians and fresh views of history.

Heart gives our readers a “European feeling”. Here the writers might interview an artist on the subject of European identity, tell love stories or delve into someone’s feelings about their European past.

Diaphragm offers entertainment. It mocks European legislation, provides interactive quizzes and puzzles, and gives fun tips for how to emulate great Europeans of the past.

Baby explores sexuality in Europe. It breaks taboos, conducts exciting interviews with “sex-perts,” advises readers on what to expect from dates in different European cities and takes them on journeys through European sexuality in different times and places.

Legs symbolises travel and progress. Here we give advice and information on European careers, discuss transnational opportunities with both employers and young people who have chosen to work abroad, and report on fun ways to travel across the continent.



INTRODUCING

NECE:

What attitude do you think young adults have towards Europe and the EU nowadays – during this period of unemployment and limited perspectives?

E&M:

Youths certainly don't share a common attitude towards the EU or Europe today. How they feel depends largely on the way in which their own lives have been affected. While some might see their perspectives limited following the crisis in Europe, others could well find a new realm of opportunities opening up. This in itself is an important insight. It shows that Europe is a very diverse region of the world in which the different concerns of different groups have to be addressed simultaneously. At Europe & Me, we therefore understand our role to be that of a medium for all young people rather than their sole voice. At the same time, we try to make young voices heard. In 2012 we conducted a survey together with one of our partners among young people on the topic of social justice and the idea of an unconditional basic income. While there was a general agreement on the fact that wealth distribution in Europe is far from ideal, opinions were polarised regarding possible solutions, which included the implementation of an unconditional basic income. You can see our article here for more details and the full report: <http://www.europeandme.eu/our-projects/958-survey-on-social-justice>

NECE:

In your experience working with young people, how would you describe their political participation today? Which forms of political participation do they choose, and in what kind of organisations and initiatives are they involved?

E&M:

It's an oversimplification to speak of a "political attitude of the young". We regard Europe's diversity as a given and as a particular strength. Different national, regional and social circumstances encourage different manifestations of political participation from

young people. It seems, however, that most young people today share a common disillusionment with the political sphere, even though they react to this in different ways. Some ignore it and go about their lives as independently as possible – behaviour that results in very low youth turnout in voting and elections. Others take to the streets for causes like the 'Occupy' movements, the student protests in Greece or the Spanish 'democracia real ya!' protests. Yet others choose alternative paths of political engagement outside those offered by traditional party entities, for example by getting involved in different forms of non-governmental organisations with a political agenda...like pro-European or pro-Federalist youth/student organisations or national youth councils, to name just two. This type of involvement is almost always voluntary, is taken up with the beginning of studies and either ends after a couple of active years or eventually leads to a more traditional path of political involvement - such as standing for elections.

NECE:

Why do you think the younger generation is so important for the future of Europe and the EU?

E&M:

From our point of view, it seems rather unreasonable to discuss the future of Europe and the EU without including young people, when those same young people will grow up to form the majority of society in just 20 years. Demographic arguments aside, society has always evolved and changed according to the dynamics of the younger generation. There is no doubt that young people bring in creativity and innovative solutions, and isn't creativity and innovation what Europe needs most these days? Today's younger generation of Europeans is the most educated and interconnected in European history. Not listening to them would mean not only planning their future without consulting them first, but would also signify a huge waste of potential.

EUROPE & ME



GOOD PRACTICE

In this section we introduce projects intended to exemplify and clarify how different target groups could possibly be empowered and qualified by means of citizenship education.

Hello Europe

“Hello Europe”: Connecting, talking, seeing, examining, thinking, knowing, understanding, listening ... these are resounding words. Words that stand for growth and prosperity, harmony and symphony! HELLO Europe will connect Europeans to one another. Our aim is to create direct contact between Europeans by means of a large-scale dialogue that really allows face-to-face encounters. For a short moment, Europe will appear to be one big city. A place where everyone else is just a few steps removed. Sounds impossible? Absolutely not! Over the course of several weeks, we will be placing large viewing screens at central locations in major European cities. Installed in shipping containers, the screens are six meters long and two meters tall. Two of them will be connected throughout each dialogue. Viewers standing in front of one screen will be able to see and hear people standing in front of the other screen. The project therefore will literally let public spaces separated by big distances be merged into one. Every thirty minutes, the connections will change, and different cities will be brought into contact – a process that takes place 24/7. The platform will be open to everyone, including those who

happen to be just passing by. People walking across the street will suddenly be able see into another city, and can have casual conversations with people facing another screen in another part of Europe. And the project is going to stretch even further. In cooperation with partner organisations, we will be setting up an entire array of events where ‘connection’ figures as a central value: boundary-breaking street-dance battles, youth organisations from different cities putting on urban games together, bands performing in a concert taking place in different countries, and more. HELLO! will also lead an active life online. People who cannot reach a big city and/or who are looking for more possibilities to communicate can visit the site. Not only you will be able watch the different screens in several cities (live) there, you can also share your opinion on relevant topics, and make an appeal to organise a new happening in front of one of our screens.

For more information: <http://youtu.be/hqFvJdZKTO8>



POLITICAL NEWS

This section provides information about news and political decisions that are relevant for setting the citizenship education agenda.

Young European: an urgent educational challenge

The Council of Europe has adopted a report on „Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge “. The report highlights the role and situation of formal and non-formal education in different European countries and calls for policy responses. The Council of Europe stresses the role that education plays for youth empowerment and personal fulfilment and calls for measures improving the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The member states are invited to provide adequate resources education which is not below 6 % of GDP.

More information: http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2013/Komarjeuneseuropiens_EN.pdf

New Programme on Civic Education in Russia

Funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this programme is aimed at strengthening professional practices among educators, as well as drawing the attention of the political and intellectual elite to the importance of promoting civic education at universities and institutions for secondary education. Education plays a very important role in the efficient and substantial construction of an open and democratic society in Russia. <http://www.theewc.org/content/activities/new.program.on.civic.education.in.russia/>

Europe for Citizens Programme 2014 – 2020: Current Status

In a move to make the 2014 European Parliament elections more democratic, the European Commission has recommended that political parties nominate a candidate for European Commission President, and also that they should display their European political party affiliation. In addition, the Commission is asking Member States to agree on a common voting date for European elections. The European Council, Parliament and Commission are also currently trying to come to a consensus for a new citizenship programme to be kicked off in 2014. They want the programme to be more easily accessible to EU citizens in the future.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/reading/multimedia/news/2013/03/20130312_en.htm

<http://intranet.youthforum.org/newsletters/node/26681>

“Avanti Europe!”

The ongoing economic and financial crisis – and the failure on the part of politicians to resolve it – have led citizens to mistrust and question the very foundations of our system. Less enthusiasm for Europe in turn translates into a lack of ambition and commitment to a European approach among national political leaders. Created by a group of concerned Europeans and employing innovative communication campaigns and participative tools, “Avanti Europe!” wants to break this dangerous cycle and establish an online platform to mobilise millions of citizens across the continent on key European issues.

<http://www.avantieurope.eu/>

INFORMATION

Call for...

Call for projects – the Knight News Challenge

In many ways it's easier than ever before to learn about and interact with the institutions and communities around us. But there's still a long way to go. How can we improve the way citizens and government interact? Tell us about your idea, why you think it's a good one, and how you and your team will make it happen.

Deadline: 25 June 2013

For more information: <https://www.newschallenge.org/open/open-government/submission/>

Call for participants – EURAC Federal Scholar in Residence Programme 2014

The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC) - Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism is now accepting applications to become EURAC's Federal Scholar for 2014! To take part, applicants must submit an unpublished manuscript in English, Italian, German, French or Spanish. Deadline for submission: 1 July 2013

For more information: www.eurac.edu/federscholar

Events

5 - 23 May, Berlin (Germany)

Aktionstage Politische Bildung (Civic Education Action Days)

These German and European campaigns on and for civic education present the diversity of the people and institutions involved, their target groups, and the actions they inspire, while drawing the attention of the public to the wide range of activities that civic education has to offer. The Civic Education Award is also granted during the Civic Education Action Days. This year's watchword is “Politics? – This is what that means to us!” (“Politik? – Das verstehen wir darunter!”). By coming together under one roof at the event, civic education institutions and stakeholders help emphasise the socio-political significance of their work.

For more information: <http://aktionstage-politische-bildung.net/aktions-tage-politische-bildung-2012/>

29 May 2013, Brussels (Belgium)

Raising Awareness of the Social Dimension of EU Citizenship: Ensuring Rights, Assessing Opportunities

2013 is the “European Year of Citizens”, which means the focus is now on providing opportunities to inform citizens about their rights in the EU, while at the same time inviting them to engage in a dialogue about citizenship to help build a common vision of how the bloc should look in 2020. This timely international symposium provides an invaluable opportunity to explore not only the political rights that citizens are entitled to, but also social rights such as access to cross-border healthcare, social security schemes and education.

For more information: <http://publicpolicyexchange.co.uk/events/DE29-PPE2.php>

INFORMATION

7 June 2013, Leicester (United Kingdom)

EAEA and NIACE Conference “The European Year of Citizens 2013 - The challenges and opportunities for adult learning”

Through inputs from members of the EAEA, this conference explores the wider role of learning for active citizenship across society and in European countries. Its programme includes speeches that will set the context as defined by academics, policymakers and leaders, and also includes workshops headed by practitioners.

For more information: <http://www.eaea.org/index.php?k=118723>

16 July 2013, Heidelberg (Germany)

“Tell Europe what you really think”

In his 2012 State of the Union address, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso called for a broad debate with citizens that would encompass a truly European dimension. To this end, the Commission will between September 2012 and December 2013 organize the Debate on the Future of Europe, composed of a series of dialogues with citizens from all walks of life.

For more information: <http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/events/event-heidelberg>

12 - 31 August 2013, Alpbach (Austria)

69th European Forum Alpbach 2013 – Experiences and Values

The Tyrolean village of Alpbach is once again set to become a venue for international encounters, critical dialogue and informal exchange. This forum brings together a large number of internationally renowned figures from the worlds of academia, politics, business and culture. The European Forum Alpbach is a unique event in both Austria and Europe. This year's theme is “Expectations – the Future for Young People”.

For more information: http://www.alpbachtal.at/de/aktuelles/event-s/69-europaeisches-forum-alpbach-2013_72,

<http://www.alpbach.org/index.php?id=1732>

Publications

Renewal in European Local Democracies

by Linze Schaap und Harry Daemen, published 2012

This book explores the dynamics of democratic reform processes in local governments in Europe. Through analyses of both theoretical challenges and present developments, it looks at the processes of democratic innovation inspired by classic representative democracy, as well as at new forms of democracy influenced by notions of governance, participation, e-governance, empowering civil society and other factors. Attention is also given to the role of regionalisation and leadership in efforts to revitalize local democracy. The study examines cases from all over Europe.

For more information: <http://www.springer.com/springer+vs/politikwissenschaft/book/978-3-531-18762-4>

Reimagining Democratic Societies: A New Era of Personal and Social Responsibility

by Sjur Bergan, Ira Harkavy and Hilligje van't Land, published in 2013 | Council of Europe Publishing, Council of Europe Higher Education Series No. 18, 2013

As societies change, our understanding of democracy must also evolve. We need democratic institutions, but also democratic culture and democratic innovation. Citizen participation, as a cornerstone of democracy, must go beyond citizen mobilisation on just a few issues. The authors – academics, policymakers and practitioners from Europe and the United States – argue this point, making the case for why democratic re-imagination and innovation cannot succeed without higher education, and why higher education cannot fulfil its educational, academic and societal missions without working for the common good.

For more information: <http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/latest-activity>

Civil Society and Democracy

by Emily von Sydow, published 2013

“This book is neither the first nor last word on the role of organised civil society in democratic life in the European Union. However, it does present a number of fascinating illustrations about the way civil society organisations provide avenues of expression for the average European citizen.

For more information: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-31-12-388-en-c.pdf>

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p.3: Pro Demos
p.5: Hello Europe

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