

Workshop Session 1

“EYCE 2005: Lessons from Practice.
National Experiences – European Challenges”

Country Profile 5

Report from the workshop
Friday, December 2nd, 2005

Presentators:

Poland: Alicja Pacewicz, Centre for Civic Education

Austria: Hans Göttel, Europahaus Burgenland

Norway: Enver Djuliman, The Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Chair: Ellinor Haase, EAEA, Belgium

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Alicja Pacewicz from the **Centre for Civic Education** in **Poland** pointed out, that in the post communist countries there's a lack of understanding of importance for active citizenship and democracy, the civic commitment is therefore rather low.

So most of the citizens are not ready to **participate** in non governmental organisations yet, because of the misuse of civil engagement for communist ideology in the past. Current growing social differences between residents of big cities and small villages as well as between politicians and average citizens create dissatisfaction and lack of understanding to support established political parties.

Therefore Poles support ideas they stand for, so they rather vote for extremists and populists. In 1998 about 38% of Poles were thinking democracy is the best governing system, while in 2003 were only 31%.

On the one hand it is about fulfilling the Polish dream of being an active part of Europe, on the other hand polish politicians considered more local than European values during the parliamentary campaign this year.

Only 5% of schools and 3% of students in Poland are not public, so the same problems appear in the public schools, which are the most influential and powerful institution regarding education. Autocratic teachers' behaviour, which causes students' and parents' fear, unclear internal school law regarding e.g. pupils' dressing which generates no sanctions for teachers breaking the rules and must be changed quickly.

EDC is a subject of: “knowledge about society” which pinpoints the weaknesses of **civic education**. In the primary school it is integrated within curricula of other social sciences, in the middle school it is being taught 1 hour weekly and includes preparation for family life, civic education and entrepreneurship. In the high schools it is taught 1 hour weekly for 2 years.

EYCE was promoted within the entire society and the leading role kept the National Committee and National EDC coordinator at the Central In-service Training Centre. EYCE in Poland established a coordinators' network, to which belonged National Committee, 40 regional coordinators (almost 1 in each voivodship with meetings every 3 months), school directors, local authorities, NGO's, students, teachers and

local communities. They all organised workshops for coordinators, conferences and seminars all over Poland, workshops for civic education, history and geography teachers (at least two in each voivodship) led by coordinators. More than 100 local projects and events were reported to the website, CCE projects.

Regional activities in Poland created many **short-term projects**, e.g.: Learning and Living in Democracy – Interschool Human Rights Day, Out of conflict - participation of young people in Socrates-Comenius project with groups from Italy and Spain, Citizenship Education Forum – learning by doing process in this field and other possibilities to make civic education more effective and attractive to young people a.s.o. For the **long term** there were also many **projects** e.g.: Poland in EU – Workshop for teachers of citizenship education on new methods of teaching about EU and citizenship combined with presentation of EYCE, its goals and ways of achieving them; Be Active – A series of lectures and workshops for young people about youth participation in regional life and activities that may be taken by students in local community; Corruption: No thanks! – Project implemented by all schools in Kluczbork which popularise active methods of teaching about corruption, knowledge about threats associated with it and is stressing the values of democracy at the same time (Cracow). NICE – Networking of International Co-operation in Education is an international project of exchanging ideas of EDC, learning by doing and lifelong learning process and methods of non-formal education in this field (Cracow); Auschwitz and Holocaust-working out methods of teaching about holocaust which will let young people better understand the mechanism of intolerance. a.s.o. On the **international level** following events were organised:

III. Summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), Youth Summit (14-15 May 2005 in Warsaw), Conference - „The role of non-governmental organisations in the field of EDC” (Warsaw, 21-24 April 2005), II Seminar of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe „Teaching remembrance through cultural heritage”, (Krakow, 4 – 6 May 2005).

Schools are very willingly participating in different projects so there is hope because engagement of the youth increases still and the ongoing reforms (especially in school education) should give the positive input here as well.

Austrian EYCE was presented by **Hans Göttel from Europahaus Burgenland – Institute for Civic Education.**

EYCE was co-ordinated by Ministry of Education and its agendas and NGOs were invited to **participate** in the programme. Unfortunately many grassroots initiatives were excluded, so the Ministry gave funds to the best informed and strongest organisations. According to the opinion of Mrs. Goettel the reason for that is that Austrian governmental institutions distrust the citizens and therefore organised EYCE without the real opinion and engagement of grassroots organisations.

The acceptance of civic society in Austria is considered in terms of inventory of social club activities and officially listed. Non-listed NGO's are controversial for the government administration.

There were **difficulties** in taking part in open EYCE activities. Programme runs under ministerial control and evaluation work is also being presented by the Ministry.

Hans Goettel said, government neither really puts public education to the public debate nor grounded solid fundamentals for development of grassroots NGOs in Austria.

Europahaus Burgenland organised around 30 events, but none of them was officially mentioned on the ministerial EYCE's list because they could not cope with the requirements given by the Ministry. Official answer was: the danger of misusing in propaganda activities is high and EYCE's budget is very low.

The Austrian state budget provides 0,1 % of its expenses for the adult learning, political education obtains only a trickle of it. Göttel called the Austrian political system a "republic of political parties" because also civic initiatives are financed through ubiquitous law on financing political parties. As a result, many NGOs are depending on ministerial/governmental will. For that reasons vast hopes are aimed at the EU regarding direct distribution of public development funds to the civic initiatives directly. An equal approach to well established and strong organisations, like trade unions and grassroots ones is expected.

Challenge for the future is to support civic grassroots initiatives, directly by communication with the EU and against overwhelming centralism in Austria, without mediation of ministry. It is the only possible way to activate citizens, who are critic towards current political system and towards strengthening civic grassroots engagement.

Enver Djuliman, representative of **Norwegian Helsinki Committee**, described relationships between citizens and state **Norway**.

This country is distinguished by very high co-operation factor between society and government. Norwegians trust their state and government and cooperate very much on decision making, they also take the right to be informed very seriously.

Norway lays on the borders of Europe and European perspective is not present, it is demonstrated by just a few European projects running there and visible mostly negative approach to the immigrants: hostility and inclusion **difficulties**. Immigrants can participate in local elections after 5 years of their stay and after 7 years in national elections. Adult refugees learn Norwegian language – programme is connected to social help. There is a traditional problem because Muslim refugees refuse women to educate. There was a penalty on a husband in such case for the first time recently.

Multicultural understanding must be a way how to work already at **school**. Human rights were a facultative issue at primary school and then disappeared completely. Civic education is focused on the equality in the secondary school: 5 hours per week on social issues and democratisation. Nevertheless there is deficiency in preparing teachers for their role of multipliers in public education. Students learn a lot about international organisations but not real examples of civil engagement in their lives.

The most important **challenge** is to bring Norway closer to Europe.

To ensure **sustainable** development there is need to educate and employ trainers/teachers for human rights in Norway, because the knowledge of practicing human rights must be passed over to students, not only being a subject of theoretical disputes.

General conclusions from the discussion:

- more NGOs meetings to discuss and put into practice, what needs to be done, because some situation seems to work out on the paper only. There must be security, that the knowledge about practising human rights must be passed over.
- Appeal to Rolf Annerberg from the EU, Head of Cabinet of Margot Wallström, who visited EYCE conference, to facilitate funds directly to the NGOs, not governmental agendas.
- Request to the European Commission for establishing countries NGO's Competence-Centers, which will be not under the influence of ministries.
- Request to the impact of the grassroots' level, funds should be distributed to the smaller NGO's and involve the active, but poorly organised and neglected citizens to the creation of civil society.