Committed to Europe's Future

Contributions from
Education and Religious Education

A Reader

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on behalf of
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CoGREE

CONTENT

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

"European integration is more than just an economic and political option: it is a synonym for sustainable peace – both inner peace resulting from new forms of social and political co-operation, and outer peace, through the EU's contribution to global development and resolving conflict. Recent dramatic world events demonstrate the importance of a united Europe, able to speak with one voice on the world stage and to contribute to the global common good by drawing on its experience of solving problems through dialogue, co-operation, solidarity and the promotion of human rights, rather than by the use of force."

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community expressed this view in a statement shortly before the European Council at Laeken in December 2001. They emphasise the core value and purpose of European integration as caring for "sustainable peace" inside Europe but also in taking responsibility for the global common good.

Initiatives towards *European integration* started early after the end of World War II (in 1946 Winston Churchill called for the creation of a "kind of United States of Europe") and led to agreements at first in the area of coal and steel in the 1950s. The western part of Europe developed from a coal and steel community to a common market, from a common market to a single market with a (partial) single currency now, and from a single market to a European Union, in which we live today, with responsibilities in many areas, ranging from justice and home affairs, through social policy to foreign and security policy. The planned enlargement of the European Union and initiatives to adapt existing political bodies for the larger family is under way. One can be confused by the complexity of the existing political structure and bodies, where quite often the European Council is mixed up with the Council of Europe or the Council of the European Union (see glossary for explanations). There are very good reasons to criticise the lack of democracy and transparency in European policy, and an active involvement is desirable to achieve more participation for European citizens as part of an active citizenship which is a current key issue in the political debate. But all these initiatives start from the basic conviction that reconciliation and peace in Europe, which influences the global arena, needs not a lesser Europe, but a better Europe, building on trust among citizens in the future of Europe.

The purpose of the reader

The documents, papers and statements included in this collection should enable readers to become acquainted with
• Current European developments and central issues of debate
• The dynamics of the discussion on Education in Europe
• The state of Religious Education in Europe.

The three sections are interwoven: education is seen as a decisive dimension of the ongoing integration and development of Europe, religious education deals with ultimate questions, questions of meaning of life, values and ethical views, items which are also part of the debates about Europe's future, as issues like 'A Soul for Europe' or 'Giving a Heart to Europe' document clearly.

The focus of the selection of texts has been the relevance of the documents for a debate about the contribution of education and religious education to Europe's future.

In the first section *European Developments* documents refer mainly to efforts to build trust among citizens in the future of Europe and to change existing political bodies and procedures in the context of the planned enlargement of the European Union and the deepening of the existing co-operation. Documents dealing with the future of the European Union (Laeken Declaration) or European Governance (White Paper) are presented as well as texts that describe the role of civil society and how citizenship in Europe can be made a reality.

The second section includes documents on *Education in Europe*, mainly dealing with the knowledge and information society and its implications for education. All initiatives on the European level have to be seen in the light of the Community's activities in this area, which are mainly to encourage cooperation between Member States "while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education system and their cultural and linguistic diversity". (Art. 149 EU Treaty) Although this restriction is a fact for all education activities of the European Community, it can be said that current developments show the increasing relevance of education for Europe. The Commissioner responsible for education speaks about a "paradigm shift" and a "silent revolution" in this area meaning that political decisions have given a bigger role to education in Europe as well as a bigger role to Europe in education.

A third section presents the situation and developments in the area of *Religious Education in Europe.* As the increasing relevance of education in general is recognised one cannot ignore the fact that this has to do not only with needs of the economic sector but also with the debate about values and norms as fundamental to living together in Europe. It is asked "What kind of RE is needed for Europe" (K.E. Nipkow) and also how can RE contribute to the future of Europe. In spite of different approaches to RE found in Europe it can be said that all of them want to enable pupils to see the importance and value of religions and the religious commitment of believers in a Europe, which is shaped by a diversity of religions and worldviews.

The editors have decided to include most of the texts in edited versions rather than in their original lengths for the sake of a more convenient reading. We have chosen extracts concerning the main purpose of the reader and we have added summaries and comments on each text to clarify its context and background. We have also added a web address where a text is available and put several texts on the CoGREE web site (www.cogree.com).

As editors we are clearly aware of the limitations of this selection. Most of the texts come from a western background. This has to do with the history and the background of the CoGREE organisations which are active mainly in this part of Europe. Although it is a central aim in our co-operation to involve the whole of Europe, we have to admit that we are not yet balanced in terms of knowledge and active involvement in important developments in central and eastern Europe and also in the south of Europe. It is a matter of fact that ecumenical co-operation has to be developed further, not just in terms of a Christian understanding of what 'ecumenical' means but also within the perspective of a broader ecumenical approach which includes other religions and life stances. In this respect we would welcome the reactions, additions and comments of all readers, who know of documents and papers from these areas that may be included in further debate.

Contributions from Education and Religious Education

This reader is one of the results of the activities of a European network called CoGREE, the Coordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe. With this publication we want to present helpful material for an ongoing debate about the contribution of education and religious education to Europe's future. The primary reason for the production of this reader has been an invited consultation to be held by CoGREE in May 2002 in Vienna but we hope it will be useful in other contexts as well.

Who does CoGREE represent?

CoGREE coordinates the work of a number of associations, organisations and networks which deal with a range of issues concerning the teaching of religions in schools and of Christian and religious responsibility in the area of European education policy.

The *Intereuropean Commission on Church and School* (**ICCS)** is a network of churches, institutes for education and religious education, and state organisations (from 18 European countries) which deal with education and RE. ICCS provides a forum especially to discuss the relations between church and school. ICCS has an ecumenical orientation with contacts to other religions.

The *International Association for Christian Education* (**IV)** is an umbrella organisation of Protestant national associations and organisations of teachers and schools with members from 8 countries. The self-understanding of IV is to act as a council, which represents the interests of its members on the European level. It encourages cooperation amongst its member organisations and works on issues of the realisation of Christian responsibility in education in Europe. Central aims of IV are to strengthen protestant schools in Europe and the protestant position in the discussion of education policy in Europe.

The *European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education* (**EFTRE)** supports the European cooperation of national and regional RE teachers' associations as well as of institutes and organisations which support RE (58 members from 19 countries). Its self-understanding is that of a non-confessional forum which represents the interests of RE teachers in Europe, independent of a specific structure and a confessional or non-confessional approach. EFTRE's aim is to serve and strengthen the work of all RE teachers associations, adopting a professional approach to RE.

These three organisations all have their own agendas, but at the same time they share a common interest in and a concern to contribute to activities, programmes and statements about religious education and general education at the European level. Besides these more formal organisations which are authorised to act in a representative way through boards, general assemblies and other committees, there are looser associations working at the European level in related areas.

The *European Conference on Christian Education* (**ECCE)** is a forum for the exchange of ideas, models and discussions about issues of Sunday school work in particular. Its aim is to support all those, who are involved with Sunday school work and Christian education.

The *European Association for World Religions in Education* (**EAWRE)** is an independent association of scholars and educators which fosters an accurate handling of world religions in school and education. EAWRE has a clear multi-religious orientation with emphasis on issues about world religions in education.

The *RE-Network for Christian Religious Education in Europe* gives practical support for the establishment of a Christian oriented RE in Middle and Eastern Europe, especially through seminars and providing information material. Its aim is to provide practical support of religious education in an ecumenical orientation (mainly protestant - orthodox).

The co-operation among these organisations was strengthened in 1998 by developing an existing yearly meeting to co-ordinate planned activities into a more structured co-ordinating group, called CoGREE. Its aim is to respect the commonalities and differences of the six organisations and to develop ways of increasing co-operation.
A tremendous step forward will be the invited consultation of CoGREE in May 2002 in Vienna, for which this reader has been produced.
It should help to link CoGREE's activities closer with political developments at the European level and to discuss how education and religious education can contribute to the future of Europe.

We are very thankful for the support we have received in the production of this reader. Special thanks to the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) for financial support and to the Comenius-Institut for the co-editing and for preparing the printing. The concept and content of the reader is a product of the fruitful co-operation of the CoGREE group.

We hope that this collection of texts and documents will foster debate and co-operation about the role and contribution of education and religious education within Europe's future. As religious educators we feel committed to Europe's future especially for the sake of the younger generation.

Münster, Utrecht, April 2002

Peter Schreiner   Hans Spinder   Jeremy Taylor   Wim Westerman

EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS

CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union has been worked out by a convent implemented in 1999. It was proclaimed in December 2000 at the EU summit in Nice and signed by the European Council, the Commission and the EU Parliament. The document, consisting of 54 articles, has to be seen in the wider context of the EU's long lasting commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms and of its policy in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs. The proclamation of Nice has no legal status but a high symbolic meaning.
The Charter is a catalogue of basic rights which documents the change of the Community from an economic community to a community based on common values. Central for education is article 14 of the Charter but other articles are also important for education.

Comments

The value of religions for the European heritage is a contested area. It can be illustrated by the discussion about the wording of the preamble of the Charter:

Conscious of its *spiritual and moral heritage* (in the German official translation: *ihres geistig-religiösen und sittlichen Erbes*; in French: *patrimoine spirituel et moral*) the Union is founded...

*The **Amsterdam Treaty on European Union**, which came into force on 1 May 1999, has established procedures intended to secure the protection of fundamental social rights:*

Article 6
1. The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles that are common to the Member States.
2. The Union shall respect fundamental rights as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in Rome on 4 November 1950 and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, as general principles of Community law. (...)

Text (extracts)

PREAMBLE
The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values.

Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.
The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States and the organisation of their public authorities at national, regional and local levels; it seeks to promote balanced and sustainable development and ensures free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, and the freedom of establishment.
To this end, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of fundamental rights in the light of changes in society, social progress and scientific and technological developments by making those rights more visible in a Charter.
This Charter reaffirms, with due regard for the powers and tasks of the Community and the Union and the principle of subsidiarity, the rights as they result, in particular, from the constitutional traditions and international obligations common to the Member States, the Treaty on European Union, the Community Treaties, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Social Charters adopted by the Community and by the Council of Europe and the case-law of the Court of justice of the European Communities and of the European Court of Human Rights.
Enjoyment of these rights entails responsibilities and duties with regard to other persons, to the human community and to future generations.
The Union therefore recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out hereafter.

CHAPTER 1: DIGNITY

Article 1
Human dignity
Human dignity is inviolable. it must be respected and protected.

Article 2
Right to life
1. Everyone has the right to life.
2. No one shall be condemned to the death penalty, or executed.

Article 3
Right to the integrity of the person
1. Everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity.
2. In the fields of medicine and biology, the following must be respected in particular:
   - the free and informed consent of the person concerned, according to the procedures laid down by law,
   - the prohibition of eugenic practices, in particular those aiming at the selection of persons,
   - the prohibition on making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain,
   - the prohibition of the reproductive cloning of human beings.

(...)

Article 10
Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. The right to conscientious objection is recognised, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of this right.

(...)

Article 13
Freedom of the arts and sciences
The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected.

The right to education includes the right of participation, the right of equality ...

and of freedom to found educational establishments.

It shows respect to the right of parents concerning education.

Article 14
Right to education
1. Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.
2. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education.
3. The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the natio-nal laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right.

(...)

CHAPTER III: EQUALITY

Article 20
Equality before the law
Everyone is equal before the law.

Article 21
Non-discrimination
1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.
2. Within the scope of application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and of the Treaty on European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.

Article 22
Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity
The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Article 23
Equality between men and women
Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay.
The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.

Article 24
The rights of the child
1. Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.
2. In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.
3. Every child shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both his or her parents, unless that is contrary to his or her interests.
(...)
Article 32
Prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work
The employment of children is prohibited. The minimum age of admission to employment may not be lower than the minimum school-leaving age, without prejudice to such rules as may be more favourable to young people and except for limited derogations.
Young people admitted to work must have working conditions appropriate to their age and be protected against economic exploitation and any work likely to harm their safety, health or physical, mental, moral or social development or to interfere with their education.
(...)

Article 54
Prohibition of abuse of rights
Nothing in this Charter shall be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms recognised in this Charter or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for herein.

Comments

The Charter documents the change of the Community from an economic community to a values based community. What further steps are important to make this frame more concrete?

The whole text of the Charter is available under:
http://ue.eu.int/df/docs/en/CharteEN.pdf

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
– LAEKEN DECLARATION –

The Laeken Declaration was adopted by the meeting of the European Council, held at Laeken, Brussels, Belgium on 14 and 15 December 2001. It sets out the basis of the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Convention was given the task of identifying options for the future development of the European Union.

Comments

The Declaration consists of three main chapters:

I.   Europe At A Crossroads

II. Challenges and Reforms in a Renewed Union

III. Convening of a Convention on the Future of Europe

The first chapter gives a short overview of the development of Europe in the last fifty years, describes the challenge that the European institutions must be brought closer to its citizens and demands a new role for Europe in a globalised world.

The Community should be aware of the expectations of Europe's citizens.

The second chapter points out clearly the need for reforms of the existing institutions and instruments of the EU.

Concrete measures are proposed.

Text (extracts)

I.   EUROPE AT A CROSSROADS

(...)

Fifty years on, however, the Union stands at a crossroads, a defining moment in its existence. The unification of Europe is near. The Union is about to expand to bring in more than ten new Member States, predominantly Central and Eastern European, thereby finally closing one of the darkest chapters in European history: the Second World War and the ensuing artificial division of Europe. At long last, Europe is on its way to becoming one big family, without bloodshed, a real transformation clearly calling for a different approach from fifty years ago, when six countries first took the lead.

(...)

Within the Union, the European institutions must be brought closer to its citizens.

(...)

In short, citizens are calling for a clear, open, effective, democratically controlled Community approach, developing a Europe which points the way ahead for the world. An approach that provides concrete results in terms of more jobs, better quality of life, less crime, decent education and better health care. There can be no doubt that this will require Europe to undergo renewal and reform.

II. CHALLENGES AND REFORMS IN A RENEWED UNION

The Union needs to become more democratic, more transparent and more efficient. It also has to resolve three basic challenges: how to bring citizens, and primarily the young, closer to the European design and the European institutions, how to organise politics and the European political area in an enlarged Union and how to develop the Union into a stabilising factor and a model in the new, multipolar world. In order to address them a number of specific questions need to be put.

(...)

- **A better division and definition of competence in the European Union**

  (...)

  Lastly, there is the question of how to ensure that a redefined division of competence does not lead to a creeping expansion of the competence of the Union or to encroachment upon the exclusive areas of competence of the Member States and, where there is provision for this, regions. How are we to ensure at the same time that the European dynamic does not come to a halt? In the future as well the Union must continue

to be able to react to fresh challenges and developments and must be able to explore new policy areas. Should Articles 95 and 308 of the Treaty be reviewed for this purpose in the light of the "acquis jurisprudentiel"?

- **Simplification of the Union's instruments. More democracy, transparency and efficiency in the European Union. Questions**:
  – How can we increase the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the present institutions, a question which is valid for the three institutions: How can the authority and efficiency of the European Commission be enhanced? How should the President of the Commission be appointed: by the European Council, by the European Parliament or should he be directly elected by the citizens? Should the role of the European Parliament be strengthened? Should we extend the right of co-decision or not? Should the way in which we elect the members of the European Parliament be reviewed? Should a European electoral constituency be created, or should constituencies continue to be determined nationally? Can the two systems be combined? Should the role of the Council be strengthened? Should the Council act in the same manner in its legislative and its executive capacities? With a view to greater transparency, should the meetings of the Council, at least in its legislative capacity, be public? Should citizens have more access to Council documents? How, finally, should the balance and reciprocal control between the institutions be ensured?
  – Should the national parliaments be represented in a new institution, alongside the Council and the European Parliament? Should they have a role in areas of European action in which the European Parliament has no competence? Should they focus on the division of competence between Union and Member States, for example through preliminary checking of compliance with the principle of subsidiarity?

- **Towards a Constitution for European Citizens**
  (...)

  The question ultimately arises as to whether this simplification and reorganisation might not lead in the long run to the adoption of a constitutional text in the Union. What might the basic features of such a constitution be? The values which the Union cherishes, the fundamental rights and obligations of its citizens, the relationship between Member States in the Union?

III. CONVENING OF A CONVENTION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

In order to pave the way for the next Intergovernmental Conference as broadly and openly as possible, the European Council has decided to convene a Convention composed of the main parties involved in the debate on the future of the Union. In the light of the foregoing, it will be the task of that Convention to consider the key issues arising for the Union's future development and try to identify the various possible responses.

(...)

The accession candidate countries will be represented in the same way as the current Member States.
Observers will be invited from the Economic and Social Committee, the European social partners, the Committee of the Regions and the European Ombudsman.

Final document
The Convention will consider the various issues. It will draw up a final document which may comprise either different options, indicating the degree of support which they received, or recommendations if consensus is achieved.
Together with the outcome of national debates on the future of the Union, the final document will provide a starting point for discussions in the Intergovernmental Conference, which will take the ultimate decisions.

Forum
In order for the debate to be broadly based and involve all citizens, a Forum will be opened for organisations representing civil society (the social partners, the business world, non-governmental organisations, academia, etc.). It will take the form of a structured network of organisations receiving regular information on the Convention's proceedings. Their contributions will serve as input into the debate. Such organisations may be heard or consulted on specific topics in accordance with arrangements to be established by the Praesidium.

Comments

The web address for the Laeken Declaration is:
http://europa.eu.int/futurum/documents/offtext/doc151201_en.htm

A website is established with background information about the Convention and to keep everybody fully up to date with the work and activities of the Convention:
http://european-convention.eu.int

EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE
A WHITE PAPER

The Commission identified the reform of European governance as one of its four strategic objectives in early 2000:
- **Promoting new forms of European governance,**
- **Stabilising our continent and boosting Europe's voice in the world**
- **Towards a new economic and social agenda, and**
- **A better quality of life for all.**

Political developments since then have highlighted that the Union faces a double challenge: there is not only a need for urgent action to adapt governance under the existing treaties, but also for a broader debate on the future of Europe in view of the next Inter-Governmental Conference. The publication of a White Paper in June 2001 has enabled the start of a public debate and has invited civil society to join in this debate.

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
The White Paper is structured in four main parts:	**Executive Summary:** Today, political leaders throughout Europe are facing a real paradox. On the one hand, Europeans want them to find solutions to the major problems confronting our societies. On the other hand, people increasingly distrust institutions and politics or are simply not interested in them.
I. Why Reform European Governance?	(...)
II. Principles of Good Governance	Yet people also expect the Union to take the lead in seizing the opportunities of globalisation for economic and human development, and in responding to environmental challenges, unemployment, concerns over food safety, crime and regional conflicts. They expect the Union to act as visibly as national governments.
III. Proposals for Change	
IV. From Governance to the Future of Europe	
	Democratic institutions and the representatives of the people, at both national and European levels, can and must try to connect Europe with its citizens. This is the starting condition for more effective and relevant policies.
The following proposals for change are made:	(...)
• *Better involvement and more openness*	
• *Better policies, regulation and delivery*	
• *Global Governance*	
• *Refocused Institutions.*	
	II. Principles of Good Governance Five principles underpin good governance and the changes proposed in this White Paper: *openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.* Each principle is important for establishing more democratic governance. They underpin democracy and the rule of law in the Member States, but they apply to all levels of government – global, European, national, regional and local. They are particularly important for the Union in order to respond to the challenges highlighted in the preceding chapter.
	(...)

Involving civil society is a de-cisive focus of the White Paper. Civil society includes the following: trade unions and employers' organisations ("social partners"); non-governmental organisations; professional associations; charities; grass-roots organisations; organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life with a **particular contribution from churches and religious communities**.

It is also stressed that with better involvement comes greater responsibility.

Civil society plays an important role in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people's needs. Churches and religious communities have a particular contribution to make. The organisations which make up civil society mobilise people and support, for instance, those suffering from exclusion or discrimination. The Union has encouraged the development of civil society in the applicant countries, as part of their preparation for membership. Non governmental organisations play an important role at global level in development policy. They often act as an early warning system for the direction of political debate.
(...)

Changing the way the Union works is first and foremost a question of political will. It needs a more effective involvement of national actors and partners of civil society.

IV. From Governance to the Future of Europe
(...)
Building on these principles, the proposals in this White Paper will:

- **Structure the EU's relationship with civil society.** A code of conduct for consultation will identify responsibilities and improve accountability of all partners. It will enhance dialogue, and contribute to the openness of organised civil society.
- **Make greater use of the skills and practical experience of regional and local actors.** In the first place, this is an issue for national authorities according to their national constitutional and administrative arrangements. At the same time the Union should make fuller use of the existing potential for flexibility to improve the ways European policies are applied on the ground.
- **Build public confidence in the way policy makers use expert advice.** The EU's multi-disciplinary expert system will be opened up to greater public scrutiny and debate. This is needed to manage the challenges, risks and ethical questions thrown up by science and technology.
- **Support the clearer definition of EU policy objectives and improve the effectiveness of EU policies** by combining formal legislation with non-legislative and self-regulatory solutions to better achieve those objectives.
- **Set out the conditions for establishing EU regulatory agencies.** These agencies can reinforce the effectiveness and visibility of EU law in the eyes of both business and the public by bringing decisions in some of the most complex and technical areas closer to the sectors affected.
- **Refocus the roles and responsibilities of each Institution.** This should help citizens to hold their political leaders and the Institutions to account for the decisions that the Union takes.

Carrying these actions forward does not necessarily require new Treaties. It is first and foremost **a question of political will.** It is part of a wider process. Changing the way the Union works calls not only for a response from the Commission, but also from all those interested, particularly the Council, the European Parliament, the Member States and European citizens.

By adapting governance at home, the Union will be better placed to contribute to new forms of global governance. Policies and global institutions must respond to popular concerns.

A new focus for the Union's Institutions...
But what will really change if these proposals are implemented? At the heart of the proposed reform of governance is the refocusing of the institutions – the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament. This should lead to:

- **A more targeted use by the Commission of its right of initiative**
  (...)
- **EU legislation which is stripped back to essential principles and a framework setting out how they should be implemented.**
  (...)
- **The more effective involvement of national actors in the shaping, application and enforcement of Community rules and programmes.**
  (...)

Comments

White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper published to launch a consultation process at European level. While Green Papers set out a range of ideas presented for public discussion and debate, White Papers contain an official set of proposals in specific policy areas and are used as vehicles for their development.

"A close reading reveals that the White Paper has three main objectives:
(1)to redress the institutional balance in favour of the European Commission,
(2)to redesign rules and procedures to enhance efficiency in policy formulation and
implementation, and
(3)to put even more emphasis than in the past on openness, transparency, and participation."
(Beate Kohler-Koch, http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org/papers/01/012101.rtf)

The whole text of the White Paper is available through
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_en.htm

CHURCHES IN THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
Conference of European Churches / Church and Society Commission
Working group on European Integration Process

The Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) has a major task in following the activities of European institutions and helping CEC's 127 Member Churches to engage with and comment on the issues raised by and in the institutions. Its Working Group on the European Integration Process set itself the goal of discussing what it meant by European integration. It also wanted to ask what the churches could contribute to the process. The document "Churches in the Process of European Integration" published for discussion in May 2001, is the first result. It is destined to help the churches discuss the issue among themselves and with people from the institutions.

The document is offered as a tool to help Member Churches of CEC and others reflect on the purpose and goal of European integration. This is particularly important in view of the debate launched by the European Council in Nice in December 2000 on the future development of the European Union. This requires reflection and the whole of civil society is invited to contribute to that. "There is clearly a role for the churches and I hope that CEC's Member Churches will find this text and the report of the Central Committee study day useful in enabling participation in the debate." (*Keith Jenkins*, Director of the CSC Commission) The Church and Society Commission will look for effective ways of channelling the result into the wider debate, for example, in future dialogue meetings with the European Commission.

Comments

The paper is structured in five parts:
1. *Introduction*
2. *Challenges of European integration process*
3. *Spiritual and ethical dimensions*
4. *Churches in the process of European integration*
5. *Conclusion.*

As challenges the paper mentions the following:
- *Decreasing of popular support for EU enlargement*
- *Scope and character of the integration process*
- *Challenges to European policies like the lack of transparency in the negotiating process; debate about free movement of persons and migration; human and social costs of the integration process; future borders of the European Union and relations to its neighbours.*

Text (extracts)

Foreword (Keith Jenkins)
(...)
One aspect of the discussion on this text has related to the use of the words "integration" and "unification". In particular this affected the choice of title for the document. Some argued that "integration" had a wider and looser meaning which was open to debate whereas "unification" implied some specific and concrete goal. "Integration" was seen as having a more open meaning than "unification". In the end, the Executive Committee of the Commission preferred "integration".
(...)

2.   Challenges of European integration process

(...)

3. Spiritual and ethical dimensions

3.1. What unites Europe?

Development of the European community went through substantial changes during the last 50 years. From the simple framework for economic co-operation in dealing with certain commodities and the basic concept of reconciliation after the war, Europe arrived today at a stage where serious questions about its substance need to be asked and answered with renewed intensity. Bipolar division of the continent disappeared and the EU seeks its new role in the continent which is driven towards intensified co-operation and unification. What does the European Union stand for today? Is it a community of values? Or just an expanding common market? A rich man's club? Is the EU just another episode in the history of European power politics? The next empire? What power will keep citizens of different ethnic, cultural, social and religious background of the enlarged EU together in the future? Enlargement is not only a wish of the candidate countries; it is also seen by the existing member states as a vital interest of member states in the effort to increase the economic market. In the light of this the questions of why the EU needs to be enlarged must be posed. What are the real reasons for that? Answers to these questions are of crucial importance for any further development in the continent. Europe has reached the stage when it is essential to learn from history and face the present reality with the founding principle of reconciliation and with original inspirations on which the Union was built. The ideals and visions of founders of what is now the EU - personalities like Schumann, Monnet and Adenauer - should once more be put alongside the present reality. Europe needs once again a clear explanation what are its roots and goals in its effort to create a community.

Experience on the present situation in Europe proves that those who are in power and who make the principal decisions about the future shape of Europe are not primarily interested in other parts of the continent for certain cultural qualities which might be found there. Their motivation is very pragmatic. The question, which is urgently to be asked, is then: what unites Europe? Is the expanding market the main or even the only driving force? Churches have a strong voice to be heard in this point. Their position can be expressed in words of recently issued Report of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches in which is stated that: "European unification is not – and not primarily – an economic endeavour; the economy is only one aspect of the project. The development of economic well being is as much as instrument of peace and justice as a result of increasingly closer, peaceful ties among peoples."(1) Taking this view is the way to convince certain present sceptics on the question of European integration that the aim of the present endeavour is not to build the fortress of Western Europe, but work for the prospect of the whole continent.

(1) The Challenges of Europe for the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and its Member Churches, a text published by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, 2000.

3.2. Does Europe need commitment for values?

The process of European integration is a complex enterprise. Opening of borders between states and enabling free movement of people will result in intensive contacts between people and groups of different backgrounds, experiences and traditions. The develop-ment of a common Europe must not end, however, with the discussion of administrative technicalities. The European Commission recognised this at an earlier stage. The need to give the developing European Union a sense of direction and purpose

as it moved beyond the single market to a political union – what Jacques Delors called "giving a soul to Europe" - has been part of the ethos which surrounded European institutions for several years. (2) At the present stage, however, much more needs to be taken into consideration. Churches are aware of it and on various occasions clearly expressed their position in this regard. The most recent document to cite is the statement which came from Rumania, signed by leaders of all Christian churches and of other religions in the country: "Process of European integration can be completed only if economic dimension will be accompanied by the spiritual dimension." (3) Ethical and spiritual dimensions of the future European construction are unavoidable requirements, if the process of European integration is to be successful. It also means that those who bear political responsibility for the future shape of the continent must take properly into account the role of the churches, religious communities and other value based groups and institutions.

If the future European Union is to survive as a cohesive unit, much more attention should be paid to the areas which are now outside practical negotiations in the accession process and the fulfilment of the criteria of accepting the *acquis communautaire.* It was stated in various fora and on several occasions that respect for diversity is a substantive element of European identity. How concretely will the "diversity of nations, cultures and values" be realised and respected in the future Union? From this follows the question which is the bottom line of the debate: is cultural diversity in Europe a threat to its unity or a positive contribution to it? And consequently, how can a common European identity be developed on the base of this diversity? There was a certain enthusiasm in discussions of this kind at the beginning of 90ies. Now it seems that the momentum of that time has lost its significance. Administrative work, full of vast number of technicalities, necessary for creating functioning institutions of the EU, has veiled the original intention. Accompanied by mistrust and very often by misunderstandings, this has caused an increasing lethargy in the progress of the European project. In such an atmosphere technical discussions on accession of new countries still continue, on some occasions even with remarkable progress, but the spirit of the whole endeavour risks gradually evaporating. Several years ago European Commission initiated not only a discussion but also a project under the name "Soul for Europe". The European Commission in co-operation with Christian churches and other communities of faith and conviction tried to contribute in this project to the search for "European soul" by specific methods and concrete tools. Projects of this kind should play a substantial role in developing a sense of European community.

3.3. The final aim of the Union

The future development of the Union, its role and responsibility on the European continent and the relation of the Union to other European countries, are themes which are closely related. How does one define a potential candidate for membership of the European Union? Are the criteria solely economic and political, or are they also geographic, societal, and cultural? These questions are not only theoretical ones. They have also consequences, which need to be considered. If the main goal of the EU is nothing but creating a common market, it is not necessary to struggle with a complicated process of accession. If however the goal is more complex and more challenging, it

needs to be formulated in an understandable way. It has to be recognised that European Union is not identical with Europe. The creation of a common Europe must be based neither on an expansion of a Western lifestyle nor on imposing of Western standards on other parts of the continent. The project of European unification has a chance to succeed only if the mutual dialogue and learning will be the main method in pursuing it. Having in mind this basic fact, the ultimate goal of the current process of integration, so strongly supported by the European Union institutions, should be clearly formulated. (4) Is the final goal creating of a certain political entity for which the name "European Union" might be used, or developing a sense of European community? "Economic and political entity" and "community" are two different things, which are not necessarily identical. By clarifying of the goal and also the internal ability to reach it, the EU should not only the internal difficulties related to its own *raison d'être*, but also the difficulties which can be expected in terms of the future relations of the EU with its perspective neighbours.

(4) Lack of vision for the future of Europe at the current stage of development has been identified on several occasions. Several contributions by top European politicians tackling this topic have been registered recently. One of the most important texts in this respect is the "Vision for Europe" of the Belgian prime minister Guy Verhofstadt, from September 2000.

3.4. European identity - European community

The European integration process needs to recognise spiritual and ethical aspects.

Discussion about finality of the European Union is not the only dimension absent from the present phase of the European integration process. Spiritual and ethical aspects are equally missing. One aspect belonging to this area is a debate about a substantial question: What is the role of communal values in Europe? The process of developing of a common Europe is certainly a process of developing a sense of European community. A major stream of European thinking, with its source in the tradition of the Enlightenment substantially supports the role of the human individual as the basic unit of society. This approach was also taken in the recent drafting of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The true community, though, is not a sum of individuals, and as well the true union is not a sum of nations. In the building of common Europe much more attention should be paid to the question of cohesion of community. Importance of building a community has been taken seriously into consideration earlier stage of the development of the European structure. However, in later days administrative and technical work in building of European institutions and foundations for the proper functioning of European political mechanism prevailed over the original ethos on which the whole construction has been built. The true value of "community" should be once again given importance in the European context.

Cohesion of community in a common Europe?

A new European construction, taking „community"serious, needs solidarity as a keystone.

A natural feature of the "community" is life in solidarity. The importance of solidarity will be increased after accession of new members from Central and Eastern Europe. Understanding and solidarity, especially from the point of view of the present Member States of the EU, will be one of keystones of building of a new European construction. One of the dangerous moments for the political potential of developing of a two-speed Europe is the construction of new division lines between "better" and "less successful" European countries, a division line between those who are rich and those whose living standards are not so high. Solidarity in European development needs to be taken as theme of a broader debate about Europe. This would mean a Europe in

How can we prevent new divison lines?

Specific role of the family as a basic unit of society.

which would be developed not only European institutions but also a true European community.

Communal life, the relation of the individual to the community and status of both individual and community, are very fundamental themes for Europe. The starting point for them should be underlining the very specific role of the family as a basic unit of society. There are crises for family life in some European countries. They have far-reaching impacts on various elements of societal life, including such divergent aspects as criminality but also a self-understanding of society as one cohesive unit. Demographic changes in Europe and the increasing problem of ageing in some European countries are also, at least in part, related to the crises of family and communal life. Even if this is a more general phenomenon, in some parts of Europe, the crises of this sort are progressing faster in some other parts while in others they are not so significant. The EU should make much more effort in support of family life. This should be pursued not only on the level of particular directives, but also in a general supportive attitude at the level of basic texts, such as European treaty or Charter of Fundamental Rights.

3.5. Regional and spiritual diversity

'European identity': who has the power to define it? Which concept of identity is appropriate to the existing diversity?

Concept of subsidiarity as a basic methodology.

Is there a need to develop 'multiple identity' further?

Respecting cultural, linguistic, and religious minorities.

Developing European identity is a main challenge of the continuing process of European unification. This process however must be shaped as a mutual interplay between unity and diversity. The richness of Europe consists in the variety of ethnic, cultural and religious traditions, which needs to be developed in its own way. Developing of the proper concept of subsidiarity has to be taken as a basic methodology in the process of European unification. It has to be recognised that European identity consists of different orders of values existing together. The biblical notion of multiple identity as it is introduced in Paul's letter to Romans is something that can be further developed especially in the conditions on our continent.

The situation of minorities is an issue in this context, widely recognised as an issue of substantial importance for the future of Europe. Respecting minorities is one of the political criteria for the candidate countries to demonstrate in the accession process. It has to be so, because only in this way can the rich diversity of Europe be saved. Protection of the rights of minorities is intensively followed in the activities of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe. The EU should be more consistent in following the issue and work more closely together with these more pan-European institutions. The basic guideline for dealing with minorities should be drawn from the fact that the same standards should be required from all stakeholders. Attention should be paid not only to ethnic minorities, but also to all other minorities: cultural, linguistic and also religious.

The issue of recognising various traditions and the rights of minorities needs to be taken into serious consideration. Its various aspects need to be brought into a proper balance. One question would be what is the role of local and regional communities in the current European process. How can a proper balance be found between adaptation to the main stream and preserving of indigenous cultures and identities? Is the expansion of positively European values necessary to be done at the expense of assimilation of local values? These questions do not have an exclusively spiritual or cultural/ethical character. Some of them also have political consequences. There has been a recent intensification of a debate in one part of Europe about equal

rights of partners of the same gender to form a quasi-family model of common life, which was launched as a part of a broad anti-discrimination initiative. It has found an echo also in official documents of the EU. This was understood by many as a hidden attack on the cultural and ethical integrity of some candidate countries. Religious and ethical standards in large parts of Europe do not allow compromise in the theme of registered partnership and acceptance of the new forms of the social life, which would oppose a broadly accepted and traditional family model. On the other hand, there are others in the churches who do see these as developments which they can support. The European Union has to recognise and be sensitive to these differences. On the one hand it has to support recognition of the rights of minorities. On the other hand, however, it has to find as well a way of honouring the right of the member states to guard their cultural autonomy of the member countries and to respect their own traditions including religious traditions. The right not to be discriminated against has an undisputed importance. It has however also its limitations. Non-discrimination is not an absolute principle. In the same way as minority can be discriminated against by a majority, majorities have to be protected against extreme or even violent minorities.

A proper balance between anti-discrimination and right for autonomy in certain aspects and within certain limits is more important than absolutising only one of them. The right of cultural autonomy should be accepted as a general standard in common Europe. (5)

4.   Churches in the process of European integration
(...)
Christianity is not a unique value for the European continent today and a model of 'Christian Europe' is not appropriate."
(...)
The variety of church and religious traditions in Europe is to be understood not as an obstacle but as an enrichment, which could be of use in the creation of a common European structure. It is completely unsatisfactory to pursue exclusively the pattern of market values to create a common Europe. Accompanying ethical and spiritual dimensions are essential for the success of the project.
(...)
In spite of their imperfections as organisations and methods which reflect a variety of ecclesial, national and cultural differences across Europe, churches have recently contributed intensively to facilitating the resolution of conflicts, breaking down barriers, and seeking mutual understanding. This has been especially true at local and regional levels. Promotion of the culture of peace has been seen in many occasions as a final and ultimate goal of the EU as well as the original inspiration, which has stood since the foundation of the EU. The close relationship of both - European inspiration and the Gospel ("Good News") of Churches is a value which should be not overlooked.
The churches play an important role in society by fulfilling their pastoral and diaconal tasks. The experience of churches in work

with various, sometimes very divergent, sectors of society such as with young, unemployed, disable, sick and migrant people, as well as with all who are excluded from the mainstream society would be a contribution to community building and improving social cohesion. Churches have a special experience of work with Roma communities. In some European countries co-existence between the mainstream and Roma communities creates substantial problems at various levels of society. Churches can contribute by a significant commitment and by offering their experience and their methods in overcoming these difficulties.

(...)

Churches are defenders of the traditional values of communal life. (...) Churches play an important role in sharing and expanding of positive life experience among various types of communities. (...) Churches have a vital role in developing a coherent view of sustainability of prosperity in Europe.

(...)

For a common Europe words such as "hope" and "reconciliation" are also parts of the Christian message of crucial importance. No community can be built without a vision of the future. Substantial elements in forming a vision are forgiveness, which enables us to deal with the past, and hope.

Comments

Some questions which might be asked in the Member Churches and associated organisations of CEC are:

- What hopes and fears do people in your church or organisation have about the future of the European Union? and your country's membership of it?

- What opportunities or problems will the European Union present to your country in the future?

- What difference do you think that the European Union with more Member States will make to your country (whether or not it is or will be a member)?

- How does your church or organisation evaluate these hopes and fears, opportunities and problems?

The whole text is available through:
http://www.cec-kek.org/English/IntegrationprocE.htm

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE MIDST OF CHANGES
**Open discussion of the Church and Society Commission
of the Conference of European Churches (CEC)**

The theme of civil society has been discussed in the Church and Society Commission of the CEC (CSC/CEC) during a considerable period. This paper has the following purposes:
a) to summarise the previous discussion, which has been carried out in various fora of the CSC/CEC including the Working Group on the European Integration Process, taking account of various contributions relevant to the theme
b) to respond to a very specific development regarding civil society in Europe and the emergence of a trans-national dimension of civil society. In this second respect, a particular emphasis comes from the European Commission in its recently published White Paper on European Governance.
The focus of CEC's interest is, therefore, a contribution to the debate by the churches and a possible reaction on their part to the European Commission's paper as well as promoting a deeper understanding of recent developments in civil society *per se*. The paper aims to stimulate debate about the action and activities of churches in society, in two distinctive but related steps, which will help to focus attention on
a) the role of churches in civil society;
b) effective reaction related to the theme of civil society towards European institutions dealing with this topic.

Comments

The paper is structured in five parts :
1. *Introduction*
2. *Civil society and the changing nature of democracy*
3. *Churches and civil society*
4. *European dimension of civil society*
5. *Invitation to an open debate.*

Text (extracts)

(...)
3.   CHURCHES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

3.1. A triangle of relations: state – church – society
The dynamic process of increasing self-awareness in society has serious consequences for the way in which basic questions of society are recognised and formulated. For a long time one significant question was the relationship between state and church. In the new circumstances this relation is influenced by a new actor to be taken into consideration: civil society. **The new dynamics need to be reflected in the evaluation of the balance and relationship between the points of the triangle: state – church – society.** This has a particular importance in new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, where churches are looking with special emphasis at their new role in the modern and open democratic society. Churches in western democracies, however, cannot avoid the task of fresh thinking about a social reality with new challenges related to the process of secularisation. **What is the role of the churches in this process? How do they, in this new dynamic, understand their relationship on the one hand to the state and on the other to society?**

Another new aspect of the triangle 'state – church – society' is the awareness of an emerging European dimension of this topic. The question of how churches can understand their role in the redefined dynamics of the triangle state – church – society on both national and European levels, particularly in their **relationship with European institutions, has in this respect a special importance. Is some experience available in this regard? Are churches involved in practical activities in this area?**

Do the churches understand that they have a particular task in clarifying these relationships? Is this related to a particular vision of society and its internal relation in the future?

3.2. Richness and limits

It is evident that in looking for answers to these questions, the position of churches will differ. There have to be recognised limiting factors, which necessarily influence this debate. To these belong: existing relationship between individual states and churches in both their codified juridical aspects as well as in their more informal forms, the minority/majority situation of a particular churches, political and social circumstances, cultural and historical background and some others. In this respect **an important role is played both by the self-understanding of the various churches and the differences which exist between different church families (Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, Roman Catholic) and their respective ecclesiologies.** However, these limiting factors do not need to be seen as an obstacle – quite the contrary. They have to be taken in their variety as enriching elements, which in a positive way bring a new light into understanding of changing dynamics in society. The question in this respect is: how can be these elements brought into dialogue with each other? **Are we able to name explicit contributions, which illustrate this cultural and ecclesial richness?**

3.3. The role of the churches

Against this background, the old question receives a new flavour. It is highly relevant nowadays to ask: what is the role of the church in society? The question has two sides: one formal and the other related to content. In concentrating on the formal side of the question, a whole spectrum of opinions is found. On the one hand it is possible to identify an opinion, which affirms church as a part of civil society, even as a very specific part. Following such an understanding, it is necessary to clarify the question of co-operation with other stakeholders in civil society. Sometime in particular fields other stakeholders in civil society are able to deliver better work than the churches, even in areas of church's focus and interest. Understanding churches as a part of civil society therefore encourages them to join in NGO activities and, as far as possible, to co-operate with NGOs on concrete issues. The role of the churches can be often in providing ethical reasoning and the general perspective to the activities, the details of which are carried on by others. Churches are a specific part of civil society. This should not however prevent them to work together with others in cases when it is appropriate.

The other pole of the formal understanding of relation between church and society affirms that churches are not part of civil society, but a species *"sui generis"*. The task of the church in this understanding is to be a counterpart of civil society and react to society developments. **How do you understand the formal position of the church in the changing society? What is and what should be the relation of the church with other stakeholders of civil society, particularly with NGOs?** In terms of sociology these may be different approaches. The key point in both cases however is that churches have something of their own to contribute, which no other sector of civil society (or outside civil society) cannot offer.

3.4. Specificity and content of the church's contribution

Churches are called to proclaim and witness gospel both in word and deeds. This is the basic task of the churches and their mission and this is their specific 'contribution' to the life of civil society. By fulfilling the main task there are obviously many areas in which churches can contribute to the raising self-awareness of civil society and its participatory character. The most important contribution of the churches is not in the formal definition whether church is seen as a part or standing over against civil society. The crucial importance is the content of the church's contribution.

The following list offers some particular areas, in which churches can make valuable contributions to the life of civil society:
- In providing of ethical reasoning and the general perspective to the activities, which are carried on by others. In this understanding the role of the churches in civil society should be one of a responsible actor which raises its voice in all important instances.
- To join NGO activities and as far as possible to co-operate with them on concrete issues. Is this also a way Christian mission can be understood?
- Churches are that part of society striving for the common good with other partners. Because churches are in their worldly dimension the sociological entities in concrete (national) contexts and at the same time transcend any narrow definition of a given context, they might also be able to offer concepts, language and communication for a civil society, which goes beyond the immediate context. This enables churches to play an active part as possible mediators in society: in conflicts, between various stakeholders and different views etc.

Certainly this list is far from complete. For further elaboration on the possible areas and content of church's engagement in civil society is possible to consult available recourses.(1) In order to reach the goal, there need however to be at hand available instruments. Therefore an appropriate question in this regard is: **what methods can churches use in order to fulfil their mission in contemporary society? And, what processes can we envisage in order to enable churches the most efficient contribution in identified areas?**

4. European dimension of civil society

A significant fact is that until recently the concept of civil society has been used more or less exclusively as the counterbalance against organised authoritarian power on the state level. Today, however, the role of state in Europe is diminishing and is being re-defined. Its place is in many areas taken by the supra-national structure of the European Union, which is increasingly important. Democratically elected institutions of the European Union face however at the same time severe problem of credibility. At various places the public speaks about the 'power of Brussels' which is distant and incomprehensible from the viewpoint of majority of public, not mentioning its other features as bureaucracy and lack of transparency, which are in this context also named. Democratic deficit is part of the problem, which the European institutions have to face in the coming period of time.

(1) e.g. papers: Laurens Hogebrink, Summary of the CEC/CSC working group discussion on the theme of civil society, and Fritz Erich Anhelm, Die Zivilgesellschaft und die Kirchen Europas (In German), paper presented at the Plenary meeting of the CSC/CEC 2001.

For this reason recent activity of the European Commission in this area might merit attention, as part of the process of the discussion by the churches of the theme of civil society. In its latest initiative **the European Commission attempts to address the problem in its various facets in launching its debate about the structure and form of European governance and by publishing a White Paper**.(2) This seeks to make the European decision-making processes more accessible to citizens and more transparent. One method of doing this is through a greater involvement of civil society. The Commission says:

Civil society plays an important role in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people's needs. Churches and religious communities have a particular contribution to make. The organisations which make up civil society mobilise people and support, for instance, those suffering from exclusion or discrimination. The Union has encouraged the development of civil society in the applicant countries, as part of their preparation for membership. Non governmental organisations play an important role at global level in development policy. They often act as an early warning system for the direction of political debate. (p.14)

The White Paper proposes various actions in this field (p.17) the principal aim of which is the proposal for the Council and European Parliament to review their relationship with civil society and, building on the minimum standards for consultations, contribute to a general reference framework for consultation by 2004.

The references to churches and religious communities combined with the recommended actions give a clear opportunity to respond to the White Paper and develop ways of relating to the European Union institutions – this particularly relates to the development of partnership arrangements. The consultation period of the White Paper is until 31 March 2002. This period opens an opportunity to clarify the basic intentions of the European political institutions with their relations to civil society and to the churches. As the part of the discussion could be raised the questions as: how serious is the European Commission with this effort? How they distinguish between relations of the institutions to civil society in general and relations of institutions to various organisations of civil society? In this framework however needs to be raised also the basic question: **What should be the substance of the reaction from the churches?**

The discussion on civil society in the framework of the CSC is an opportunity to clarify what might be the reaction of churches to the invitation formulated by the European Commission and what might be the content of the churches' contribution to the public debate in this regard.

Invitation to an open debate

The Church and Society Commission would welcome contributions to the questions raised in this paper. It would also welcome open debate and other comments, which could enrich discussion on the role of the churches in civil society as well as contributions to that part of the initiative, the European Commission that concerns churches.

Comments

Churches and other religious communities are a significant part of the European society. The debate on civil society should take place also on a local and national level to promote a deeper understanding of recent developments and to enrich the active role of churches.

The whole text is available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

"CITIZENSHIP, SOLIDARITY: WHAT SORT OF EUROPE DO WE WANT?"

LIAISON COMMITTEE OF NGOs
ENJOYING CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMISSION DE LIAISON DES ONG
DOTÉES DU STATUT CONSULTATIF
AUPRÈS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE   CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY   ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE
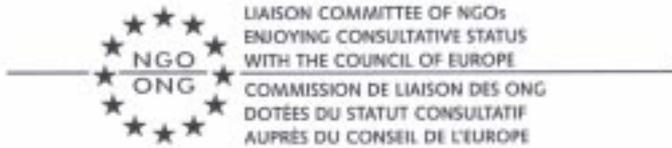
The Council of Europe recognised the influence of Non Governmental Organisations – NGOs, as early as 1952, when it gave international NGOs the opportunity to acquire „consultative status". The rules for co-operation have been improved and updated over the years and are currently governed by Committee of Ministers Resolution (93) 38. Nowadays, more than 400 NGOs enjoy the consultative status. The following declaration was worked out at a joint NGO/Parliamentarians' Conference in November 2001 in Strasbourg. It underlines the importance of life-long formal and non-formal education and encourages a greater participation by civil society in European political life.

Comments

The design of an outline of Europe is a permanent task which needs collaboration of citizens, civil society and political bodies.

The role of NGOs as part of an active civil society is recognised.

Active participation of all citizens is needed.

Text

1. Parliamentarians and NGO representatives met at the Council of Europe on 6 and 7 November 2001 to design together the outline of Europe demanded by citizens in the face of present-day society's ills, and to debate the role of Parliaments and NGOs in making civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, a full reality in the whole of Europe.

2. Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in enhancing participation of citizens in political life, they

   i. renewed their commitment to pluralist parliamentary democracy as the best system for ensuring the democratic functioning of society based on the values of freedom, justice, equality and solidarity, Human Rights and the rule of law which are the Council of Europe's *raison d'être*;

   ii. recognised the existence of an active civil society and its NGOs as a vital component of European society and as an important and indispensable element of democracy;

   iii. reaffirmed the essential role of NGOs in a pluralist democracy by contributing to checks and balances and enhancing the active participation of all citizens in the conduct of public affairs.

3. Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in promoting democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities, they

   i. underlined the importance of life-long formal and non-formal education to nurture a democratic culture throughout Europe and to promote citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a pluralist democracy;

ii. stressed their joint responsibility in combating marginalisation, civic apathy, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and violence;

Education for democratic citizenship needs developed partnerships.

iii. called for particular efforts to be made to develop partnerships between educational institutions, local communities, NGOs and political authorities to strengthen education for democratic citizenship with its political, economic, social, (inter)cultural and ecological dimensions, and with its different levels - from local to international;

Do young people have a real chance to use responsibilities and develop a daily practice of active citizenship?

iv. underlined the necessity of activities carried out by young people, and with them, which favour the exercise of their responsibilities and the daily practice of active citizenship;

Participatory democracy as an urgent need.

v. called for seeking ways and means of encouraging greater participation by civil society in European political life, thus strengthening participatory democracy as an integral part of representative democracy.

4. Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in strategies to promote social cohesion, they

i. reaffirmed the indivisible nature of all Human Rights, be they civil, political, social, economic or cultural;

Social cohesion and education for democratic citizenship should be linked.

ii. confirmed that social cohesion between all those who live together in the Greater Europe without dividing lines is an essential part of human rights and dignity;

iii. recalled that social cohesion would be all the more efficient if it were associated with education for democratic citizenship;

iv. underlined the need for particular efforts to be made to promote social justice, in particular by involving marginalized groups in public and economic life, and for social partners and NGOs to take complementary action;

v. called for full accessibility and social inclusion of people with disabilities and full recognition of their organisations.

5. Focusing their discussion on citizenship and solidarity at global level, they welcomed the action of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) in Lisbon, set up as a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, and invited all European states to join it.

6. Participants paid specific attention to the challenges facing societies at the present time, and

i. reaffirmed that both sustainable human development and democracy at all levels of human society - local, national, regional and global - are essential if peace is to endure;

A differentiated view on roots of terrorism.

ii. declared that the roots of terrorism are in particular embedded in poverty, injustice, inequality, discrimination and hatred, that preventive strategies would have to include efforts in the fields of education and social cohesion which seek to counter exclusion, alienation and

Democracy should not be detected by the fight against terrorism.

Globalisation as a central issue should be directed to become a positive force.

intolerant attitudes and try to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way;

iii. recalled that the fight against terrorism must not undermine democracy, Human Rights, in particular individual freedom, and justice on the grounds of defending these values;

iv. expressed the expectation that a democratic, solidary Europe will substantially work for an environment - at the national, European and global levels alike – which is conducive to sustainable development, global human security and to the elimination of poverty; Europe will do the utmost to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people.

7. Participants called for legislation providing NGOs with a framework and resources to enable them to play their full part.

8. Participants invited the Parliamentary Assembly and the NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe to intensify co-operation, notably by improving their access to the work of the Parliamentary Committees in their different fields of competence. Furthermore, the participants welcomed the creation of the Sub-Committee on the Strengthening of Democratic Institutions, which would allow for a structured dialogue between the Liaison Committee of NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe and parliamentarians.

In the same vein, the participants expressed the wish that Committee of Ministers' Resolution (93)38 on relations between the Council of Europe and international non-governmental organisations be revised in order that it reflect the actual partnership between NGOs and the Council of Europe.

9. Participants required that the present declaration be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Comments

The text is also available through:
http://www.coe.int/T/E/N.G.O/public/News/articles/final_declaration_7_november_2001.asp

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation founded in May 1949. The Parliamentary Assembly is the deliberative body of the Council of Europe, composed of 301 representatives (and the same number of substitutes) appointed by the 43 member states' national parliaments.
The Council of Europe is also a platform for voluntary associations. By granting consultative status to over 350 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Council of Europe is building a real partnership with those who represent ordinary people. Through various consultation arrangements (including discussions and colloquies) it brings NGOs into intergovernmental activities and encourages dialogue between members of parliament and associations on major social issues. The Parliamentary Assembly has adopted two recommendations in 1993 and 1999 that deal with the role of religion and religious education in Europe.

RECOMMENDATION 1202 (1993) on religious tolerance in a democratic society

Comments	Text
Text adopted by the Assembly on 2 February 1993 (23rd Sitting).	1. The Assembly has already adopted a number of texts on related subjects and recalls in particular Recommendation 963 (1983) on cultural and educational means of reducing violence, Resolution 885 (1987) on the Jewish contribution to European culture, Recommendation 1086 (1988) on the situation of the Church and freedom of religion in Eastern Europe, Recommendation 1162 (1991) on the contribution of the Islamic civilisation to European culture, and Recommendation 1178 (1992) on sects and new religious movements.
	2. Attention should also be drawn to the hearing on religious tolerance held by the Committee on Culture and Education in Jerusalem on 17 and 18 March 1992 and to the colloquy marking the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Jewish refugees in Turkey held on 17 September 1992 in Istanbul.
This is the positive side of religion.	3. Religion provides an enriching relationship for the individual with himself and his god, as well as with the outside world and the society in which he lives.
Plurality of religions can be found in many European societies.	4. Mobility within Europe and migratory movements to Europe have always resulted in the meeting of differing world views, religious beliefs as well as notions of human existence.
	5. This meeting of differing religious beliefs can lead to greater mutual understanding and enrichment, although it could also result in a strengthening of trends towards separatism and encourage fundamentalism.
The secular society is the dominant political model.	6. Western Europe has developed the model of secular democracy within which a variety of religious beliefs are in theory tolerated. History has shown, however, that such tolerance is also possible under a religious government (for example the Arabs in Spain and the Ottoman Empire).
	7. It is a matter of concern that in numerous countries there has been a renewed occurrence of xenophobia, racism and religious intolerance.
Religion can nurture conflicts, but can also support healing and reconciliation.	8. Religion often reinforces, or is used to reinforce, international, social and national minority conflicts.

A concept of Europe needs shared values for a sustainable living together.

Is the status of religious tolerance inadequate?

Focus on common religious concerns about the value of people. All are made in the image of God.

9. There is a recognisable crisis of values (or rather the lack of them) in present-day Europe. The pure market society is revealed as inadequate as was communism for individual well-being and social responsibility. The recourse to religion as an alternative has, however, to be reconciled with the principles of democracy and human rights.

10. In the context of current and future social trends and the growing pressures of multicultural communities, inadequate attention has so far been given to promotion of religious tolerance.

11. In each of the three main monotheistic religions a basis can be found for tolerance and mutual respect towards people with differing beliefs or towards non-believers. Every human being is viewed as the creation of the one God and, as such, is due the same dignity and the same rights, regardless of his convictions.

12. The question of tolerance between religions has to be further developed. The three monotheistic religions should be encouraged to give greater emphasis to those basic moral values that are essentially similar and tolerant.

13. European history shows that the co-existence of Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures when based on mutual respect and tolerance has contributed to the prosperity of nations.

14. The universal importance of religious freedom, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, has to be reaffirmed. This freedom is rooted in the dignity of man and its realisation implies the realisation of a free, democratic society.

15. The secular state should not impose any religious obligations on its citizens. It should also encourage respect for all recognised religious communities and ease their relations with society as a whole.

16. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers call upon the governments of the member states, the European Community as well as the responsible authorities and organisations:

Legal guarantees and their observance

i. to guarantee religious freedom, freedom of conscience and freedom of worship with specific reference to the rights indicated in Assembly Recommendation 1086 (1988), paragraph 10;

ii. to allow for flexibility in the accommodation of different religious practices (for example in dress, eating and observance of holy days);

Education and exchanges

Religious education is given a high priority.

iii. to ensure that studies of religions and ethics are part of the general school curriculum, and to work towards a differentiated and careful depiction of religions in school books (including history books) and in classroom teaching with a view to achieving a better and deeper understanding of the various religions;

iv. to emphasise that a knowledge of one's own religion or ethical principles is a prerequisite for true tolerance and that it might act also as a safeguard against indifference or prejudice;

v. to establish a ''religious history school-book conference'' consisting of a representative selection of theologians, historians and philosophers for the purpose of compiling basic

texts, documents and commentaries for teaching in schools;

vi. to make it possible to present to young people the ideas and deeds of living individuals of different religious beliefs as examples of religious tolerance in practice;

vii. to facilitate, in the framework of existing exchange programmes for secondary school students, university students and other young people, meetings and discussions with informed persons of differing beliefs;

viii. to promote inter-religious encounters and organisations that serve the purpose of furthering mutual understanding between religions and thereby peace and respect for human rights;

ix. to consider the provision of similar facilities for the religious schools of all recognised religions;

Information and ''sensibilisation''

x. to ensure that fundamental religious texts and related literature are translated and made available in public libraries;

xi. to organise cultural projects on religious issues in the context of cultural promotion programmes;

Research

xii. to facilitate the development of a network of research institutes in Europe which would:

— collect, analyse and evaluate literature on religious tolerance;

— provide an information service with a good selection of this literature;

— organise workshops and research conferences on religious tolerance;

— serve as a competent and authoritative source of public information;

xiii. to stimulate academic work (seminars, degree courses, doctoral dissertations) in European universities on questions concerning religious tolerance.

RECOMMENDATION 1396 (1999) on Religion and Democracy

Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1999 (5th sitting).

1. The Council of Europe, by its statute, is an organisation which is essentially humanistic. At the same time, as a guardian of human rights, it must ensure freedom of thought, conscience and religion as affirmed in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It must also ensure that manifestations of religion comply with the limitations set out in the same article.

2. The Assembly has already taken an interest in the diversity of the cultures and religions in Europe. Their co-existence and interaction have considerably enriched the European heritage. In particular, the Assembly refers to Resolution 885 (1987) on the Jewish contribution to European culture, Resolution 916 (1989) on redundant religious buildings, Recommendation 1162 (1991) and Order No. 465 on the contribution of the Islamic civilisation to European culture and Recommendation 1291 (1996) on Yiddish culture.

3. The Assembly is also aware that, even in a democracy, there are still certain tensions between religious expression and political power. There is a religious aspect to many of the problems that contemporary society faces, such as intolerant

fundamentalist movements and terrorist acts, racism and xenophobia and ethnic conflicts; consideration should also be given to inequality between sexes in religion.

The Assembly has already addressed some of these issues in Recommendation 1202 (1993) on religious tolerance in democratic society and Recommendation 1222 (1993) on the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Extremism is not religion itself, but a distortion or perversion of it. None of the great age-old religions preaches violence. Extremism is a human invention that diverts religion from its humanist path to make it an instrument of power.

4. It is not up to politicians to decide on religious matters. As for religions they must not try to take the place of democracy or grasp political power and they must respect the definition of human rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the rule of law.

5. Democracy and religion need not be incompatible. Quite the opposite. Democracy has proved to be the best framework for freedom of conscience, the exercise of faith and religious pluralism. For its part, religion, through its moral and ethical commitment, the values it upholds, its critical approach and its cultural expression, can be a valid partner of democratic society.

6. Democratic states, whether secular or linked to a religion, must allow all religions that abide by the conditions set out in the European Convention on Human Rights to develop in the same conditions, and enable them to find an appropriate place in society.

7. Problems arise when the authorities try to use religion for their own ends, or when religions try to abuse the State for the purpose of achieving their objectives.

8. Many conflicts also arise from mutual ignorance, the resulting stereotypes and, ultimately, rejection. In a democratic system, politicians have a duty to prevent a whole religion from being associated with actions carried out for instance by fanatical religious minorities.

9. Religious extremism that encourages intolerance, prejudice and/or violence is also the symptom of a sick society and poses a threat to a democratic society. As it compromises public order, it must be fought with those means in conformity with the rule of law, and as it is an expression of a social malaise, it can only be combated if the authorities tackle society's real problems.

10. Education is the key way to combat ignorance and stereotypes. School and university curricula should be revised, as a matter of urgency, so as to promote better understanding of the various religions; religious instruction should not be given at the expense of lessons about religions as an essential part of the history, culture and philosophy of humankind.

11. Religious leaders could make a considerable contribution to efforts to combat prejudice, through the manner in which they express themselves in public and their influence on believers.

12. The combating of prejudice also necessitates the development of ecumenism and dialogue between religions.

13. The Assembly consequently recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of the member states:
   i. to guarantee freedom of conscience and religious expression that conforms with the conditions set out in the European Convention on Human Rights for all citizens and, in particular, to:
      a. safeguard religious pluralism by allowing all religions to develop in identical conditions;
      b. facilitate, within the limits set out in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the observation of religious rites and customs, for example with regard to marriage, dress, holy days (with scope for adjusting leave) and military service;
      c. denounce any attempt to foment conflict within and between religions for partisan ends;
      d. ensure freedom and equal rights of education to all citizens regardless of their religious belief, customs and rites;
      e. ensure fair and equal access to the public media for all religions.
   ii. to promote education about religions and, in particular, to:
      a. step up the teaching about religions as sets of values towards which young people must develop a discerning approach, within the framework of education of ethics and democratic citizenship;
      b. promote the teaching in schools of the comparative history of different religions, stressing their origins, the similarities in some of their values and the diversity of their customs, traditions, festivals, etc;
      c. encourage the study of the history and philosophy of religions and research into those subjects at university, in parallel with theological studies;
      d. co-operate with religious educational institutions in order to introduce or reinforce, in their curricula, aspects relating to human rights, history, philosophy and science;
      e. avoid – in the case of children – any conflict between the state-promoted education about religion and the religious faith of the families, in order to respect the free decision of the families in this very sensitive matter.
   iii. to promote better relations with and between religions and in particular:
      a. engage in more systematic dialogue with religious and humanist leaders about the major problems facing society, which would make it possible to take account of the population's cultural and religious views before political decisions are taken and to involve religious communities and organisations in the task of upholding democratic values and promoting innovative ideas;
      b. encourage dialogue between religions by providing opportunities for expression, discussion and meetings between representatives of different religions;
      c. promote regular dialogue between theologians, philosophers and historians, as well as with representatives of other branches of knowledge;
      d. widen and strengthen partnership with religious communities and organisations, and especially with those which have deep cultural and ethical traditions among local

Education about religion, as dealing with information and knowledge, should be supplemented with education from religion, aimed at understanding and finding one's own relation or commitment to (or against) religion or belief.

This was a contested paragraph during the debate.

populations in social, charitable, missionary, cultural and educational activities.

iv. to promote the cultural and social expression of religions and, in particular, to:

    a. ensure equal conditions for the maintenance and conservation of religious buildings and of the assets of all religions, as an integral part of the national and European heritage;

    b. ensure that redundant religious buildings are reused in conditions which are, as far as possible, compatible with the original intention of their construction;

    c. safeguard cultural traditions and different religious festivals;

    d. encourage the social and charitable work undertaken by religious communities and organisations;

14. The Assembly also recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

i. lay down, as part of its projects on education for democratic citizenship and history teaching, guidelines for the introduction of educational syllabuses relevant to points 13.ii.(a), (b) and (c) of this recommendation;

ii. continue to provide a framework for pan-European meetings between representatives of different religions.

Comments

It seems that the Council of Europe is becoming more sensitive towards the relevance of religions in Europe. This might partly be due to the influence of new member states, where the orthodox church has an important role in society and politics.

The recommendations are available through:
http://stars.coe.fr/ta/ta93/erec1202.htm (On religious tolerance in a democratic society).
http://stars.coe.fr/doc/doc98/edoc8270.htm (Religion and democracy).

EUROPE AND THE CHURCHES

The former EU President Jacques Santer addressed the General Assembly of the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS) on 14 September 1998. Shortly before this body merged with the Conference of European Churches and became the Commission on Church and Society (CSC) of the CEC, Santer made some valuable remarks on the relations between the churches and the European Union as well as on the activities around "A Soul for Europe".

Comments

After thanks to the churches and their associations as special partners of the European Commission in the preparation and implementation of plans and policies as they affect the citizens, Santer referred to the 'Soul for Europe' activities, an initiative sponsored by the Commission with the European Parliament.

The call for a "Soul for Europe" has started an ongoing debate about ethical and religious inspirations and contributions in the debate about common values and meanings concerning Europe as well as on contributions from European citizens and their respective organisations and bodies in a civil society.

Text (extracts)

(...)

Let me take this opportunity to offer a few remarks on the thinking behind A Soul for Europe, this initiative which gives us the chance to propose and promote projects of religious and ethical inspiration.

Apart from their spiritual, ethical and obviously European orientation, the Commission hopes that these projects will:

— contribute to giving meaning and direction to the European unification process;

— boost tolerance and pluralism and put the accent on mutual respect and acceptance of differences of nationality, sex, religion and culture;

— promote solidarity with those who are the least well-off in whatever respect;

— involve individuals and groups who as a rule are not given a say in discussions on European policy;

— emphasise the concept of freedom of opinion and action in the face of the manifold constraints of modem society.

To give Europe a soul, it takes more than merely reciting the principles behind integration – reconciliation, peace, solidarity, justice, liberty and human dignity. The principles must also be applied, though given the complex realities facing our political leaders they will be applied only imperfectly, and sometimes they will contradict each other.

In other words, the practical implementation of European policies, like any other policies of course, has taught us that reference to principles alone will not suffice. Identification of the ideal solution always demands moral awareness and unfailing vigilance if we are to remain true to these principles. It follows that we must sometimes take risks and be aware that conflicts may have to be resolved.

The purpose of establishing a European policy is to pave the way for the future, secure peace, organise our collective life, create a community and ensure the social and political coexistence of peoples and nations. Seen in this light, calling for a Soul for Europe implies calling for religious and philosophical bodies to make their contribution and offer their responses to the questions that arise in the life of each and every one of us and affect each of our individual identities. The churches, in particular, are therefore expected to give their interpretation and meaning of European integration.

(...)

As I see it the next stage in the process of reaching a consensus in relations between the Union and the European structures representing the churches and religious communities should be

A next stage in the relations between the churches and the European Union is mentioned.

Further on Santer mentioned Christianity as one of the seeds of European identity.

Santer emphasizes the value of other religions and the meaning of interfaith cooperation.

an agreement to stop viewing our relations in the light of the concepts we are used to applying in our discussions in the national framework. These concepts are based on a specific history, a specific cultural environment and specific sensitivities. None of them can be trans-posed unchanged on to the European level. To put it simply, we cannot seek inspiration either in the German law governing church/state relations, or in the strict separation between churches and state in French secular model, or indeed in any other national arrangement.

But all these models will have to be borne in mind for European purposes, for they can provide guidance when we establish new concepts tailored to the European context and the character of the Community institutions.

(...)

But as I see it, emphasising the tight link between Christianity and the history of our continent does not imply that Europe's spiritual, cultural and social identity is of purely Christian origin. Other traditions that Christianity took over or compromised with have left deep traces and made their own great contributions to the development of Europe and the emergence of a European spirit.

Judaism, out of which Christianity emerged, is one of them. So we are quite right to speak of Europe's Judeo-Christian tradition, especially as throughout the centuries there have always been large Jewish communities alongside Christianity. It has made so many striking contributions to the European identity, not only through its artistic, literary and scientific achievements but also through the great successes of the Jewish community in the worlds of business, industry, commerce and politics.

Islam, the third great religious tradition, rooted in the Mediterranean, has also had its impact on Europe's culture. We all know that Europe's familiarity with the philosophy and literature of the ancient Greeks is largely attributable to the scholars of the Islamic world who were intellectually so far ahead of their Latin-speaking contemporaries in the Middle Ages and who were behind the synthesis of classical rationalism and Christian spirituality.

And we should beware of underestimating the Islamic world's challenge to Europe and enrichment of it through the centuries right down to the present day in terms of politics, civilisation and religion.

The whole meaning of the intercultural and interfaith dialogue between Christianity, Judaism and Islam (to which we are bound to add the Humanist tradition flowing from the Enlightenment) is to be found, then, in Europe's culture and history. With the influx of people from various Muslim countries into the European Union, it is now becoming urgent for political reasons to multiply our efforts to improve mutual understanding and intensive exchanges between Christianity and Islam, between the Christian churches and Muslim communities.

Perhaps I should also recall that a European Muslim identity is beginning to emerge in the Muslim communities; I regard this as a valuable phenomenon and a source of encouragement that merits our support.

In general terms I do want to stress how important it is for the future of the Union that we succeed in seeing that the various

Encouraging initiatives and commitments from the churches and their organisations.

ethnic, cultural and religious communities to be found in Europe can come to live together. But this is too ambitious an objective for politicians to attain on their own. Initiatives and commitments from the churches and their organisations will be particularly welcome – indeed precious – here.
(...)

The European Union as a community of values.

The European Union is a community of peoples, founded on a consensus as to values. May I draw your attention to the fact the Amsterdam Treaty, which is expected to be ratified by the end of the year, contains a mew article stating that "the Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law" Article F(1). Article F(1) provides that a Member State acting in breach of these rules may have certain of its rights under the Treaty suspended, and may even be excluded, which makes clear that this is no mere statement of intent. What is most noteworthy with this article is that for the first time these general principles now have legally mandatory status, with penalties for failure to comply with them.

If we read this new article in conjunction with a whole series of new material inserted by both the Maastricht and the Amsterdam Treaties, we see how far the Union has come in the last ten years in the Union's qualitative development. To give just a few examples, let me mention the establishment of Union citizenship, the commitment to subsidiarity, the organisation of the Committee of the Regions, the beginning of economic and monetary union, the upgrading of Parliament's status in the decision-making process, the recognition of the role of political parties at European level as factors for integration and, finally, the Declaration on the status of churches and non-confessional organisations.

The Community was originally conceived as a Union of peoples and states, but it is growing into a Union of citizens.

Comments

The whole text of Jacques Santer's speech is printed in:
Europe under Challenge - Reconciliation and Meaning, Occasional Paper No.4, Ecumenical Association for Church and Society, Brussels 1997, p.25-37.

It is also available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

CHARTA OECUMENICA
Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE)

The Charta Oecumenica was signed in April 2001 on the occasion of a European Ecumenical Encounter in Strasbourg / France. The purpose of the document is described in the preamble:
"Europe - from the Atlantic to the Urals, from the North Cape to the Mediterranean - is today more pluralist in culture than ever before. With the Gospel, we want to stand up for the dignity of the human person created in God's image and, as churches together, contribute towards reconciling peoples and cultures.
In this spirit, we adopt this charter as a common commitment to dialogue and co-operation. It describes fundamental ecumenical responsibilities, from which follow a number of guidelines and commitments. It is designed to promote an ecumenical culture of dialogue and co-operation at all levels of church life, and to provide agreed criteria for this. However, it has no magisterial or dogmatic character, nor is it legally binding under church law."

Comments

The charter consists of three parts. The first two sections explain that churches are Called Together to Unity in Faith and Proclaiming the Gospel together.

Section three deals with the common responsibility of the Churches in Europe.

The text emphasises crucial Christian values that can strengthen a humane, socially conscious Europe.

Text (extracts)

I. We believe in "one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church"
(...)
II. On The Way Towards The Viskble Fellowship of the Churches in Europe
(...) We commit ourselves (...) to promote ecumenical openness and co-operation in Christian education, and in theological training, continuing education and research. (...)

III. OUR COMMON RESPONSIBILITY IN EUROPE
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"
(Matthew 5:9)

7. Participating in the building of Europe
Through the centuries Europe has developed a primarily Christian character in religious and cultural terms. However, Christians have failed to prevent suffering and destruction from being inflicted by Europeans, both within Europe and beyond. We confess our share of responsibility for this guilt and ask God and our fellow human beings for forgiveness.
Our faith helps us to learn from the past, and to make our Christian faith and love for our neighbours a source of hope for morality and ethics, for education and culture, and for political and economic life, in Europe and throughout the world.
The churches support an integration of the European continent. Without common values, unity cannot endure. We are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity constitutes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe. On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail. We likewise insist on the reverence for life, the value of marriage and the family, the preferential option for the poor, the readiness to forgive, and in all things compassion.

As churches and as international communities we have to counteract the danger of Europe developing into an integrated West and a disintegrated East, and also take account of the North-South divide within Europe. At the same time we must avoid Eurocentricity and heighten Europe's sense of responsibility for the whole of humanity, particularly for the poor all over the world.

We commit ourselves

- to seek agreement with one another on the substance and goals of our social responsibility, and to represent in concert, as far as possible, the concerns and visions of the churches vis-à-vis the secular European institutions;
- to defend basic values against infringements of every kind
- to resist any attempt to misuse religion and the church for ethnic or nationalist purposes.

8. Reconciling peoples and cultures

We consider the diversity of our regional, national, cultural and religious traditions to be enriching for Europe. In view of numerous conflicts, the churches are called upon to serve together the cause of reconciliation among peoples and cultures. We know that peace among the churches is an important prerequisite for this.

Our common endeavours are devoted to evaluating, and helping to resolve, political and social issues in the spirit of the Gospel. Because we value the person and dignity of every individual as made in the image of God, we defend the absolutely equal value of all human beings.

As churches we intend to join forces in promoting the process of democratisation in Europe. We commit ourselves to work for structures of peace, based on the non-violent resolution of conflicts. We condemn any form of violence against the human person, particularly against women and children.

Reconciliation involves promoting social justice within and among all peoples; above all, this means closing the gap between rich and poor and overcoming unemployment. Together we will do our part towards giving migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers a humane reception in Europe.

We commit ourselves

- to counteract any form of nationalism which leads to the oppression of other peoples and national minorities and to engage ourselves for non-violent resolutions;
- to strengthen the position and equal rights of women in all areas of life, and to foster partnership in church and society between women and men.

9. Safeguarding the creation

Believing in the love of the Creator God, we give thanks for the gift of creation and the great value and beauty of nature. However, we are appalled to see natural resources being exploited without regard for their intrinsic value or consideration of their limits, and without regard for the well-being of future generations.

Together we want to help create sustainable living conditions for the whole of creation. It is our responsibility before God to put into effect common criteria for distinguishing between what human beings are scientifically and technologically capable of doing and what, ethically speaking, they should not do.

We recommend the introduction in European churches of an Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Preservation of Creation.

We commit ourselves

- to strive to adopt a lifestyle free of economic pressures and consumerism and a quality of life informed by accountability and sustainability;
- to support church environmental organisations and ecumenical networks in their efforts for the safeguarding of creation.

10. Strengthening community with Judaism

Relationships with Judaism and Islam should be developed further as well as contacts to other religions.

We are bound up in a unique community with the people Israel, the people of the Covenant which God has never terminated. Our faith teaches us that our Jewish sisters and brothers "are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11.28-29). And "to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah" (Rom 9.4-5).

We deplore and condemn all manifestations of anti-Semitism, all outbreaks of hatred and persecutions. We ask God for forgiveness for anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians, and we ask our Jewish sisters and brothers for reconciliation.

It is urgently necessary, in the worship and teaching, doctrine and life of our churches, to raise awareness of the deep bond existing between the Christian faith and Judaism, and to support Christian-Jewish co-operation.

We commit ourselves

- to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the church and in society;
- to seek and intensify dialogue with our Jewish sisters and brothers at all levels.

11. Cultivating relations with Islam

Muslims have lived in Europe for centuries. In some European countries they constitute strong minorities. While there have been plenty of good contacts and neighbourly relations between Muslims and Christians, and this remains the case, there are still strong reservations and prejudices on both sides. These are rooted in painful experiences throughout history and in the recent past.

Intensified encounters between Christians and Muslims.

We would like to intensify encounters between Christians and Muslims and enhance Christian-Islamic dialogue at all levels. We recommend, in particular, speaking with one another about our faith in one God, and clarifying ideas on human rights.

We commit ourselves

- to conduct ourselves towards Muslims with respect;
- to work together with Muslims on matters of common concern.

12. Encountering other religions and world views

The plurality of religious and non-confessional beliefs and ways of life has become a feature of European culture. Eastern religions and new religious communities are spreading and also attracting the interest of many Christians. In addition, growing numbers of people reject the Christian faith, are indifferent to it or have other philosophies of life.

We want to take seriously the critical questions of others, and try together to conduct fair discussions with them. Yet a distinction must be made between the communities with which dialogues

and encounters are to be sought, and those which should be warned against from the Christian standpoint.

We are committed

- to recognise the freedom of religion and conscience of these individuals and communities and to defend their right to practise their faith or convictions, whether singly or in groups, privately or publicly, in the context of rights applicable to all;
- to be open to dialogue with all persons of good will, to pursue with them matters of common concern, and to bring a witness of our Christian faith to them.

Churches promote freedom of religion and conscience, dialogue and joint action with all persons of good will.

Comments

The Charta exists in 18 European languages (April 2002). Initiatives take place in many national, regional, and local contexts. Further plans exist for a follow-up to the Charta by the CEC-CCEE Joint Committee.

The whole text of the Charta Oecumenica is available through:
http://www.cec-kek.org/English/ChartafinE.htm

SPIRITUALITY AND EUROPE: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ICCS held a European Conference in 1997 in Strasbourg with the theme: Spirituality and Europe: The religious contribution to education. Extracts from the lecture of Hans Spinder are documented. The issues he raised on the role of religion in education in Europe and the tasks for school, church and state are still important five years later.

Comments

How can European organisations, committed to RE and a spiritual dimension of education, be related to the political Europe?

'Commitment' links the personal and the political spirituality.

(1) Jacques Santer, In Search for Europe's Soul, p.35, in: Europe under Challenge - Reconciliation and Meaning, Occasional Paper No.4, Ecumenical Association for Church and Society, Brussels 1997, p.25-37.

A holistic concept of education is proposed.

Text (extracts)

1. Introduction
(...)
"Spirituality is like a bird: if you hold it too tightly, it chokes; if you hold it too loosely, it flies away. Fundamental to spirituality is the absence of force."
(Rabbi Hugo Gryn)

2. Education and the EU
(...)

3. The Churches and Europe
(...)
Jacques Santer, addresses an appeal to 'religious communities and all the currents of thought in which Europe is so rich.' "We need them to reflect upon our common venture. In a Union whose influence on the lives of citizens is growing, we have to consider Europe's spiritual dimension. This is not a matter for the institutions. So the churches must contribute their thoughts on the challenges to our society as we gradually move towards European integration. Indeed the churches can be of considerable help to us in overcoming the materialism which still too often characterises our civilisation." He also stresses the need and the possibility of inter-religious dialogue:
"A constructive dialogue must take place between the representatives of the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Churches of Europe and the representatives of Islam, Judaism and all the humanisms." (1)
(...)
What is wanted is not a return to a Christian Europe, but a political culture, based on human dignity and freedom and in which a balance is sought between self-determination and co-operation, and between individuality and plurality. The best model for that aim is a federal Europe that takes the principle of subsidiarity seriously.
(...)

4. A Christian view on education in Europe
(...)
It is impossible to speak about the Christian view on education, there always will be a diversity of opinions and approaches, but some elements in the Christian tradition can be seen as funda-mental for such a view.

The first thing to say, looking at European developments, is that from a Christian point of view education cannot be reduced to merely vocational training or preparation for the labour market. Human beings are not just 'human resurses' but persons in their

own right. Education should support and stimulate knowledge, but also emotions and attitudes. To become a responsible and active person, in private life as well as in society, one needs knowledge, but also values; without values knowledge becomes worthless. The school should aim at the professional, cultural and personal preparation for life of its pupils/students. From their tradition Christians are motivated to contribute to a holistic concept of education.

Such a comprehensive concept of education can only be developed within the concrete context of a school. The possibilities and limitations of schools can differ enormously under the influence of national, political traditions (such as the school system, the relationship between church and state, and the position of churches and other religions) and local

The shape of national education systems depends on the specific context of each country.

circumstances. But a centrally developed school concept will not function when it is imposed on the school in a top-down model. A school concept can only become a living reality when the people in the school are partners in the development process and can decide on their own educational concept (Reality can be rather different).

However, there are general principles in the Christian tradition, of which I give some examples that can undergird a comprehensive concept of education.

- From the doctrine of creation we learn that all people, children and adults, are equal before God. Therefore all learning and teaching individuals, irrespective of their family background, intelligence, skills etc., have a right to receive support, guidance and loving devotion.
- In the Christian tradition there is a consciousness of errors and failure by human beings, but also the promise of forgiveness and reconciliation and so the certainty of a new start.
- In the Christian concept of identity the idea of the other is implied and difference is included. One of the problems in Europe is the exclusion of others, on account of race, religion, sexual inclination or nationality. For that reason it is so important that churches support a comprehensive concept of education oriented towards peace, freedom, reconciliation and justice.

When we work this out for school education, this can mean for example:

- In history teaching the past is not treated in an absolute or ideological way, but is scrutinised critically and former errors such as colonialism and other forms of oppression are critically and honestly presented;
- An active drive against prejudice and discrimination is part of the school policy as well as a positive preparation for an open, democratic and multicultural society;
- Special attention is given to the spiritual dimension of life in the teaching in the classroom and in school life as a whole. The school should try to become a community of learning and living, in which all participants are interested in the others and all are prepared to take responsibility for each other.

A specific understanding of the relationship between state and church (strict separation) dominates the political debate in Europe.

Increasing recognition of religious communities.

(2) K.E. Nipkow: Religionsunter-richt im künftigen Europa (Religious education in the future Europe), in: Informationes Theologiae Europae, Internatio-nales ökumenisches Jahrbuch für Theologie, Frankfurt u.a. 1995, p. 357-374.

4.1 The role of religion in education

Special attention should be given to the role of spirituality and religion in education. I have mentioned already that in the EU religion is not recognised as a political or social factor; in their strict interpretation of the separation between church and state, religion is exclusively a private affair. From that perspective religion does not exist in education, although one can perceive some changes in the EU. Firstly, there is now a programme, financed by the EU, called "Giving a Soul to Europe", which is co-ordinated by EECCS. Secondly, in the Treaty of Amsterdam , churches and religious communities are mentioned for the first time: "The Union will respect and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States". (Declaration to the Final Act)

This position of the EU is different from that of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe, with a long tradition of her member states in middle- and eastern Europe, has recognised the important role of religion in society, culture and also education. For that reason the Council published an important recommendation on religious tolerance in a democratic society. (...)

5. A task for school, church and state.

My conclusion is, that working on spirituality in schools and supporting and stimulating the spiritual development of pupils and students can be a contribution to the integration process of Europe. Not a Europe of any kind, but a social, just, democratic and peaceful Europe.

This means a challenge for schools and educators, for the churches and for the politicians.

- For the schools it means that they should make Europe, or the European dimension, a theme in their education and in other activities. In several school-subjects this can be present, including in RE. In line with some of the best aspects of the European tradition, this should always be a critical approach. This means, according to Nipkow, that the best way for RE to serve the European dimension is to transcend this dimension and to look at things from a global perspective.(2)

- For the pupils it can be important when the school participates in international/European exchange programmes. The meeting with other people in circumstances and conditions different from their own can expand the horizon of pupils and make them aware of the European reality. A condition for the success of those meetings is, of course, a good preparation and good supervision of the process.

- The churches should continue their reflection on a vision of Europe from a Christian perspective. Inherent in such a vision is, in my opinion, that such a vision is developed at the basis of church life, that is in collaboration with the church members in the parish. The European dimension can come to life in all kind of ecumenical and inter-religious contacts. There is an existing network of contacts between local churches in eastern and western Europe, which can become of great importance for the European dimension in the churches.

- The challenge for the politicians is, that they should realise the importance of education in the on-going integration process in Europe, and the important role spirituality and religion can play in that process.

In general, one can say that a concept of Europe that is not supported by a vast majority of European citizens can never succeed. This is also clear to the current President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer: "If we do not regain the support of the public, we will fail." (3)

To gain the support of the young generations education will be indispensable for Europe.

(3) Jacques Santer, In Search of Europe's Soul, in: Europe under Challenge – Reconciliation and Meaning. Occasional Paper No. 4, EECCS, Brussels, 1997, p. 30.

Comments

The whole text is available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

NEW PROGRAMME
ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

The Conference of NGOs (CONGO) is an international, not-for-profit membership association that facilitates the participation of NGOs in United Nations debates and decisions. Founded in 1948, CONGO's major objective is to ensure the presence of NGOs in exchanges among the world's governments and United Nations agencies on issues of global concern

The reactivation of the Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief at the end of 2001 is also important for the discussion on education and religious education in Europe. The Conference of European Churches plays a central role in this NGO activity.

Comment

The CEC Office of Communication and Information released a Press Communique.

More information about the issues at the Madrid Conference (see pp. 87-90).

For CEC's work in Europe tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and non-discrimination are

Text

About 30 non-governmental organisations have met in Geneva, Switzerland, under the auspices of CONGO, the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations in Consultative Status with the United Nations, in order to reactivate the Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

The Committee will work in close cooperation and in critical solidarity with the UN programmes, in particular with the Commission on Human Rights and its Special Rapporteur on Intolerance based on Religion and Belief. Members of the Committee include not only religion-based NGOs, but also human rights and humanist organisations promoting freedom of religion or belief.

At its founding meeting, on 5 December, the Committee agreed on three priority areas:

— education for tolerance (in follow-up to the Madrid Conference of the UN Special Rapporteur, November 2001);
— anti-discrimination (in follow-up to the UN World Assembly against racism, Durban, September 2001);
— the promotion of a culture of dialogue, especially in view of the 11 September events.

The founding meeting elected Rev. Rüdiger Noll, Executive Secretary for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), as its President. "For the Conference of European Churches", Rüdiger Noll declared, "our strong involvement in this Committee is another good opportunity to bring the voice of CEC's member churches to the attention of an international political body. The UN-NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief will be based on values which have been promoted by CEC for years: tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and non-discrimination." Mr. Noll also assured his commitment to "ensuring the involvement of all NGOs represented on the Committee, including those outside the milieu of the Christian

Comments

For further information on the re-established Committee see: **www.congo.org**

EDUCATION IN EUROPE

TOWARDS A EUROPE OF KNOWLEDGE. A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCHES

European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS)

The European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society is the predecessor of the Church and Society Commission (CSC) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). This policy paper is a reaction to the Commission's 'Towards a Europe of Knowledge'. It clarifies the role of education and culture in European policies, referring to the concept of European citizenship. The paper mainly supports the line of the European Commission, stresses the importance of a comprehensive concept of education and formulates what the challenges for the churches are in this field.

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
Part 1, Introduction, refers to the principles and policies of the European Commission in relation to education and culture. At the end a critical remark and the challenge for the churches are formulated.	1.1 However, EECCS is of the opinion that the results of the activities of the Community in these areas are not yet satisfactory. Education is predominantly oriented to the needs of the labour market. The existing diversity of culture is not sufficiently integrated although Article 151 Paragraph 4 requires that cultural aspects are taken into account in Community actions under other provisions of the Treaty. Religion is often denied as an existing asset even though it is embedded in the history and culture of all European societies and is gaining in importance.
	1.2 The challenge to the churches, referred to in the title of this paper, is to recognise, respond to and support the wider concept of education which is now accepted by the European Community, while encouraging the Community and its member states to develop these concepts further. (...)
1.3 refers to common challenges of European integration.	1.4 By creating a citizenship of the Union through the provisions of the Treaty of Maastricht, the member states have undertaken a first step to link citizens directly with the European Union (Article 17 Treaty of the European Community [TEC]) beyond the aim of "an even closer union among the peoples of Europe" (Article 1 Treaty of European Union [TEU]). The programmes on education and training proposed by the European Commission for the period 2000 to 2006 relate to this citizenship through their intention of achieving a common European educational space. The creation of this space should enlarge the concept of citizenship of the Union in order to share common values and to strengthen the awareness of belonging to a common social and cultural area.
	1.5 Guiding principles are needed to achieve these objectives. Within the framework of its existing policy bases, these principles must increasingly take account of and incorporate the roles of
Education, culture and religion play a decisive role in Europe.	– education as a central element for designing the future of Europe;
	– culture as map and compass, as heritage and challenge, as well as the source of identities;
	– religion as a fundamental theme of human existence and an integral part of the cultural foundations of Europe. (…)

2.3 In its White Paper on General and Professional Education "Towards a Knowledge Society" (November 1995), the Commission set out its view of future education policy. The reference point for the development of education has been focused on the question the extent to which education can contribute to employment, competitiveness and social cohesion in our societies. (…)

2.4 Opening up opportunities in education and vocational training with satisfying job possibilities to those who struggle with various obstacles is an extremely important challenge. This concerns, for example, the great number of young people who leave compulsory school early or do not complete upper secondary-level education or vocational training and those people who cannot cope with a permanent need for further qualification or job skills. To an even greater extent, migrants and their children have to struggle with specific problems in school and job. (…)
EECCS wants to underline the Commission's attentiveness that the ongoing shift towards the "knowledge society" does not become a new source of exclusion.

2.5 In its categories of rationality, functionality and historical perspective, the White Paper described important elements of a European concept of education. To that is also added the aspects of personality development, character formation, cultural openness and the awakening of social responsibility, aspects which are mentioned but not developed. However, a comprehensive concept of education requires to look for dialogue and possible agreement on these aspects also at the European level. Personality development includes "revulsion and resistance in face of inhumanity; perception of happiness; the capacity and the will to understand oneself; a consciousness of historicity of individual existence; vigilance with regard to these final questions; and – a double criteria – the acceptance of self responsibility and responsibility with regard to public affairs." (Hartmut von Hentig)

2.6 EECCS would like to stress that education covers more than just rational and instrumental knowledge. In particular, education cannot be directed exclusively towards the needs of the labour market. A comprehensive concept of education, which takes into account the personality as a whole, implies designation of life and sense, and enables to orientation and communication. Knowledge, skills, understanding of values, responsibility, creativity, judgement and social competence are all equally part of it.
(...)

3.1 EECCS welcomes the intention of the European Commission to reinforce the sense of the citizens in the EU-countries and the candidate countries of belonging to a common social and cultural area by designing the next generation of EU-programmes on education. One of the most important points of this concept was that citizenship and culture were part of the building of Europe. This might be described by the idea of a mosaic in which "Europe" as a whole was owned but the diversity was accepted.

3.2 Europe is "more than the sum of its States" and above all more than an economic community. The existence of a

	cultural Europe is the precondition to make a political Europe possible. Therefore it is important to say that culture should under no circumstances be submitted to state or bureaucratic dictation. Fields of action such as education, culture and religion need absolute freedom for their successful development. EECCS would remind the European Commission and the member states of the European Union of the dangers which flow from instrumentalising education and culture as mere servants of the state or of the economic system. (...)
Freedom for culture and education.	
A culture of diversity.	3.4 Therefore, the European cultural identity cannot be the sum of regional or national cultures but the co-operation of these cultures in the spirit of mutual recognition and tolerance already mentioned. Its common base rests in the fact that it comes from Judaeo-Christian-Muslim tradition, the classical foundation of philosophy and law, from the humanist tradition and from the Age of Enlightenment, where its expression is found in individual and indivisible human dignity and because of this, in solidarity, responsibility towards the voiceless, the weak, strangers and also in future generations (…)
The role of religion in education is not recognised properly.	3.8 With regard to this broad task, EECCS regrets that the Commission has not regarded religion, belief and philosophy as part of the subject matter of education either in the White Paper of 1995 nor in the Communication of 1997. EECCS and its member bodies could envisage a future closer co-operation with the EU-institutions as it is proposed by the Commission in the Communication. EECCS would welcome a closer dialogue also with religious bodies within the framework proposed for the dialogue with the member states, parents, the educational and social partners, in economy and society.

Comments

Shortly after this statement was published EECCS merged with CEC.The Church and Society Commission (CSC) of CEC took over the EECCS concerns. Initiatives on education has to be further developed.

The whole text is available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN CREATING THE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

Ms Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission, responsible for Education and Culture

Speech given by Ms Reding at the Zentrum für Europäischen Integrationsforschung, University of Bonn (Germany), 7 March 2001. She evaluates the Lisbon conclusions (2000) as a paradigm shift and a silent revolution concerning education: instead of talking about diversity and the differences in education in the European countries, there is a need to speak about what we have in common.
The Lisbon summit has given a bigger role to education in Europe and a bigger role to Europe in education.

Comments	Text (extracts)
European education policy and subsidiarity.	(…) As you know, education is a national responsibility. For Germany, his federal states, just as in other member states of the European Union, education policy is strongly related to regional and national culture, identity and democracy. The European Treaties give the European institutions a role in promoting quality and mobility across the borders. But there is no European role in the substance of how education is conducted in the Member States: what is taught, what is learned and how this knowledge is transmitted from teacher to student. This falls, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, under the competencies of the Member States. (…)
	The knowledge and information society: the challenges for Europe (…)
The concept of lifelong learning and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).	**The first key challenge**, which I see, is the question of **lifelong learning.** With the acceleration of technological changes and the accumulation of "new knowledge" individual skills and qualifications become **perishable goods.** One has to **continuously update his skills and qualifications** and it is therefore clear that the responsibility and the challenge to adapt to the Information Society is not an exclusive task to the schools and universities. It is all throughout life, from cradle to grave. It is a common challenge for the entire society, in which education and training providers across the whole spectrum of formal, informal and non-formal learning have an important role to play. (…)
Basic skills and qualifications.	**A second key challenge** is the question **which basic skills and qualifications** learners should acquire in order to become adequately active in this knowledge- and information society. Interestingly enough, some studies indicate that, in order to master Information and Communication Technologies, 80 % of the skills required are social and interpersonal skills: the ability to communicate, to co-operate and interact, to organise and manage information, to judge between relevant and irrelevant information, and to work in the multicultural environment that the Internet establishes as a reality for all of us. On the other hand, the technology itself may well become much more user-friendly. Information and Communication Technologies

may one day be as much a standard as water and electricity. So before overhauling our entire curriculum we should stop and think and make sure we are seeing things in the right perspective and, consequently, changing things in the right proportions.
(…)

The knowledge and information society: the European deficits

In Europe, there is a growing gap between an increasing number of employment opportunities in information and communication technologies (ICT) and the number of qualified candidates to fill them.
(…)

Internet and new technologies are miracles of knowledge and information and will offer tremendous **potential for growth as well as for cohesion**. New technologies can, for instance, offer entirely new ways of learning and studying and can potentially help us to combat some of the problems in our education systems, including those of **school resignation, drop-out and the problems of people with specific learning difficulties**, such as dyslexia.

"Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."
(H.G. Wells)

However, I think that we should act proactive and take the necessary steps to ensure the transition to the knowledge and information society taking place in the way in line with our ambitions and values. We must not leave everything to market forces.

Knowledge and Information Society: the European role

E learning is just one example for the role that Europe can take in **setting a common agenda and stimulating Member States for it**. At European level we can identify concrete common targets and deadlines, so as to stress both the urgency and the responsibility that we share on our way to the Knowledge and Information Society.

Ladies and gentleman, we have to understand that the answer to these problems is **not less Europe, but a better Europe**. (…)

New possibilities for European co-operation.

We have to understand that globalisation keeps on moving on and that European integration is not a process in which we loose our national roots or feelings of belonging, rather one in which we anchor these in a bigger community of shared values, as a response to globalisation. (…)

The Lisbon summit of March 2000.
Silent revolution, who are the actors?

The Lisbon summit is the beginning of a **silent revolution**. As I said in the beginning of my speech, the Lisbon summit is doing two things:

− it gives a bigger role to **education in Europe**
− it gives a bigger role to **Europe in education**
(…)

A new strategic goal, closely related to education and training.

In Lisbon the Union set itself a new strategic goal for the coming decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, capable of achieving a sustainable economic growth accompanied by quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and of greater social cohesion.

This is a strategic goal, which is just as important as the completion of the Common Market, the introduction of the Euro and the enlargement of the Union. And the means to accomplish these goals are, to a large extend, related to education.
(…)

The Lisbon conclusions should not be interpreted as a European incursion into national education policies. But what is interesting about the Lisbon conclusions is that, for the first time in our

history, we have felt the need to speak about what there is in common in education, rather than the eternal - almost automatic or "programmed" - emphasis on diversity, when we speak of education. That is an important "paradigm shift" taking place in this silent revolution. We recognise that, despite the enormous discrepancies between the education systems, the challenges and certain objectives are similar, if not identical.

This is why Member States have embraced a new way of co-operation. The new open method of co-ordination, adopted in Lisbon, upholds subsidiarity, but at the same time intends to "exploit" all the options available underneath the "umbrella'" of subsidiarity. (…)

Steps taken from Lisbon to Stockholm and on to Barcelona
The Lisbon summit has also introduced the principle that we will continue having regular summits of similar kind in order to monitor our progress, and to verify if Europe is still on course towards the Knowledge and Information Society, and to consider new initiatives for reinforcing our efforts. (…)

The next summit will be the **spring summit of Barcelona in 2002,** under the Spanish presidency. It will provide the opportunity to present a report in which we will indicate how exactly the open method of co-ordination can be implemented to approach the objectives we have outlined in Stockholm. (…)

The Barcelona summit of next year will therefore give us a kind of **blueprint of co-operation in education for the next decade**. It will therefore be a summit to watch!

Nice and future developments
(…)
I would like to refer to the four following aspects:

1) Firstly, the Nice Council has adopted the **European Social Agenda**. This is an important gain for a balanced and sustainable creation of the Knowledge and Information Society.
2) Secondly, the Nice Council has included the **structural indicators** to measure the annual progress of the European Union on our way towards the Knowledge and Information Society.
3) The Nice Council has also adopted a **Resolution for supporting the action plan for mobility** of teachers, learners and researchers
4) Finally, the Nice Council adopted the new **Employment package** which has, to my great satisfaction, further improved and which takes to the importance of education and training in the context of Life Long Learning.

Comments

The complete text is available through:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/reding/speech_en_2001.htm

More information about summits of the European Council is available through:
http:// ue.eu.int/en/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm

THE CONCRETE FUTURE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

This report presents "a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity, with a view to (…) presenting a broader report to the European Council in the Spring of 2001". It covers not only the education systems as such, but the training systems as well; It starts (section 1) with a brief analysis of the main elements emerging from the contributions made by Member States in response to the Commission's questionnaire and of work done at EU-level. It then proposes (section 2) a number of concrete objectives which could form the basis for a joint work programme to be agreed by the Council; and finally (section 3) puts forward suggestions as to how to take forward this work programme in the context of the "open method of co-ordination" proposed for co-operation in the education field by the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira.

Comments

The goal of Europe as a knowledge and information society.

The three main goals for education refer to:
- *Individual*
- *Society*
- *Economy.*

Text (extracts)

(...)

1. THE PERSPECTIVE FROM MEMBER STATES …

The contributions from Member States show a number of common concerns about the future and about the contribution which the education systems must make if the Lisbon goal that Europe should become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" is to be achieved, and to the more general goals which society attributes to education. They also reflect the increasing pace of change within society and the economy, as well as the impact of increasing European integration.

Overall, the Member States reflect view that education must contribute to three main goals: the development of the individual, who can thus realise his or her full potential and lead a happy and fruitful life; the development of society, in particular by reducing the disparities and inequities as between individuals or groups; and the development of the economy, by ensuring that the skills available on the labour market match the needs of businesses and employers. This should be done by a strategy of lifelong learning, which overcomes the traditional barriers between the various parts of formal and informal education and training.

...Their Main Concerns...

The five following points reflect the main concerns expressed by Member States:

- Quality (...)
- Access (...)
- Content (...)
- Openness (...)
- Effectiveness (...)

2. PROPOSED CONCRETE FUTURE OBJECTIVES

(…)

The report suggests that the Council adopt a long-term work programme.

the five objectives set out below would be those around which the Council could define a joint work programme in the context of the "open method of co-ordination" proposed by Lisbon, to be pursued jointly by the Member States, supported by the Commission, at European level.

(...)

The concrete objectives proposed (...):

More quality.

Raising the standard of learning in Europe

Raising the standard of learning is essential if Europe is to become a more competitive and dynamic society. It is also essential if Europe wishes to enable its citizens better to develop their own skills and competences, and to realise their potential as individuals, as members of society, and as economic agents. (…)

Raising the standard by two measures.

Improving Training for Teachers and Trainers

Upgrading the initial and in-service training of teachers and trainers so that their skills respond both to the changes in society and expectations, and to the varied groups involved (…) is a major challenge to the education systems over the next 10 years. (…)

Increasing Literacy and Numeracy

Ensuring that all citizens achieve literacy and numeracy is essential to ensuring quality learning; they are the key to all subsequent learning capabilities, as well as to employability. (…)

Lifelong learning is a key concept in the EU debate. Is there any limitation to this?

Making access to learning easier and more widespread at all times of life

Everyone accepts that education systems must adapt to a world of lifelong learning; and in a number of Member States this leads to concerns about the inclusiveness of education and its contribution to the fight against social exclusion, about its internal coherence, and about how attractive it is to young people and to adults. (…)

- Access to Lifelong Learning (...)
- Making learning more attractive (...)
- Internal coherence within education systems *(...)*
- Education and social cohesion (...)

Basic skills.

Updating the definition of basic skills for the knowledge society

The basic skills which society requires education to deliver are those which give an individual a secure foundation for life and work. They thus cover the vocational or technical skills as well as those social or personal competences which enable people to work together and to lead happy and fruitful lives. The increased pace of change in society and in the economy, and in particular the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) requires us continuously to keep the definition of basic skills under review, and to adapt it to those changes on a regular basis; and to see that those who left formal education or training before the new skills were available, have a chance to regain them later.

Information and Communication Technologies for everyone

The rapid development within society of the use of information and communication technologies has meant a revolution in the way schools and training institutions work, as indeed it has

changed the way in which very many people in Europe work. As far as the education systems are concerned, there are three challenges:

- Equipping schools (...)
- Training teachers (...)
- Networking and Resources (...).

Professional skills and personal competences
The changing nature of society and of work means theat increasingly, professional or vocational skills are not enough. At work, the complexity of work organisation, the increase in the types of task that employees are called upon to carry out, the introduction of flexible work patterns and of team working methods, mean that employees need skills beyond the purely technical in a way that their predecessors did not.
(…)
Specific Skills
(…)

Education in context.

Opening education and training to the local environment, to Europe and the world
There is consensus about the need to open up education systems to the influences of other parts of society – both those close to schools (parents, local institutions, local businesses) and those more distant (exchanges, mobility, e-mail networks). This is necessary not just because of the increased mobility, both professional and geographical, that people undertake during their working lives, but also as part of the way in which Europe adapts to meet the challenges of a global economy. (…)
Within this multicultural European context, three particular areas of concern stand out:

- Foreign language teaching. (…)
- Increasing mobility and exchanges. (…)
- Strengthening links with business. (…)
- Developing the spirit of enterprise. (…)

(...)

How to reach these goals?

3. THE "OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION" METHOD PROPOSED BY LISBON
During the discussion at the 9 November 2000 Education Council, the Commission proposed a two stage process to respond to the Lisbon invitation, viz.: first phase of the report to the Stockholm European Council on the content and broad lines of the Education Council's response; then a process of consultation between the Member States and the Commission, leading to a second phase of the report (to the Seville European Council in March 2002) which would define the method for implementing the "open co-ordination" process.
(…)

4. CONCLUSIONS
The concrete objectives proposed in this report set out a number of challenges which all education systems face today, to a greater or lesser extent. They are not confined to the current 15 Member States; they apply equally, perhaps more strongly in some cases, to the countries in the process of joining the Union. However, they are in essence common challenges.

An important role for education.

The future of the Union – achieving all the aims inherent in the challenge set out in the Lisbon Conclusions, i.e. *"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and*

better jobs and greater social cohesion" – requires a solid contribution from the world of education. It requires that education systems can be adapted and developed so as to deliver the basic skills and competences everyone needs in the knowledge society; to make lifelong learning attractive and rewarding; and to reach out to everyone in society, however far from education and training they may consider themselves, with ways of developing their skills and making the best use of them.
(…)

Comments

The Commission acknowledges that each Member State is working to put in place a raft of measures to adapt their education systems to the Knowledge Society.
International assessment studies, like PISA, shows clearly that the competition between education systems, how to meet the expressed needs, is a central matter. Can they help to raise the quality of school education?

The official number of the document is: COM(2001)59final

The whole text is available through:
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2001/com2001_0059en01.pdf

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN EUROPEAN SOCIETY

A DECLARATION BY THEIR REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Formal education, wich provides the basis for lifelong learning and training is a key foundation for the "society of knowledge" and for "accomplishing Europe through education and training."
It is with this in mind that the European Organisations of Non-Governmental Schools and European Organisations, which promote the right to education and freedom of education, all together representing twelve million pupils and their parents, make this Declaration.

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
Aim of the Declaration:	**A message to the European society** (...) With it we want to call the attention of European public opinion and its political representatives to the vital contribution independent education makes to a free, democratic and pluralistic society (…)
Education in Europe.	**Within a new context** (…) In Europe, this is the first time in history that an attempt is being made to build a united – though not uniform – Europe, based on common ideas shared between member countries instead of by force, conquest and imposed decree. (…) As a consequence, most people perceive the need "to accomplish Europe through education and lifelong learning". This is leading towards a convergence in educational approaches, even though each individual country preserves its own educational system.
Independent schools contribute to plurality in education.	**Pluralism** Our European society is clearly developing as a pluralistic one. This plurality is one of the essential dimensions of European citizenship, to which all of us are entitled. (…) Independent schools, recognised as they are by constitutions, long traditions, laws and international documents, including art.14 of the recent charter of fundamental rights of the European union, offer a positive answer to the new social context and to the consequent educational needs in the wider European community. (…)
The role of independent schools in the educational systems.	**Education in a plural society** (…) Independent schools play a vital role in any educational system by ruling out any tendency towards educational monopoly. They are an important ingredient in all educational systems due to their capacity to promote the educational innovation required by social change. Furthermore, there is ample evidence, as governments are well

aware, that independent schools make a real contribution to the development and quality of education nationally in terms both of management and pedagogy.
(…)

Parental choice.

Autonomy and subsidy
European Society gives parents the right to choose for their children an education which matches their religious, philosophical or pedagogical convictions, as it is ensured by article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
To help parents exercise real parental choice, national governments must give a clear response to the needs of Independent schools and recognise their responsibility for their support.
(…)

Aspirations and hopes
Independent schools aspire to contribute, as they have long been doing, to educational quality in all schools and for all pupils in our respective countries and in the new plural Europe to which we belong. This is the vocational aim and the essence of our activity and dedication.
(…)

SIGNED BY ECNAIS, CADEICE, CEEC, ECSWS, EFFE, FUNDEL, IV, OIDEL
(see abbreviation list at the end of the reader)

Comments

The number of independent schools differs very much in European countries. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union includes in the right to education „the freedom to found educational establishments" for which independent schools are examples.

The whole text is available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

GIVING EUROPE A HEART AND SOUL – A CHRISTIAN VISION FOR EDUCATION IN EUROPE'S SCHOOLS
ICCS Working Group

> **The following text comes from a publication of ICCS, worked out by an international ICCS working group.**
> **The aim is to present a Christian vision about the contribution of education to the shaping of a Europe with a heart and soul. The publication addresses the churches, the politicians and the schools, each of whom have their specific responsibility in this area.**

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
	PREAMBLE
	(…)
The focus of the publication.	This publication will focus on education as an important sphere of live in a democratic society. We will argue that religion has its legitimate place in education on several levels. Our starting point is from within the Christian faith community but we suggest that other religions or worldviews might argue in a similar way. Through examples and reflections we illustrate how churches and Christians can support and inspire an approach to education, that contributes to the quality of living together in Europe, sometimes referred to as a Europe with a heart and soul.
Chapter 1 deals with European citizenship and the role of identity and religion.	**1. A VISION FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE FUTURE** **Introduction** One of the most important challenges facing Europe as it enters the third millennium is how citizens of the many countries within Europe can develop a sense of their own identity which incorporates elements of regional, national, European and World citizenship and includes, for many, a religious identity. For such a concept of identity to be coherent and functional it must be possible for the individual to reconcile their citizenship with their religious beliefs where these are important to them. Article A of the Amsterdam Treaty commits members of the European Union to develop active citizenship. This commitment goes beyond bringing the European ideal closer to its citizens. It also seeks to encourage peoples' practical involvement in the democratic process at all levels. Such an active involvement is only possible for people, whose religious faith is important to them, if the regional, national, European and world institutions acknowledge the value of such beliefs to the individual and, potentially, to society. (…)
Citizenship and education.	**The contribution of education to the development of citizenship** We take the word "citizenship" in this context to include elements of active membership, participation and responsibility. Developing such a concept in the hearts and minds of residents of the countries that are already members of the EU is a significant challenge. (…)
The text reflects on concepts of citizenship, referring to different documents.	For the aim of active citizenship within Europe to be achieved, within the principles of subsidiarity, each of the nation states within the European Union and the Council of Europe areas must find ways of reflecting these ideals within their own provision for education.

The contribution of the Christian churches to the development of citizenship

Churches and education.

The Christian churches are all heavily involved in and committed to the concept of lifelong learning for their own membership and many of the churches open the opportunities for learning that they provide to the wider community beyond their own membership. The churches face many of the same challenges as the nation states in developing, amongst their adherents, the basic concepts of active membership, participation and responsibility.

Involvement of churches in formal education.

The Christian churches are also committed to formal and informal learning contexts with young people and adults. In most European countries the churches, or some of them, are deeply involved with the provision of schooling either through sponsoring their own schools, or through various forms of partnership with or service to the state system of education. Even in those countries where the religiously affiliated schools do not have a formal institutional relationship with the churches or where there is no formal connection between state schools and churches, schools need to take account of the religious commitments of the pupils and their parents.

What is active citizenship?

Developing a common understanding

In the context of developing an education for active citizenship within the new Europe it is logical that the churches, the schools and the civil authorities should seek ways of working in partnership, or at least of identifying the contribution that each makes to achieving the other's objectives.

It is important that, in facing these challenges, and in seeking to find ways of working together the local authorities, the churches and the schools themselves do not limit their understanding of citizenship to an agenda, which reflects only the needs of their local community. They should encompass the regional, national, European and world dimensions

(…)

The task of the school

Education is not only received in schools. It is a much broader experience to which the home, the local community and for some the churches will all make a contribution. Therefore it is important to establish what tasks are expected of the school. (…)

The roles on different levels are developed:

 The role of the local community
 The role of organisations at national level
 The role of organisations at European level

(…)

Chapter 2 presents the perspective of the school, mainly by examples of good practice.

2. IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Introduction

Different statements of European institutions emphasise the interests of schooling and education in shaping Europe. Unfortunately these are based on a concept of education that predominantly meets economic needs and defines human resources in such a way. These human resources are largely nothing more than flexible trained labour, available for employment in the European labour market. It seems to many that there is a real danger of education becoming a one-dimen-

sional enterprise in which only that which is demonstrably useful or easily measured is valued.

We are of the opinion that there is much more at stake in schools and training institutions.

In this climate it is good to recognise the importance of an ethos which promotes good relationships, pupil and staff responsibilities, parental and community involvement and a time for reflection and for spiritual development.

What follows are examples of good practice which offer an alternative approach to the kind of learning aims and attainment targets which have little or no regard for the development of the whole child and are driven by the belief that the most important thing is to acquire employable skills.

Most of the examples illustrate religion as a part of culture, religions as currently operative factors in society, Christianity as an element in the interpretation of self and world

(...)

3. CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Chapter 3 discusses the responsibility of the churches for education within the framework of Europe.

A challenge to the churches.

Why and how should churches and Christian organisations be involved in education? And what does the European context mean for this involvement? These are the questions at stake in this article.

(…)

Part I: Churches and Education
Different models and concepts

The education system and the way RE is organised within that system differ from country to country. This has consequences for the involvement of churches in education.

(…)

How do churches look at Europe?

Part II: Churches and Europe

The churches' contribution to a vision of Europe will have to do with fundamental values, with spirituality and with justice, peace and integrity of creation. Law, regulation and problem solving are, and remain, the task of the politicians. A good and appropriate starting point for the churches could be the original motives for European integration.

(…)

Only during the last few years has discussion about the ideals of the European integration returned, but now related to a concept of Europe that is larger then just western Europe; this discussion is explicitly related to middle- and eastern Europe.

(…)

A Catholic and a Protestant perspective.

Looking at the participation of churches in this European discussion, it becomes clear that there is a difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant and Anglican churches. The latter hardly have a clear opinion about Europe, while the former has a well-defined position concerning Europe and its contribution to European integration.

Reports from Dutch, German and Swedish contexts

In the late 1990s several Protestant churches produced reports about Europe. As examples, we first take the reports of the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church, 'Hart en ziel voor Europa?' and that of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, called: 'Europa fordert die Christen'.

	(…)
The ideals of Europe.	Both reports underline and support the original intentions of the integration process: peace, reconciliation and justice, and they argue that these motives now apply to Europe as a whole. The reports still contain criticism of several aspects of European integration (democratic deficit, primacy of market forces, social exclusion, ineffective foreign policy) but the difference from former
Criticism, but from a positive assessment.	statements of the churches is: "that such criticism is no longer expressed from the sideline, but from a positive assessment of the European integration process as such."
	(…)
A social oriented Europe.	The reports argue that the social dimension in Europe should be supported, especially in relation to unemployment, inequality in life conditions, migration, asylum and development policy. The aim should be a Europe as a community of solidarity.
Federalism and subsidiarity.	What is wanted is not a return to a Christian Europe, but a political culture, based on human dignity and freedom and in which a balance is sought between self-determination and co-operation, and between individuality and plurality. The best model for that aim is a **federal** Europe that takes the principle of **subsidiarity** seriously.

In a publication of the Christian Council of Sweden (title: Churches and the EU) the original motives for the start of the European co-operation are stressed and the EU is qualified as a peace project. That is the motivation for the Swedish Churches to get involved in the European project.

II.5 Churches in public life
It is important that the vision about churches in Europe, expressed in the reports quoted above, is translated into effective and credible policies and strategies.
To achieve credibility it is necessary that a church vision of Europe and education is consistent with its internal operations and educational work.
To be effective the vision must be articulated in the language of public and political affairs and the churches must change their national orientation into a European and global orientation.
(…)

Part III: A Christian Contribution to Education in Europe
It is impossible to speak about <u>the</u> Christian view on education; there always will be a diversity of opinions and approaches, but some elements in the Christian tradition can be seen as funda-mental for such a view.

Education from a Christian point of view.
The first thing to say, looking at the European developments, is that from a Christian point of view education cannot be reduced to vocational training or preparation for the labour market. Human beings are not just 'human resources' but persons in their own right. Education should support and stimulate knowledge, but also emotions and attitudes. To become a responsible and active person, in private life as well as in society, one needs knowledge, but also values; without values knowledge becomes worthless. The school should aim at the professional, cultural and personal preparation for life of the pupils/students. From their tradition Christians are motivated to contribute to a holistic concept of education.

Where and how can churches operate?
Churches cannot continue to be involved in education without developing a European perspective as described in the examples above. To achieve this there must be international, ecumenical dialogue underpinned by individual and parish exchange experience.
(…)

Chapter 4 addresses the European institutions.

4. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE VISION FOR THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

The demand for a heart and soul to Europe.

The debate stimulated by the former president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, under the general title *Giving a Heart and Soul to Europe* points to the fact that, so far the process of European integration has been focused exclusively on three areas.   Integration of economics, technology and the labour market has been identified as the task of the political and administrative institutions of Europe. However, M. Delors declared that it is not possible to build Europe exclusively on the basis of financial, economic and legal expertise.
(…)

Recognition of the role of religion.

Therefore, at the European level, politicians are challenged to re-formulate their vision for Europe so that it incorporates the acceptance of religion and spirituality as an absolute prerequisite for the development of European dialogue, co-operation and unification.
(…)
In order to foster the search for peace, justice and reconciliation politicians and church leaders must work together to face the constraints and obstacles at local, national and European levels. Only in such a way can religious and spiritual ideas and practices become fully a part of the European ideal, and contribute to the development of the heart and soul of Europe.
(…)

School in a context of growing complexity.

A developing model for relationships surrounding the school
In the early days of schooling the limited number of schools that were available were, for the most part provided by religious houses and met the needs of potential scholars and clerks whose tasks would be closely related to the needs of the church as either custodian of knowledge or major land owner. (…)

In the text a model for the relationships of schools with other institutions is developed.

When schooling first began to be offered to the general population of European countries the only relationships external to the school were those that existed between the school and the community that it served. A simple model could express these relationships (….)
A further complexity within the model developed as a result of the changing role of the church within the local community and within the state. (…)
The demand for the development of a European identity and the increasing contribution of the European Union and the Council of Europe to education, particularly in the areas of European identity and active citizenship has introduced another layer to the model of relationships. This reflects the need for the state to be in relationship with the European institutions. Also it is clear that the European institutions are seeking to be in relationship with the churches at European level. (…)

	Making these structures work effectively is a major challenge for the churches and for the European institutions. Given the lack of resources that exists within the organisation representing the protestant churches at the European level it may be necessary for the European institutions to be more pro-active in their steps to make the partnership work at this level.
European dimensions.	So far this section has considered the basic network of relationships that focus on the school. Within the general sphere of education there are many other areas where co-operation between the various partners in the provision and support of schools and schooling should be working together. For example developing and enabling the partnership between the European institutions and the Christian churches should also include work on the common European approach to the teaching of history. (….)
Conclusion.	We have argued that an active engagement with the churches could bring many benefits in the context of the European dimensions of schools and schooling. This will enhance the development of a European vision and make a significant contribution to the development of a heart and soul for Europe. (…)

Comments

Information about the publication and the website will be available through:
http://www.cogree.com

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
IN EUROPE

SCHOOL EDUCATION AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION

International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Madrid, 23-25 November 2001)

The Conference was organised in the framework of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief, in cooperation with the Government of Spain and on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The conference aim was to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights by redesigning the role that school education should play, with a view to eliminating all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief. States, relevant United Nations bodies, other inter-governmental organisations, national human rights commissions, as well as selected experts, religious and belief communities and non-governmental organisations participated in the conference.
Has Spinder represented the World Council of Churches at the conference. We document extracts of his report, from a study report for the conference and the final document.

Comments

The Special Rapporteur conducted a survey in 1994 by means of a questionnaire addressed to States, on problems relating to freedom of religion or belief in primary or elementary and secondary educational institutions. Replies given by 77 States gave the basis for a study report, prepared under the guidance of Mr. Amor, which served as one of the preparation papers for the conference.

The report gives a description of different positions of religious education within the school systems, which can be situated between two poles: on the one hand the countries with provisions for "laïcité" or "secularity", implying that no religious education should be in the domain of state control and

Text (extracts)

Study Report: "The role of religious education in the pursuit of tolerance and non-discrimination."

"Religious education should be conceived as a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realize their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own. As such, religious education radically differs from catechism or theology, defined as the formal study of the nature of God and of the foundations of religious belief, and contributes to the wider framework of education as defined in international standards."
"The Special Rapporteur has chosen the following approach, namely that the study's perspective be human rights-oriented and not theological in nature insofar as it focuses on whether and how religious education can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights by contributing to the development of self-awareness in the full respect of other identities, tolerance and non- discrimination. The specificity of this study lies therefore in its focus on religious education and its contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights."

should exclusively be the responsibility of family and religious community. On the other hand countries that have constitutional or legal requirements for provision of religious education in schools. All this positions have their own rights and historical reasons.

In relation to confessional religious education the report takes a careful position.	It should not be assumed that confessionally organized religious education is inimical to the promotion of tolerance and inter-religious understanding.
A third position is visible in states that have taken over all education for ideological reasons.	While the intention to create national unity by providing common schooling for all communities in a pluralist society may have been the leading criteria for such a policy, one of its results was to bequeath an almost total ignorance about religion, whether in a historical context or in an experiential way, which has created further distance among groups.
The discussion about the question whether religious education should be provided by the state in public schools ends with the following conclusion.	International prescriptions about education in the field of religion and conviction highlight that the very purpose of that education and the conditions governing its practice are connected with principles of promoting tolerance and international understanding. Provision of religious education, provided it is neutral and objective, can make a real contribution to the prevention of intolerance and discrimination by helping pupils realise their own individual and communal cultural identity and provide ethical guidance.
The main challenge, according to the report, is how to ensure that teaching of religion and conviction is undertaken.	...in an open and enquiring way, permitting question, response and free choice by the pupil, for it to contribute to a real "Culture of Tolerance", as also advocated by UNESCO.
After analysing the received answers on the questionnaire the following conclusion is drawn.	In conclusion, the frequent invocations of tolerance and respect for differences, dialogue and freedom of conscience, argue that many countries would indeed favour a multireligious approach to education. Religious education is seen in many replies as having great potential to harness the positive teachings of religions and motivate people for a tolerant and non-discriminatory society and a clear expectation emerges from most responses that religious education, rising to new challenges, can provide an important element within a preventive strategy aiming at challenging intolerance and discrimination.

Evaluation of the study report: The report is an interesting but also courageous attempt to go beyond the formal recognition of the freedom of religion or belief as a universal human right, in describing what the role of religion in schools could be. The report pleads for a place for religious education in all schools as a means to promote tolerance and understanding among individuals, groups and nations. In order to respect the separation between religion and state and the laws and regulations in the different state systems, the report defines the necessary character of religious education as neutral and objective. The vast majority of supporters of religious education in school will agree that religious education can and should contribute to the promotion of tolerance and understanding and to the prevention of intolerance and discrimination, but the condition that this education should be "neutral and objective" will be questioned by many. Experiences in many practical situations have learned that an objective kind of religious education can educate to indifference. Learning about religion, as dealing with information and knowledge, should be supplemented with learning from religion, aimed at understanding and finding your own relation or commitment to (or against) religion or belief.

The considerations start with the recognition of the rights and dignity of all human beings and recall then the relevant statements and declarations about human rights and the promotion of freedom of religion or belief. It is noted that human rights education should promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity, that every human being has a right to education, aimed at the full development of the child's personality, talents and abilities and providing gender equality. Remembered are the rights of parents to choose schools for their children and religious and/or moral education in conformity with their own convictions.

The main goal of the conference is formulated in the first article:

The final document

(...)

The conference:

Underlines the urgent need to promote, through education, the protection and the respect for freedom of religion or belief in order to strengthen peace, understanding and tolerance among individuals, groups and nations, and with a view to developing a respect for pluralism;

Then it states that the right to freedom of belief or religion should be respected (art. 2) and that young people should be brought up in respect for human rights. The State should promote and protect human rights (art. 4) and ensure equal rights for woman and men in education. (art. 5) Intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are condemned and States should take measures against manifestations of it through education or media. (art.6)

Article 7 gives four guidelines for education.

(a) the strengthening a non-discriminatory perspective in education and of knowledge in relation to freedom of religion or belief at the appropriate level

(b) The encouragement of those engaged in teaching to cultivate respect for religions or beliefs, thereby promoting mutual understanding and tolerance

(c) The awareness of the increasing interdependence between peoples and nations and the promotion of international solidarity

(d) The awareness of gender aspects with a view to promoting equal chances for men and women.

Article 9 deems the role of parents, families and legal guardians in the education of

*children in the field of religion
and belief. In order to pursue the
objectives of the document
recommendations for the
training of educational personnel
are formulated. (art. 10)*

States and organizations are encouraged to produce and renew educational materials for education in the field of religion or belief. (art. 11)
States and organizations are recommended to disseminate examples of best practice (art. 12)
and States should promote cultural exchanges in the filed of education. (art. 13)

(17) Invites organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations to contribute, in accordance with their mandate, to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, tolerance and non-discrimination.
(...)
(18) Invites all States, civil society and the international community to promote the principles, objectives and recommendations in the present document on school education in relation with freedom of religion or belief, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The final document reflects clearly the character of the conference as a human rights conference. Much of what has been said during the conference or written in the study report about the need for and about the character of religious education in schools, about dialogue and (religious) identity and about the contribution of religion or belief to tolerance could not have a place in this document.
The traditional Western discussion about the relationship between State and Church makes it impossible for certain States to think of a form of religious education in school. Within this framework religion is seen as a private matter and the responsibility for religious education in any form is considered to be the unique responsibility of parents and religious groups. States have to be neutral in religious affairs and cannot have a preference for one religion or belief or the other. This is the reason the wording of article two was changed in the drafting committee. The third draft had: "Deems that all religions and beliefs have their value …" which was changed into: "Deems that every human being has an intrinsic and inviolable dignity and value..."
There are no States and hardly any religious communities that want to give up the separation between State and religion, but the critical question is how school can contribute to social and cultural integration or an intercultural society, without giving room in the curriculum to the education concerning religions or beliefs.
The suggested compromise of a neutral and objective programme about religions is not enough. Learning about religion needs a complement with learning from religions in order to give room to the experiences and emotions of pupils and others, with a view to help the learners to develop their own commitment to a religion or belief of their choice. It is now the task of educational experts to make clear how a religious education that promotes tolerance and non-discrimination can be organised without interfering with the separation between State and religion or the free choice of being religious or not of the individual citizen.

Comments

The whole final document is available through:
http://www.hri.ca/children/education/madridDec.htm

OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Peter Schreiner

Schematic presentations always have limitations and this is also the case for this overview of Religious Education in Europe.

The table includes all the members of the Council of Europe except Armenia and Azerbaijan, although they became member states of the Council in 2001. It raises the question of where Europe ends.

In most European countries encounter with religions, learning about religion and learning from religion is part of the syllabus of public schools (with the exceptions of Albania and France, at least outside the departments of Alsace and Lorraine, changes are being discussed). The detailed regulations of the subject differ from country to country.

The second column gives information about whether the approach to RE is predominantly confessional or non-confessional and about which religious communities offer RE. The variety of approaches ranges from catechetical instruction (e.g. in many east European countries), through confessional cooperative concepts (e.g. in Finland, Germany or Austria) and non-confessional cooperative concepts (e.g. in Great Britain) to concepts focused clearly on a religious studies model (e.g. in Denmark).

Another column gives information about the status of RE. It is usually a compulsory subject where RE is taught non-confessionally. If it is confessionally oriented there is often a range of different subjects, out of which pupils and/or parents can choose one, or sometimes RE is a voluntary subject. This also corresponds to the column about the responsibility for setting the syllabuses.

All models and approaches to RE have their own history and "biography" and result from complex developments, influenced by the religious landscape of the countries, the role and value of religion in society, the structure of the education system and the relationship between the state and religion. This has to be taken into account in order to understand the nature of RE in each country. The last column gives "remarks" referring to the specific situation of the country.

A comparative view of approaches to RE should understand these different contexts and should not try to harmonise the differences that exist. A motive for a comparative view can be seen in the fact, that the debate about religious education is more and more dominated by the international dimension which also shapes daily life. Someone who knows about the situation in other countries can value in a much better way the different political decisions.

The blanks in the overview are caused by information that has not yet become available. In this respect all additional information and comments will be greatly appreciated by the author.

COUNTRY	APPROACH TO RE: CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS / OTHER RELIGIONS	OPTIONAL SUBJECT (O) COMPULSORY SUBJECT (C) OPT.-COMP. S. (OC)	SUBSTITUTE (S) OR ALTERNATIVE SUBJECT (A)	RESPONSIBILITY FOR SYLLABUSES	REMARKS
Albania	No Religious Education				Confessional RE in a few denominational private schools
Austria	Confessional: Religious communities, registered by the state (15)	C	No	Cooperation: state /religious communities	Mainly Confessional RE
Belgium	Confessional: Religious communities, registered by the state; regulations on local level	OC Religion/Ethics	Yes	Religious communities	52% catholic schools
Belarus					History of religion in some schools
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Confessional: Islamic, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Adventist	O, C, O/C		Different regulations in the cantons of the Federation and the Republic of Serbia	A new subject "Culture of Religions" is planned
Bulgaria	Confessional: Orthodox	O			Introduced in 1998 in primary school, 1999 in secondary school
Croatia	Confessional: Catholic, Islamic	O		Religious communities	76% Catholic
Cyprus	Confessional: Greek orthodox	C		Syllabuses from Greece	77% Greek-orthodox, 18% Muslims
Czech. Republic	Confessional: all registered religious communities	O	No	Religious communities-	
Denmark	Non-Confessional: Prim. School mainly Ev.-luth., other religions must be included in sec. school	C in sixth form colleges opting out is not possible	No	Dept. of Education and local Education Authorities aided by RE teachers associations	No RE in form 7 or 8 due to preparation for confirmation. comp.subject defined as academic study of religion
England and Wales	Non-Confessional: Christian tradition and World Religions at all stages	C Parental right of withdrawal	No	LEA- committees with representatives of religious communities, teachers and politicians	Multi-religious approach
Estonia	Confessional	O	?	RE on demand of parents	Mainly Lutheran tradition. A few non-state Christian schools with RE are reopened.
Finland	Confessional: Lutheran and orthodox	C	S: Humanistic Ethics	Cooperation state/church	Mainly Lutheran RE (Participation 97%)
France	Only Alsace and Lorraine: Lutheran/reformed catholic/Jewish	No RE (except Alsace and Lorraine)		No regulation (responsibility of the churches)	Exception: Alsace and Lorraine 'Culture of religion' under development for the remainder of France
Germany	Confessional evangelical/catholic partly Jewish, Islamic religious instruction, Greek-orthodox,	C (exceptions)	S/A: Ethics/Norms and Values, Philosophy	Coop. state/ churches	Exceptions: Berlin, Bremen, Brandenburg
Georgia	Confessional	O	?		The Georgian-orthodox church plans to start RE
Greece	Confessional: orthodox church / Islamic community	C	Partly	Orthodox church/Islam. community	In principal: Greek-orthodox. ?RE
Hungary	Confessional	O	Planned	Churches	Compulsory subject in church schools

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COUNTRY	APPROACH OF RE: CHRISTIAN CONFESSIONS / OTHER RELIGIONS	OPTIONAL SUBJECT (O) COMPULSORY SUBJECT (C) OPT.-COMP. S. (OC)	SUBSTITUTE (S) OR ALTERNATIVE SUBJECT (A)	SYLLABUSES	SPECIAL REMARKS
Iceland	Non-confessional: Christianity, religious science and ethics	C	No	State in cooperation with churches	93% Protestants
Ireland	Confessional: roman-catholic	C	No	Church	Domination of catholic school system
Italy	Confessional: roman-catholic	O Ethics/Religion	No	Church	Mainly roman-catholic RE, enrol for RE necessary
Latvia	Confessional: roman-catholic, Lutheran	O	Ethics		Partly Lutheran, partly roman-catholic
Lithuania	Confessional	OC Moral education with RE or Ethics	Ethics	Religious communities	75% catholic
Luxembourg	Confessional	OC	Yes		Only cathol. RE
Macedonia					Mainly orthodox and Islamic population
Malta	Confessional roman-catholic	O			Only catholic RE, all schools are catholic schools
Moldova					Russian orthodox majority
Netherlands	Christian churches, Jewish and Islamic religious communities, humanists,	C (in all Christian schools)	No	Christian schools	2/3 of all schools = Christian schools. In Primary schools: obligatory teaching about spiritual streams;
Norway	Non-confessional: Christianity with Religion and Moral Philosophy	C	No	State	New syllabus since 1997
Poland	Confessional	O	S: Ethics?	Church	
Portugal	Confessional	OC	Yes		RE since 1986
Romania	Confessional: Romanian orthodox, protestant, roman-catholic	O	?	Churches	RE since 1998
Russian Federation	Partly confessional	Possible O	?	No regulations	RE since 1990, only on initiative of parents
Scotland	Mostly Non confessional, confessional only in roman-catholic schools	C	No	State in non-denomination schools; state/-church coop. in denom. schools	Confessional RE only in denominational schools (30% of the schools)
Slovakia	Confessional: Catholic, protestant	O	No	Churches	
Slovenia					
Spain	Confessional: roman-catholic	O	Partly	Churches	Only catholic RE, very few protestant schools
Sweden	Non-confessional	C	No	Cooperation state/church.	99% take part in „objective RE"
Switzerland	In principal Confessional RE and Non-confessional Bible science	O/C		Churches / regional state	School regulations on canton level (26 cantons)
Turkey	Islamic instruction	C			Only Islamic instruction, opting out for Non-Muslims possible
Ukraine	Confessional: Orthodox, protestant	O			Constitution of 1996 provides the right of independent schools with the right of free RE

DIFFERENT APPROACHES – COMMON AIMS?
CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Peter Schreiner

The following paper, delivered by Peter Schreiner at a seminar at Oslo university in November 2001, provides a comparative overview on religious education in Europe. Although there are many differences in the existing approaches to religious education, there are also some common trends and challenges which need to be dealt with.

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
	### 1. 'Biographies' of RE
Basic information about RE in 24 European countries can be found in Peter Schreiner (ed), Religious Education in Europe, Münster 2000.	In most countries of Europe religious education is part of the curriculum in public schools but the regulations are different.

RE in Europe is grounded in factors like the
— religious landscape of the country,
— the role and value of religion in society,
— the structure of the education system, and its history, and politics.

Each approach to religious education is shaped by a specific *composition with different layers.* Where you have a *Catholic dominated population* as in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland Catholicism is deeply embedded in the culture. Any kind of RE there will be influenced by that. Even if legal rights guarantee the freedom of religion, which is the fact e.g. in Italy, Spain and Portugal, the dominance of one religion is obvious in culture and society. This is the reason why the small Protestant churches in Italy don't use the legal opportunity, to provide religious education for their pupils in schools. The dominance of Catholicism nurtures resistance against any kind of denominational RE in schools. In Poland the small Evangelical church has also criticised the Catholic majority church for using their influence in public schools, but now they have reached an agreement with the government which allows the church to provide RE in the areas where their members live.

Where you have a *mixed religious situation* as in Germany, the Netherlands or in Switzerland a Protestant and Catholic RE exist in public schools or other provisions are made through Christian schools as in the Netherlands.

Where you have *a strict separation of state and religion*, and France is an extreme example for that due to the basic principle of laicité, religion has no place in public schools. And if you take into account the fact that France has a well developed area of private (Catholic) schools, where 20 % of all pupils attend, you can follow the argument, that there seems to be no remarkable discussion about RE in public schools. However over the last few years a serious discussion has started about the need of 'religious knowledge' in school. Teachers have become increasingly aware that pupils do not understand history or art or even French without a basic knowledge of religion(s). Additionally

*See the article of Bernard Kaempf in the above mentioned book.*

Islam has an increasing influence on the French society. Initiatives were developed providing opportunities for teachers to include religious knowledge in different subjects.

The adoption of a religious studies approach in Denmark and the complex balancing of secular and religious influences within England and Wales provide further interesting examples.

Also in other countries the relationship between public and private schools influences the status of RE. A majority of 2/3 of all schools in the Netherlands arg still Christian schools and 1/3 have a "neutral status" according to religion and worldviews. When in the last century an emotional and serious discussion took place in society about the value and place of religious education, a solution was found in the 'pillarization' of the country where nearly all parts of the society were structured according to religious or non-religious world views. The state guaranteed the same rights and support for "private" schools which were then founded mainly by initiatives of parents. A denominational RE exists in the 2/3 Christian schools and in general no religious education takes place in the "neutral" public school. Increasingly parents in public schools ask for options in RE and worldviews which are then provided by the Reformed church or the Humanistic Union.

Speaking about 'biographies' of religious education in Europe shall encourage a careful look and the readiness to explore different understandings about RE. It can sharpen one's own view about RE and it can provide opportunities for dialogue among RE practitioners and scholars without nurturing the perspective to develop *the* European RE approach, which would ignore the richness of cultures and religions in Europe. But it should not hinder discussion of some common or specific challenges to RE.

2. Dimensions and Models of Religious Education
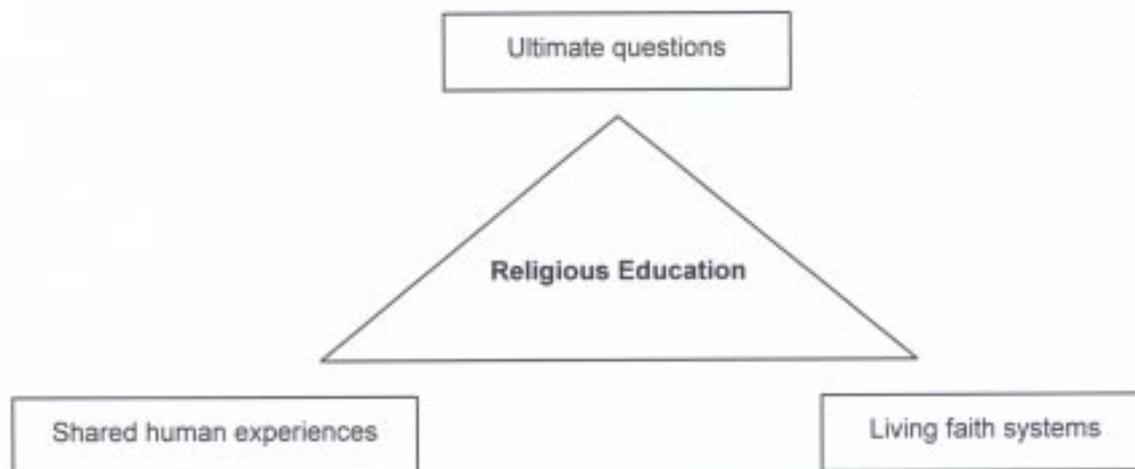
The "triangle model" draws on the work of the Westhill project and CEM in England.

At the last European conference of the European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE) (August 2001 in Edinburgh) this triangle was used as a kind of common understanding and a framework for discussion RE in Europe. It was shared by many of the participants. It includes the dynamic element of RE and its actors. Ultimate questions and shared human experiences can be contributed by the pupils themselves and the teachers by sharing their stories. Living faith systems include both the traditions of religions and world views but also the current value and importance of these views for their believers. Every kind of RE should be aware of these dimensions. It says something about RE before we deal with concrete models.

Two main approaches to RE
Neglecting the need for a more specific description we can roughly differentiate between two main models of RE in Europe: the *religious studies approach* and the *denominational or confessional approach,* being well aware that this simplification can nurture prejudices and stereotypes.

The differentiation between 'confessional' and 'religious studies' refers to the fact, that contents of RE, the training and facilitating process of teachers, the development of curricula and teaching material are mainly in the responsibility of religious communities or of the state.

Where RE is denominationally oriented, it must be emphasised that this approach is not understood as the consequence of a state church or of a majority religion. Rather it is considered the realisation of state neutrality and the individual freedom of religion. The state does not have to influence the contents of the subject, but to be neutral in religions and world-views. Where RE is denominationally oriented (e.g. in the south of Europe, partly in Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany, central and eastern Europe) different kinds of religious education are offered. In Austria, Belgium and partly in Germany denominational religious education is not limited to Catholic or Protestant teaching but it includes also Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other forms of religious education. In many cases there is an opportunity to opt out and to choose alternative subjects such as ethics or philosophy.

These two models are often seen as the two ends of a spectrum. An 'overlapping area' can be identified in which there is cooperation between the state and religious communities in designing RE syllabuses. Examples of this are the ‚Agreed Syllabus' system in England and Wales, but also the shared responsibility of state and religious communities for the RE syllabuses in Germany.

Most of the countries with a religious studies approach (e.g. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Scotland) do not have a general right to opt out, although in some countries it is given to members of religious minorities. General aims are to transmit religious knowledge and understanding, as well as to deal with human experiences. The neutrality of the state and the right of religious freedom are to be guaranteed with this approach as well. In this case, however, it occurs in a different way than with denominational religious education. The religious studies approach is carried out under the sole authority of the state. Instruction is not to be neutral in respect to values but must be neutral in respect to worldviews including religion, a demand which corresponds to the religious neutrality of the state. From this perspective, this neutrality guarantees that this kind of religious education is equally acceptable to all denominations and religions.

A schematic overview of the place of RE in the school system and the different responsibilities might look like the following:

Responsibility: religious communities	Cooperative models between religious communities and the state	Responsibility: schools (state agencies)
denominational/confessional	confessional / non-confessional	Religious Studies
Voluntary subject	Voluntary/Compulsory subject	Compulsory subject

3. Aims of Religious Education

Examples of the different models of RE in actual curricular statements.

Different approaches have different aims. The more denominationally oriented RE has a focus on the identity formation of the pupils concerning the religious dimension. The more religious studies oriented approach refers more to the knowledge and understanding of religion.

Some examples of aims of RE from different countries:
(1) Religious Education should:
- enable pupils to achieve knowledge and understanding of religions with particular reference to Christianity and the other principal religions in the country and oft he influence of these religions on people's lives and in society.
- contribute to the spiritual and moral development of pupils:
  - by developing awareness of the fundamental questions about life raised by human experience;
  - and encouraging pupils to
    - investigate
    - reflect on
    - evaluate
    - and respond to
  such questions in the light of the teachings of the world's great religious and ethical traditions.
- promote respect for the rights of other people to hold beliefs different from one's own.

(England, Manchester Agreed Syllabus in Religious Education (May 1996)

(2) To give the student a many-sided religious and ideological all-round education. In such a way that the student
(1) familiarises herself with her own denomination and religion and its cultural inheritance in order to get stimuli to form a personal outlook on life
(2) he studies other religions and value and belief systems with the aim of learning to respect people who carry different convictions and coexists with them in a multicultural society and
(3) develops an ethically responsible attitude to life in order to be able to choose her own values, take responsibility for the future, and influence decisions made in society.

(Finland, Framework Curriculum for the Senior Secondary School 1994: 87, according to Markku Pyysiäinen, 1999, 44)

(3)
(1) To make sensitive for religious meanings and questions as a kind of introduction to religion
(2) Orientation and advice in questions of an ethical responsible life
(3) To pass on religious knowledge and religious experiences
(Germany, Association of Protestant and Catholic RE teachers in Wurttemberg, 1997)

Some emerging commonalities.

When we compare the aims of religious education from different national contexts we can find certain similarities.
Many catalogues of aims of RE include:
- To deal with questions of meaning from the perspective of different world views and religions.
- To enable pupils to clarify their own values and to give reasons for them.
- To encourage pupils to question their own value based decisions.

1) A recognition that RE must meet the needs of pupils, which remain very similar in whatever country they are.

Looking to the different RE classrooms in Europe I would argue that there is a tendency that practice is converging in spite of the different 'theories'. This can be underlined by an increasing awareness about the relation of religion and the pupils, their own individual religious practice, their religiosity and their 'religious needs'.
This view includes a recognition of the active-meaning capacity of the students going along with a dynamic understanding of religion.

2) The centrality of the pedagogical enterprise.

Looking for reasons for this convergence one can say that there is a central awareness of religious education as a pedagogical enterprise. Another reason is an increasing awareness of the experience and the day-to-day situation of the pupil.
This change of perspectives includes a different understanding of religion and culture. Both are seen as dynamic interwoven areas and every definition has no more than a provisional status. There is no religion or culture that has not changed in history. More emphasis is given to the concrete 'gestalt' of religion within each individual.

3) The changing relationship of religion and culture, neither of which is static.

In summarising the development of RE in Europe it seems to be obvious that a change in the perception of religion from an institutionalised tradition to personal aspects of believers, the religiosity of pupils and the acceptance of the 'Children's right to religion' (Friedrich Schweitzer) can provide a new stimulus for a European oriented discussion about RE.

4. Challenges

(…)
- Secularisation in a global context
- Adequate dealing with the situation of plurality
- Expectations (of parents and politicians)
- A need for exchange and cooperation among RE professionals in different countries.

(…)

Four challenges for the future of RE are identified:

A key challenge for the future of RE in Europe.

How can religion(s) and education be brought into a relationship to the situation and the needs of the students? How can we deal with the tension between encouraging open-mindedness and seeking to transmit values through RE? The relationship between a more **content-centred** approach which transmits knowledge from a teacher who knows to a student who should know and a **pupil-centred** approach which takes students as the active meaning-makers seriously and provides them with a safe space for their own development is also a debate for RE. Paulo Freire has called the '**transmission'** approach the "banking-method" where the educator making 'deposits' in the educatee. He and others argue for a **transformation** approach where learning and teaching is mutually interwoven, where teachers become teacher-learners and learners become learner-teachers. Religious education is a decisive area where critical contributions can be made to this ongoing debate.

Comments

The extracts from papers by Schweitzer, Hull and Jensen provide examples of the different approaches to RE described in this paper.

A web version of the whole paper is available through:
http://www.comenius.de

EUROPE – A CHALLENGE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Friedrich Schweitzer

At the conference of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School about "The Pluralistic European Society: Opportunities for Cooperation Between Church and School?" held in Trondheim, Norway in summer 2000, Prof. Friedrich Schweitzer presented this paper. He teaches Religious Education at the university of Tübingen/ Germany.
Although religious education can be seen in a European perspective, it is not a central issue in discussions about education at the European level, nor an important point in the institutions of the EU.
In his introduction Schweitzer remarks: "In this situation (…) we have to ask firstly if and in which sense Europe in fact may constitute a challenge for religious education. And finally, we also have to think about the ways in which the relationship between religious education and Europe may be taken up in the practice of religious education so that children and youth who are the European adult generation of tomorrow, can see the relevance of this relationship."

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
	1. Is Europe A Challenge for Religious Education?
Starting with an analysis of the political mandate of the European Communities.	I start with the EC because it is an open question if we have to deal with religious education as a European issue in the sense of the EC. This question arises from the political mandate of the EC as it is described in the treaties between the participating European nation-states. (…)
RE has to be connected to the general understanding of education.	In this sense it is true that the EC has no responsibilities for matters of education of its own – education remains a responsibility of the individual member states. At the same time, Europe in the sense of the EC has important consequences for education, including religious education in theory as well as praxis.
A critical analysis about the concept of "knowledge" and the "knowledge society" is necessary.	1. Aims of Education: A first and most important consequence concerns the aims of education. In 1996, the EC published a major book-length statement on general and vocational education. This publication focuses on learning and "knowledge" which is seen as a decisive resource for the future of European societies. (…) (…) Consequently there is reason to assume that the EC will influence the understanding and interpretation of the aims of education in such a way that education is limited to qualification for employment and that the position of religious education is put in question, just like other areas of education which do not seem to be of immediate importance for the economy.
	2. Legal Questions: Concerning legal questions it must again be stated that education remains subject to national law, except for the adaptations which had to be made for the sake of European cooperation. (…) Nevertheless, the interpretation of national law is not independent from the legal situation in the respective European neighbouring countries. For example, the right of religious freedom which is guaranteed in all member states, can be understood in very different ways.

3. Models of Religious Education in Public Schools

Two main models can be identified, but a broader range of concrete approaches in this general framework should not be neglected.

Whoever looks at religious education in a European perspective, will first of all be struck by the varieties of its forms.

(…)

The denominational approach in the sense of learning from religion is most clearly realised, for example, in Italy, Austria and Germany. Given the misunderstandings which are often repeated in this respect, it must be emphasised that denominational religious education in these countries is not understood as the consequence of a state church or of a majority religion. Rather, it is considered the realisation of state neutrality and individual freedom of religion.

(…)

The religious studies approach, our second model of religious education, does not include the participation of religious communities, at least not in a continuous manner. This approach has gained its main attention in England and Wales. In a similar way the religious studies approach is practised in Sweden as well as in some parts of the Dutch schools. Religion is taught on a non-denominational basis.

(…)

Do we need a new European oriented model for religious education?

In our present context, the most decisive question must refer to what Europe means for the future of religious education in state schools. Which one of the models described will become the guiding model in Europe? If we consider, for example, the recent recommendation of the Council of Europe about religion and democracy of January 1999 from this perspective, we may, at first glance, be delighted about the way in which the importance of religion in democracy and consequently in Europe is recognised. (…)Yet upon closer inspection especially of the recommendations to the governments of the member states it becomes clear that this statement can also be read as supporting the (French) understanding of the relationship between state and church in the sense of strict separation.

(…)

This seems to be a decisive area for debate.

Even if other statements in this recommendation which might be interpreted differently, should not be overlooked, this clearly is a plea for the religious studies approach as guiding model. Given such statements the assumption is not without grounds that the development of Europe in general and of the EC in particular will in the end weaken the position of denominational religious education, among others due to the strong influence of countries like France and Britain. (…)

4. European Identity and Religion: It is one of the big unresolved questions which connection can be assumed between a European identity and religion. In the public discourse outside of theology and religious education, again and again, one may find references to the dividing lines which are felt mostly in eastern Europe and which are explained with the traditional separation and tensions between western and eastern Christianity. (…)

The importance of the relationship between the European identity and religion is even more visible when we include non-Christian religions into our considerations. In politics and in the media one often encounters the question if, for example, Turkey as a non-Christian country can be part of Europe or of the EC. (…)

5. <u>Religious Foundations of Social Solidarity</u>: Religion is not the same as ethics but, according to widely shared assumptions, religion can make an important contribution to moral education. It is a common feature of most religions that faith is the source of an ethics. In the case of Christianity, this ethics which has grown out of Christian faith, has strongly influenced philosophical and political ethics in general, for example in connection with the formulation of human rights. (…)

If Europe – be it in the shape of the EC or of a greater Europe – is to be more than an abstract entity which is exclusively based on economic interests, then it is in need of social forces which work towards the European solidarity which lies so far ahead of us. For this reason we must at least ask what religious education can contribute to the realisation of a European solidarity.

(…)

2. Pluralism in Europe - Challenges and Perspectives for State, Church and School

It can hardly be doubted that the experience of diversity belongs to the overall characteristics of our time. The reference to such diversity is no longer limited to political positions and tendencies but it has also come to include different cultures, ethnicities, worldviews and religions. All of us are confronted with the challenge to live with this diversity – or rather, <u>to learn how to live with it</u>. The crisis experiences for example of violence and death in the context of hostility against the stranger in Germany indicate that living together in Europe does not function very well. (…)

Diversity and the role of civil society.

In the light of these challenges the decisive question must be how we can deal with this plurality in such a way that the aim of a democratic pluralism will really be achieved. Of course this is a very comprehensive question which is related to the internal and external future of Europe. A single paper should not be expected to offer more than a few perspectives relating to this future. Therefore I will focus on the question of religious education. More exactly, I want to show that with state, church and school there are certain convergent developments which speak for a new cooperation in the area of religious education in public schools. The different developments which I am referring to, converge in the conviction increasingly articulated by politicians and social philosophers alike that the future of democracy is premised on a strong civil society. (…)

(…) three points referring to the state and its role in democracy:

- the special role of the eastern European citizen movements
- the concept of <u>intermediary institutions</u> between the state and the individual citizens
- there is a stronger interest in voluntary work and in agencies which organise such work.

What is the role of the church in civil society?

(…)

Of course much more could be said about these developments. My considerations above are only meant to show the plausibility of my understanding that the future of democracy is premised on civil society. In respect to the state, this understanding has received increasing support. But what does it mean in respect to the <u>church</u>? Can the church take on a new meaning in the context of civil society? Or should the church and the religious

communities more and more be confined to the private realm because of the plurality of religions and worldviews in Europe?

Three considerations:
- We may distinguish, in Europe as well as in other parts of the world, two different models for how the state can deal with the situation of increasing plurality in the area of religions and worldviews. The first model which is gaining more and more influence today, presupposes that the plurality of religions and worldviews is responsible for tensions and divisions in society which only can be overcome by further extending the boundaries of religious neutrality. According to this model, more or less the whole public sphere must be structured on the basis of religious neutrality, and the state school is a prime candidate for this extension of religious neutrality. (…) the second model for dealing with plurality is based on the assumption that religious neutrality can only be achieved to a limited degree and that especially education will lose many chances for influencing children and youth if it is detached from all religious convictions and worldviews which actually motivate and shape their behaviour. (…)
- In international research, we find empirical support for the assumption that there is a close connection between a functioning civil society or democracy and the influence of religious communities. (…)
- Therefore it is important, (…) to identify an emerging self-understanding of the church which is in line with the commitment to civil society. Churches will only be able to become operative as intermediary structures if they accept this as their task. (…)

School and plurality.
D. Green: Reinventing Civil Society: The Rediscovery of Welfare Without Politics, London 1993, p. 138f.

The role of the <u>school</u> in a pluralist society:
- According to (…) D. Green, there can be no doubt about the higher degree of effectiveness of private schools since the standards in state schools are on the decline. The development of moral, intellectual and other active abilities, he says, is hindered by the system based on state schools alone. (…)
- In many countries there is a plea for more autonomy of the individual schools. Without explicit reference to the discussions on civil society yet clearly in the same vein, educators demand more school diversity, decentralisation, school autonomy and, in part, deregulation. (…)

Summarized:
A first line of arguments points out that the role of all three institutions – state, church and school – is changing if the civil society is given a stronger role in democracy. The various arguments concerning state, church and school converge in this perspective of strengthening civil society and public responsibility.
A second line of arguments points out that even in countries which have a different tradition, authority over the school is being shifted to civil society and, through this process, becomes an authority shared with others. It is exactly at this point that a new cooperation between church and school is desirable (…) I am thinking of the church as a supportive partner of the school in civil society, not of the church as ruler over the school. (…) Religious education may be seen as a test case for this partnership. (…)

A test case for religious education.

3. Religious Education, Civil Society, and the Public School

(…)

Criteria for a future approach to religious education.

Compared to traditional denominational religious education, the future approach must include a much stronger emphasis of the need for ecumenical and interreligious education for the sake of mutual understanding and respect. This emphasis refers to the different Christian churches and denominations as well as to the different religions and worldviews. The idea that school religious education should only familiarise the younger generation with the traditions of one's own denomination and to have children and adolescents adopt these traditions, is less convincing than ever.

There are challenges for the existing models.

(…)The traditional religious studies approach is still fully in line with the state-centred model of the school which is supposed to be religiously neutral.

A new model for religious education.

As opposed to this, there now is a need for a new type of cooperation with the religious communities.

In conclusion I want to set forth three demands concerning the new model for religious education:

1. (…)Religious education should not only affirm democracy and the idea of civil society by making use of the principle of subsidiarity, for example, in the context of the school – it must also actively and expressly contribute to their realisation.

2. The new model of religious education is not only a matter of practical realisation within the schools but it also requires a different kind of teacher training as well as corresponding theoretical orientations. This will only be achieved if religious education is willing to widen its horizon and to focus on Europe rather than only on the national contexts.

3. Finally, and this may be of special interest for ICCS, religious education needs a European voice of its own. (…) It would be an important step towards strengthening civil society in Europe if we were more successful in establishing a representative association of religious education in Europe.

I close with a very strong thesis. Whoever wants to give Europe a soul will need a strong civil society which includes the religious communities. And whoever wants a strong civil society will need a school and a type of religious education to which the religious communities are committed and for which they have some authority. And finally, whoever wants to take seriously the challenge which Europe entails for religious education must make an effort to give religious education in Europe a voice of its own.

One voice for religious education in Europe?

Comments

It seems that the paper raise important points about mutual challenges of Europe and religious education which need further discussion.

The whole text is available through:
http://www.cogree.com

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
A Global Perspective

John M. Hull

In a recent published article Prof. John Hull Professor für Religious Education at teh University of Birmingham, England, gives an overview on main approaches to religious education in a global perspective. The author is aware about the complexity of his task: "As the manner and extent to which religious education is included in state education varies from country to country, it is difficult to formulate a global perspective. Nonetheless, this essay will attempt to provide some general frameworks and to chart potential ways forward."

Comments

Four important factors influence the approach to religious education:

The spectrum includes also a range of countries with a mix of Christian denominations like the Netherlands and Germany.

Text (extracts)

In reviewing some general models, we can say that the approach to religious education in different countries varies in accordance with several factors:

1. The religious affiliation of the society, whether mono-religious or multi-religious;
2. The relation between the religious and the secular within each country;
3. The historical tradition of each country; and,
4. Conceptions about the nature and purpose of state school religious education.

Religious Affiliations:
The religious affiliations of a country are a primary consideration in determining how a religious education programme might look. Countries such as Greece are considered mono-religious in that the country is predominately Greek orthodox and the state religious education is the same. On the other side of the spectrum, however, are countries like England where there has been a pluralistic Christian tradition since 1689 and a significant multi-religious presence since WW II. While religious education was initially non-denominational Christian in England, a multi-faith approach gradually developed. (…)

Religious and Secular Relationships:
The relationship between the religious and the secular elements in a society also determines how religious education might develop. For example, we can compare the United States of America with France and Turkey. The secularity of the U.S. Constitution is not historically hostile to religion, but it represents a separation of church and state in the interests of securing the freedom of religion from state control. On the other hand, the secularity of the modern French education system is influenced by the 1789 revolution, which was hostile to the church. The result is that religion is not taught in state schools in France. This anti-religious secularity is also apparent in Turkey following the founding of the modern Turkish State by Atatürk in 1923. (…)

Historical Traditions:
The historical experiences of each country are also likely to modify the factors noted above. Because Roman Catholicism and Protestantism were more or less equally present in most of the

German provinces, for example, religious education in the state schools took either a Protestant or Catholic form.
(…)
Another example of the impact of history upon religious education may be found in several countries of post-colonial Africa. (…)

Defining Religious Education:
Finally, we need to look at how a country defines the nature and purpose of religious education. These perspectives have been influenced by modern philosophies of education from Rousseau to Dewey, by new interpretations of human rights including the rights of children, and by progressive re-interpretations of religion on the part of theologians and religion scholars.
(…)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778), 18th century French deistic philosopher and author; has written: Emile, or On Education (1762).

John Dewey (1859 – 1952), Leading light of the 20th century American school of thought known as pragmatism and leading educational theorist, founder of a laboratory school in Chicago.

How can religious education contribute to religious freedom?

It is against this enormous variety, and in the light of the complex ways these many strands inter-weave to form distinctive national patterns, that we must ask, "What is the contribution of religious education to religious freedom?" From what we have said it is clear that there can be no simple answer to this question. Immediately one is faced with several additional questions: "What kind of religion? What kind of religious education? And, what kind of freedom?" (…) My colleague Michael Grimmitt has usefully distinguished between 'learning religion,' 'learning about religion,' and 'learning from religion.' (…)

Three different approaches to religious education:

Learning Religion:
'Learning religion' describes the situation where a single religious tradition is taught as the religious education curriculum and is taught from the inside, so to speak. The teachers are expected to be believers in the religion themselves and the object of the instruction is to enable pupils to come to believe in the religion or to strengthen their commitment to it. (…)

Religion from within.

When plurality in such formerly monolithic societies does appear, two possible reactions may be observed. First, religious education may be abandoned altogether and the state education system may become completely secular. When this takes place, it is expected that nurture into religious faith will be confined to the homes of the children or to the religious communities themselves. The second possible reaction may be described as a pluralization of learning religion in which students are offered a system of parallel instruction. (…)
The freedom that this kind of religious education offers is too restricted. It offers freedom to the religion, which is being taught, and a freedom of non-competitive transmission, but it does not enhance the freedom of the student. (…)

Learning About Religion:
There is, however, another possible reaction to the onset of pluralism (…) which we may describe as 'learning about religion.' Instead of religion being taught from the inside, in the situation that 1 described as being from faith to faith, religion is now taught, as it were, from the outside.

From an outside perspective.

This approach may be called 'learning about religion' because of its descriptive and historical approach. It tends to appear as a reaction against the mono-religious 'learning religion' situation

(…)
A disadvantage of this 'learning about religion' approach is that it tends to focus upon the content of religions and, therefore, the pupils are often not motivated to study it. (…)
However, this kind of religious education, 'learning about religion,' has a significant role to play in the prevention of religious intolerance. Because it empowers the student with critical skills for interpreting religious phenomena, it tends to release students from unexamined beliefs and helps them to break down the stereotypes of other religious traditions. (…)

Learning From Religion:
Because the approach above does present certain limitations, a third kind of religious education has also emerged. This may be called 'learning from religion.'

The focus on the child as learner.

(…)
The question at stake is to what extent, and in what ways, children and young people can gain educational benefit from the study of religion. This becomes the kind of religious education that has as its principal objective the humanisation of the pupil, that is, making a contribution to the pupils' moral and spiritual development.

In the first two kinds of religious education, 'learning religion' and 'learning about religion,' religion is taught for its own sake, whether as an object of faith to which the children are summoned, or as an object worthy of critical study. However, in the third kind, 'learning from religion,' the central focus switches to the children as learners. (…)

The Role of Religious Education Today:
The distinctions between various approaches to religious education that we have been discussing are certainly of great importance in understanding the nature and purposes of modern religious education. (…)

If we take the first of the three types of religious education which we discussed, 'learning religion,' then we might well claim that it is the business of each religion to ensure its own transmission to the next generation. (…)

What justifies the inclusion of religious education within a publicly funded state education system?

As for the second approach 'learning about religion' we could imagine that, from the point of view of the state, such an approach would be preferable in that it places religious education on the same footing as the other subjects of the curriculum. (…)
However, this 'learning about religion' approach still leaves much to be desired from the point of view of the state. The curriculum is under pressure and (…) it might be argued that education in mathematics and science is more significant from the point of view of the modern state. Of course, we have the question of mutual understanding and toleration between different religions. (…) However, as we start to talk about the contribution of religion to these life-areas, we are already moving away from religious education as 'learning about religion' toward our third understanding of the subject, 'learning from religion.' For young people to become more tolerant of others through the study of religion is to learning from religion.
Indeed, the great strength of the third approach is that, in speaking of the benefits which young people and society may derive from the study of religion, one is moving away from the domestic concerns of the religious communities, and the internal

questions about the best way to study religion, into the wider issues with which government and the community at large are rightly concerned.

A Case Study:
How would the 'learning from religion' approach apply to an issue of contemporary concern? Let us take the example of the pressures of financial competition, which influences every aspect of government polity. (…)
These financial forces are, however, being challenged and it is in this context that we must interpret the world-wide interest in spirituality and in an education which will encourage the genuine humanity of our young people. The dilemma is that we need to have an education that promotes their spiritual and moral welfare. (…)
But how can education promote moral and spiritual ideals? It is at this point that the world religions must be recognised as the principal foci of disciplined and coherent human moral and spiritual life. This does not mean that the religions are necessary to ethical life, or that you cannot be good without religion. (…)
Nevertheless, the world religions contain the seeds of human protest. They remain, along with a humanised art, literature and science, the main resources that we have for the rehabilitation of human life.
At its best, however, 'learning from religion' is a unique resource for the advancement of human freedom.

Comments

This article of John Hull is published in a booklet of the International Association for Religious Freedom: "Religious Education in Schools: Ideas and Experiences from around the World", Oxford 2001, p. 1-8. It can be ordered through:
International Association for Religious Freedom, 2 Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF U.K. or through: **Zarrin@iarf.net**.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A EUROPE OF CONFLICTING TRENDS

Tim Jensen

The following paper, delivered by Tim Jensen at an EFTRE conference in Copenhagen in August 1998, calls for an approach to RE that is based on the 'scientific' study of religions, free of a commitment to any one religion; it is argued that this would provide an acceptable basis for RE within secular societies. It provides an example of the 'study of religions' approach to RE derived from a Danish context.

Comments	**Text (extracts)**
Agreement on the need for all future citizens of Europe to study RE.	(…) As my starting point I take it for granted that we all, in spite of all other different opinions, agree that it is important that future European citizens, future citizens of the various member states, cannot leave the public school system without having had some kind of RE that gives them information and knowledge about religions and the phenomenon of religion. Now, if we have at least this much in common, then the central question is: What kind of RE does it take to ensure this? Contrary to the lofty visions of a future inter-religious RE (which I for one, with a reference to the principles of Freedom of Religion and the parents' right to withdraw their children from religious education contrary to their faith, would not send my children to), I propose a kind of secular
RE to be provided by a secular state on a universal secular basis.	informative, critical and pluralistic RE, guaranteed and run by the secular state. Such an RE will not, I admit, aim at some kind of religious knowledge of religion, but at knowledge and information; it will make it impossible for parents to withdraw their children from RE, it will make the possibilities for opting out obsolete. It will be the guarantee that every future citizen, be he/she religious, non-religious or anti-religious will know something about religion. Not everything there is to learn about religion or even from religion, but something.
RE that will draw on the methodology of the academic study of religion in the tertiary sector.	I want an RE closer to the Enlightenment-traditions of Europe and the study and science of religion. An RE, which together with the other school subjects and the school as such, can function as a "bastion of liberal rationalism". An RE which does not hold such sui generis theories of religion and RE, that it actually prevents itself from becoming an ordinary, obligatory school subject. An RE that practices a thoroughly critical approach to religion, to religious as well as so-called secular discourses on religion, and, not the least, to its own past and present theories of and approaches to religion. An RE, which compared to other visions, has the advantage of actually being in existence, working and working fine. It is a secular RE, but a secular RE that is thoroughly critical of its own secular character as well as of religion, I do not think that such a kind of RE, as little as the science of religion, has constantly to change its character and aims according to the developments, trends and tendencies in the world in general or in the world of religions, but I do think that it has to take notice of the religious and cultural situation that it is a part of. (…)

When in 1964, Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of the EEC, claimed that the democratic ideal on which the future of Europe depended, owed its origins exclusively to Christianity, he was, not only wrong but also using a rhetoric that not many of his contemporaries would, for various reasons, subscribe to. Today, however, when the democracies of Europe are multi-religious in a way they have not been before, times have changed. Rhetoric such as Schuman's is much more frequent. Public and political discourses on the cultural identity of Europe and of the various European nation-states flourish. So does the use of religion, by religious as well as secular participants, as an ethnic and social marker, a marker of identities. (…)

The theoretical basis for the study of religions from a critical standpoint.

We must become better at finding ways to present sui generis theories of religion as theories and naturalist theories, be they psychological, cognitive, biological, sociological; we must become better able to discuss the implications of using the one or the other theory, also the ideological implications. We must become better at unfolding how extremely thrilling it is to try to find out more about religions, to watch religions as human and social constructs. We have to apply all our historical and comparative analytical skills, and instead of just trying to create a sense of familiarity with the religious systems and their point of view, we have to create space for critical distance and for a conscious effort to de-familiarise the religious discourses, – as well as the public discourses on religion. Why should the study of religion not be as fascinating as the study of the genes, the brain, and the universe, and why not fascinating in much the same way as these studies are fascinating? We have to break away from thinking that religion is only interesting to us and the students as "answers" to so-called "existential" questions.

This section raises questions about student motivation to study RE; what aspects of the subject engender enthusiasm?

A dialogue between Christianity, other religions and secular philosophy.

Let me finally, for a lot of interwoven reasons, end with a recommendation of an RE with a tri-partite structure (Christianity, other religions and philosophy and ethics), where these three subject-areas are constantly made to enter into dialogue with each other under the aegis of the science of religion.

It is through this dialogue between the subject-areas and the integration of the third component, the one dealing with philosophy and ethics, including the philosophical discipline of ethics, the semi-religious and even the ideologically based anti-religious philosophies of religion, the religious and non-religious philosophies of life, and – not the least – the theories and discussions of secularisation and of the secular study of religion, that the kind of RE I recommend shows its strength most clearly. Why? Let me mention a few reasons:

The justification for this approach:

1) Cultural understanding.

1. To understand the history of Europe, the history of religions in Europe, the past and present make-up of the cultural landscape with all its conflicting trends, and to be able to critically analyse today's rhetoric, for instance of the overall Christian identity of Europe, the students simply have to be informed about all the other contributions. To understand the history and intricate nature of e.g. democracy, human rights, the idea of the secular society and of secularisation in general, they have to learn about the Christian contributions, – but they do have to learn that that is not the whole story. They have to have an awareness of the intricate interplay of the religious and non-religious traditions of Europe.

2) Ethical competence.

2. The students have to have ethics. They have to learn about the major strands in moral philosophy, and they have to do so in close connection with the teaching of the characteristics of religious ethics in general and the ethical dimensions of the

religions. Today, debates about ethics, not the least applied ethics, are flourishing and one of the major trends within the religious traditions are the critical thematizing of exactly their ethical traditions, the reinterpretation and application of them to meet the moral dilemmas of the modern world.

Taken together these two points reveal the great advantages of the integration of these topics in RE. However, the disadvantages inherent in the separation of the two, must not be forgotten. This is especially so when the separation takes the form of two separate subjects, the philosophy and ethics subject being the alternative to RE.

3) Parity with other subjects in the curriculum.

3. Third, and this is the point I want to emphasise as I wind up my recommendation and argument: This subject-area includes not only the theories of secularisation, but also the make-up of the science of religion and the make-up of RE as based upon that. It makes the ways in which RE (in the wake of secularisation and in the light of various theories of "religion" and the "secular") handles religion a subject in itself, a subject accompanying every other subject in the syllabus. It integrates the self-critical reflections on religious and non-religious theories of religion, of the methodologies and the implicit or explicit ideologies connected to the past and present development of this way of dealing with what we call "religion".

RE that provides a critical study of both religion and culture.

The RE, then, that I recommend, based upon the science of religion and taught by professional teachers, all of whom have an exam and a degree from a university or the like with a curriculum comprising at least the basics of the science of religion, cannot be but a kind of methodic and implicit criticism of religion. It is bound to be, an implicit criticism of Culture, and it cannot help sliding from the implicit to the explicit criticism when located in the midst of the battles fought over and between majority- and minority-religions.

The academic, scientific study of religion, and the kind of RE based upon it, produces descriptions and critical explanations of the various religions, as well as open-ended, non-normative definitions and theories of religion perfectly suited for an open, democratic and secular society that still believes in the value of information, knowledge and critical analysis.

The epistemological roots of the 'study of religion' approach.

The science of religion that I think RE must base itself upon was from its beginnings involved in an emancipatory project, trying to free itself from the theistic, monotheistic, predominantly protestant understanding of religion. It is continuously deeply involved in freeing itself from religious theories of religion in order to become more "pure" and more scientific, but the religiously based theories are still part of it and they too must be transmitted in RE. This fact, and the fact that the rational study of religion, naturally implies criticism also of its own rationality and its own scientific approach to religion, is important, and critics of my proposal should take this into consideration. (…)

The place of RE within a secular and pluralistic society.

The humanistic and social scientific approach to religions in RE is the guarantee for some kind of unity in diversity, for some kind of a continuation of the liberal, rational humanistic approach that I see no alternative for, and it is the best bid on a responsible public education that meets the normal standards of the secular society. And, if RE is to be compulsory, in line with the principles of the Human Rights articles on education and in line with the

interests of a truly secular state, then the RE offered has to be informative, critical and pluralistic.

It is, in my opinion, high time for the secular states to become truly secular, especially when it comes to religious education. Neither the notion, nor the actual versions of the secular state, have fallen from the sky. The secular state is the provisional result of a long history. It is, like religion, a human and social construct, at once precious and fragile, that has to be protected and continuously reconstructed in the practice of its principles. One of its principles is the freedom of religion and the respect for religion; another is the belief in the use of rationality and the critical faculties. The RE I recommend is not a weapon against religion. It is, however, an instrument that can help protect minority-religions, that can help preserve the secular state and serve the common good in a multi-religious secular state and society.

Comments

Discussion at the EFTRE conference raised the issue of whether this approach could be applied right across the age-range of all school systems from 5 – 19. The question of how the truth claims of different religions should be handled in the classroom situation was also discussed.

The full text of this paper is available at: Tidman, Nils-Åke: Into the third Millennium.
EFTRE conference August 1998 in Copenhagen, Malmö 1999, ISSN 0348-8918, p. 142-159.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE LITTLE SUBJECT WITH THE BIG QUESTIONS –
Why Religious Education is such a good thing for young people

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Erzieher in Deutschland e.V.

The Association of Protestant Educators in Germany (AEED) is a network of currently 31 Associations of Protestant teachers and RE teachers. Actively involved in the debate about approaches to RE in Germany AEED has worked out arguments for RE which should help RE teachers in dialogue with parents who ask: Should our children take part in Religious Education? „We submit that, in future, this discussion concerning the nature and function of Religious Education will have to be led by Religious Education teachers themselves, at ground level within the schools. In order to instruct and prepare these teachers for this momentous task, we have assembled the following arguments which we believe sway the balance in favour of a positive choice to attend Religious Education."

Comments

The arguments were assembled to help RE teachers in dialogue with parents and others about the purpose and value of RE.

The contribution RE can make for supporting basic values for schooling.

*A clear statement for learning **about** religion and learning **from** religion.*

The students' own experiences and beliefs are central in RE.

The influence of Judaism and Islam, and more recently other

Text

1. **Instruction in Religious Education is the proper responsibility of a school in its mission to provide a thorough education for its pupils**
   For pupils to be thoroughly educated, Religious Education should form an integral part of a school's curriculum. Through Religious Education students are introduced to the fundamental values upon which all other subjects rest. These values include respect for other human beings, tolerance and understanding of the sacred nature of human life.

2. **The task of Religious Education is not to bequeath belief, but belief forms the premise from which it develops**
   Religious Education should form a support basis for children throughout their lives. It instils them with knowledge and provides the opportunity to encounter Christian traditions. It is only by discovering Christianity, and other faiths, that children are able to answer the fundamental questions of who they are, who they want to be, what they believe and what they want to believe. Whilst Religious Education should be taught from the 'inside', it should not be taught in a biased manner, nor should it dictate belief to students.

3. **Religious Education endows students with important skills**
   Religious Education grants to students the opportunity to discuss the meaning of life with reference to their own experiences and beliefs. Knowledge of religion in practice provides students with something upon which to draw when attempting to answer important life questions and distributes cultural, ethic and religious skills.

4. **Knowledge and understanding of the Judeo-Christian heritage is necessary in order to create a source of hope for the future**
   In spite of variances between denominations, traditions within the Christian church have shaped our history and culture. The

importance of these traditions continues to pervade our lives and to affect our understanding of individuals and the community, women and men and time and development. These traditions also influence our sense of morality, our law, language, literature, art and music. The knowledge which flows from this heritage, and the critical debate which surrounds it, forms an indispensable element of education in school.

5. **Religion deals with the whole: 'Where is my place in the world?'**
Religious Education provides children with support when dealing with questions concerning good and evil, happiness and sorrow, the spiritual and the temporal. Religious Education also provides children with a forum within which they have the time, the space and the self-assuredness to consider these issues. When considering the nature of God, it is equally important to understand who and where God isn't as who and where God is. Similarly, it is equally important to understand how not to live as how one should live. One should attempt to evaluate critically different ideologies and promises of redemption.

The value of RE within an 'holistic' education.

6. **Religious Education translates into religious language everyday feelings and experiences and provides a means of expressing these feelings**
Children and young people normally have many different ways to discover life and the world. Religion provides children with another means by which to articulate their interpretation of life and of the world: it provides them with the opportunity to express their feelings. The strength of religious language is that it can provide comfort, resistance and hope when logic and rationality fail.

*The balance within RE between learning **about** religion and learning **from** religion.*

7. **The teaching of Religious Education in schools should draw upon faiths as practised by the different denominations within society**
The plurality of faiths within society is mirrored within schools through the separation of Religious Education instruction into different classes according to the denomination and/or faith of the student. Thus, whilst students must receive religious instruction they are free to decide in which way they choose to be taught. Religious Education offers the opportunity to encounter, on a regular basis, authentic representatives of these faiths or denominations. Every Christian Religious Education teacher represents the living religion of Christianity. By granting students the opportunity to meet these living representatives of living religions, Religious Education brings into schools issues of real life and society.

In many other European school systems the value of pupils of different faiths, and none, learning alongside each other is stressed.

This raises the question of whether the RE teacher needs to hold to a faith themself.

8. **To be able to benefit from the guarantee of freedom of religion within today's pluralistic society, it is necessary to have religious knowledge**
Religious Education lessons grant to students the knowledge they require to choose competently between religions within our pluralistic society. It also provides them with the chance to encounter and to discuss different cultural beliefs and religious traditions, and thereby enables them to criticise religion. Both school and parents cannot afford to deny students the preparation they require to exercise their freedom of religion by deleting Religious Education from the school syllabus.

The knowledge, understanding and evaluative skills needed to handle religious issues should be seen as an entitlement within the education of an 'active citizen'.

9. Religious Education contributes to the development of a student's identity

The contribution of RE to an individual's personal development.

Religious Education assists young people in orienting themselves within their society and gives them the skills necessary to communicate effectively with other individuals. This is realised by assisting young people to interpret their own lives. As a result of this, Religious Education assists students in their quest to discover their own set of beliefs and values within a multicultural pluralistic society.

10. The difference between Religious Education, Ethics and Philosophy is found in the way they approach the questions posed

Ethics and Philosophy is a non-religious alternative to RE available in most 'Bundesländer' in Germany.

Religious Education, Ethics and Philosophy all progress from different starting points: Religion takes a universal approach, questioning and analysing every element of life from a number of angles. On the contrary, Philosophy and Ethics approach issues from one angle, namely that of rationality. Everything in Philosophy and Ethics boils down to this issue of rationality. Conversely, Christians, whilst acknowledging the importance of rationality, look to their own experience of God as their supreme authority, drawing upon the example set by Jesus Christ.

11. Religious Education fulfils an important component of a school's educational function

The contribution of RE to the development of shared values, social inclusion and community cohesion.

The German Constitution delegates to schools the task of teaching certain fundamental values and skills. Schools should teach children to love their fellows, to learn to live peacefully with other human beings and should encourage a dialogue between the various faiths and philosophies within our pluralistic society. This responsibility is realised by Religious Education. As such, the fulfilment by schools of this obligation would be endangered were it not for Religious Education.

(...)

Comments

This statement from within Germany raises many issues that are common within the systems of other European nations, whether of a confessional or a non-confessional type.

The text is also available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

TEACHING CHRISTIANITY IN DIALOGUE WITH OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS

Consultation on Concepts on Teaching and Learning in Religions

The World Council of Churches' team on Education and Ecumenical Formation and the team on Inter-religious Relations in co-operation with the Comenius-Institut, Münster / Germany, organised a consultation in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2000. The meeting was part of the WCC activities on interreligious learning on a global level. As mentioned in the text other consultations have taken place. The results and outcomes of the consultations will be evaluated in a global gathering which is planned for 2003.

Comments	**Text**
	An invitation for conversation
	We are religious educators from Western European countries hosted by the World Council of Churches, Education and Ecumenical Formation Team gathered to reflect about the changing role of Religious Education (RE) in a time of growing pluralism. We were encouraged by the sharing of experiences from a variety of settings. Our work was given further impetus by the results of the WCC consultation in October 2000 held in
(1) WCC Multi-faith Consultation on Religious Education, held in Bangkok 11-15 October 2000.	Bangkok,(1) where representatives of different faith traditions were brought together. Their willingness to work together in this area and the way in which shared spiritual concerns built bridges between participants give us hope for the future.
	Our particular focus was teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions. We start from a position of acknowledging that in some situations Christianity is taught in a confessional context and in others as one religion among many. We also note that RE takes place in various settings, such as the family, congregations and educational institutions.
Globalisation and pluralism are major trends which cannot be ignored by the ecumenical movement.	At this point in history two main trends are in the focus of the ecumenical movement, globalisation and pluralism, which are decisive elements influencing societies and all areas of education all over the world. Both trends present challenges and opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-religious exchange and learning.
	We now have more immediate contact with other ways of believing, knowing and behaving. There is a perception that cultural and religious differences lead to social conflict. For many, the increased exposure to other world views constitutes a threat instead of being seen as an enrichment.
Religious Education can play a decisive role in enabling students to deal with existing differences. Dialogue with other faith traditions becomes essential.	In this context RE takes on a renewed importance. In societies where religious indifference, cultural intolerance and rapidly changing norms and values seem to prevail, RE can be the space in which young people learn how to deal with challenges to identity, manage conflict and develop sensitivity in interacting with difference. The task of conceptualising RE, in dialogue with other faith traditions is an essential way forward.
	Those with whom we wish to engage in dialogue, often find themselves among the marginalised of our societies. This can make it difficult for them to enter any discussion on the basis of equality. Therefore it is a prerequisite for RE in dialogue with

A theology of justice as a basic ground for RE.

other religious traditions, that it addresses theological and sociological questions of justice. To go one step further, we would stress that RE needs not only to be rooted in a theology of dialogue but as well in a theology of justice.

Christianity is a multicultural and global religion as are most other religions.

Overcoming violence in its existing multiple forms can be an area of common concern in the co-operation among faith communities. More information about the Decade is available through http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/dov/index-e.html.

Aware of the confessional diversity of Christianity we recognise also that the presence in Western Europe of Christians with origins in other parts of the world, makes the presentation of Christianity as a multicultural and global religion a pressing need. To teach Christianity ecumenically in Europe is a statement against racism and ethnocentricity.

Given these observations, we can see a close relation between a RE in dialogue with other faith traditions and the **Decade to Overcome Violence**, as decided by the VIIIth WCC assembly in Harare. We especially underline the goal of "working with communities of other faiths against the misuse of religious and ethnic identities in pluralistic societies". We believe that RE can play a vital role in achieving this goal.

We address these emerging convictions of ours to you in the hope that you will enter with us into a wider process of sharing.

II Principles involved in teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions

Christian education and formation support the individual in the development of religious identity. This can contribute to the formation of social values and communal living.

Teaching of Christianity should be based upon the following theological foundations:

There is a need to put into practice those principles and theological foundations of Christianity which are of relevance in dialogue with other faith traditions.

- The doctrine of creation as expressed in the value and human rights of everybody
- the incarnation as the willingness of God to engage with humanity
- compassion as learning in dialogue addressing the suffering of others
- the prophetic tradition of challenging injustice
- reconciliation and love.

Our confidence was reinforced by the Bangkok consultation where participants affirmed that their religious traditions also have important principles to offer.

As well as these resources, Christianity also has barriers to dialogue such as:

Barriers to dialogue should not be ignored.

- Exclusive truth claims
- Church history which contains elements of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, colonialism, sectarianism and sexism.
- Attitudes of cultural superiority being justified theologically.

Regarding this ambivalence within our own tradition, teaching Christianity in dialogue with others highlights the need for a wider discussion on a theology of religions.

Teaching Christianity should be sensitive to the reality that children studying RE may come from faith traditions where different learning styles are of importance and make use of the following didactic principles:

- to give opportunities for face to face encounters
- to elicit family and community support
- to make links with the every day experience of the learner.

Learning and teaching concepts have to be evaluated carefully.

III Aims and objectives in teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions

Being aware of different learning contexts we promote the following objectives as requirements for enabling learning:

– to focus on the perspective of the learner, taking particular account of the local situation
– to create an environment which is supportive for a process of individual identity building respecting the otherness of others.
– to enable learners to show respect toward different religious traditions and experiences, and the seriousness of different truth claims
– to create a safe space for communication of religious differences
– to allow each learner the freedom to disclose private experiences or not
– to allow the learner to express their own religious experience in their own way, noting that no individual can represent the whole religious tradition.

IV A proposed way forward

We see the need for more reflection on a theology of religions, and a way to participate in the development of a Christian theology of RE. We would also like to promote discussion about ways to conceptualise teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions in the field of training teachers and clergy.

Do we take the challenges of teaching Christianity in dialogue with other faith traditions seriously within our own theology?

We therefore invite religious educators to send us reports, however brief, of their work in this area.

Comments

The debate about the contribution of Religious Education to Europe's future should take account of a global perspective.

A web version of the paper is available through: **http://www.cogree.com**

ABBREVIATION LIST

AEED   Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Erzieher in Deutschland
(Association of Protestant Educators in Germany)

CADEICE   Conféderation d'Associations d'Ecoles Independantes des Communautés Européennes

CEC   Conference of European Churches

CEEC   Comité Européen pour l'Enseignement Catholique

COE   Council of Europe

CoGREE   Coordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe

CONGO   Conference of NGOs of the United Nation

CSC   Church and Society Commission of CEC

EAWRE   European Association for World Religions in Education

ECCE   European Conference on Christian Education

ECNAIS   European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

ECSWS   European Council of Steiner Waldorf Schools

EECCS   European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society

EFFE   European Forum for Freedom of Education

EFTRE   European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education

EU   European Union

FUNDEL   Fundación Europea Educación y Libertad

ICCS   Intereuropean Commission on Church and School

ICT   Information and Communication Technology

IGC   Intergovernmental Conference

IV   International Association for Christian Education

NGO   Non Governmental Organisation

OIDEL   Organisation Internationale pour le Développement de la Liberté d'Enseignement

WCC   World Council of Churches

GLOSSARY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Treaty of Amsterdam

The Treaty of Amsterdam is the result of the Intergovernmental Conference launched at the Turin European Council on 29 March 1996. It was adopted at the Amsterdam European Council on 16 and 17 June 1997 and signed on 2 October 1997 by the Foreign Ministers of the fifteen Member States. It entered into force on 1 May 1999 (the first day of the second month following ratification by the last Member State) after ratification by all the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

From the legal point of view, the Treaty amends certain provisions of the EU Treaty, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts. It does not replace the other Treaties; rather, it stands alongside them.

More information through: http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/amst/en/

CEC

The Conference of European Churches is the regional ecumenical organisation which links in fellowship some 123 churches and 25 Associated organisations in all the countries on the European continent, including ICCS and IV from the CoGREE network. Web address: http://www.cec-kek.org

CSC

The Church and Society Commission of CEC is the result of the merger of CEC's work on church and society issues and the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS), which was completed on 1 January 1999.

Its task is

- to help the churches study church and society questions from a theological and social ethical perspective, especially those with a European dimension;
- to represent the member churches of CEC in their relations with political institutions working in Europe.

Charter of Fundamental Rights

The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights sets out in a single text, for the first time in the European Union's history, the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the EU.

More information through: http://www.europarl.eu.int/charter

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which aims:

- to protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- to promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- to seek solutions to problems facing European society (discrimination against minorities, xeno-phobia, intolerance, environmental protection, human cloning, Aids, drugs, organised crime, etc.);
- to help consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.

It was founded in 1949 and has currently 43 member states.

More information through: http://www.coe.int

Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union is a Community institution exercising the powers conferred upon it by the Treaties. It is the Community's legislative body; for a wide range of Community issues, it exercises that legislative power in co-decision with the European Parliament. The Council is composed of one representative at ministerial level from each Member State, who is empowered to commit his Government. Council members are politically accountable to their national parliaments.

More information through: http://ue.eu.int

European Commission

The Commission initiates Community policy and represents the general interest of the European Union. As the Union's executive body, the Commission manages policies and negotiates international trade and cooperation agreements. The 20 Commissioners are men and women who have held high office in their home countries. Because of its right of initiative, the Commission is charged with making proposals for all new legislation. The Commission acts as the guardian of the EU treaties to ensure that European legislation is applied correctly.
More information through: http://europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm

European Council

The European Council brings together the Heads of State or Government of the fifteen Member States of the European Union and the President of the European Commission. They are assisted by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs and by a member of the Commission. It should not be confused with the Council of Europe or with the Council of the European Union. The European Council meets at least twice a year, when it is presided over by the Head of State or Government of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council. It has a major role to play in providing impetus for the development of the Union and policy guidance in every area of the Union's activity.
More information through: http://www.europarl.eu.int

European Parliament

The European Parliament represents, in the words of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, 'the peoples of the States brought together in the European Community'. Some 375 million European citizens in 15 countries are now involved in the process of European integration through their 626 representatives in the European Parliament. The European Parliament is elected every five years, the first direct elections were held in 1979. Particularly the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, have transformed the European Parliament from a purely consultative assembly into a legislative parliament, exercising powers similar to those of the national parliaments. Like all parliaments, the European Parliament has three fundamental powers: the power to legislate, the power of the purse, the power to supervise the executive.
More information through: http://www.europarl.eu.int

European Union

Consists of 15 member states (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Finland). There is a group of 13 accession countries, most of them candidate states applying for membership (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey).
More information through: http://www.europa.eu.int

Green Papers

Green Papers are communications published by the Commission on a specific policy area. Primarily they are documents addressed to interested parties, organisations and individuals, who are invited to participate in a process of consultation and debate. In some cases they provide an impetus for subsequent legislation.

Intergovernmental Conference (ICG)

This is the term used to describe negotiations between the Member States' governments with a view to amending the Treaties. An IGC is of major importance as regards European integration, where changes in the institutional and legal structure – or simply in the content of the Treaties - have always been the outcome of intergovernmental conferences (e.g. Single European Act and Treaty on European Union).

Laeken Declaration

Approved by the European Council on 15 December 2002, considered a key step in the EU reform process.
More information through: http://europa.eu.int/futurum/documents/offtext/doc151201_en.htm

Treaty of Nice

Worked out by the ICG in December 2000 in Nice and signed in February 2001 also in Nice. The treaty is intimately linked with plans for the enlargement of the EU, and is intended to complete the process, which began with the treaty of Amsterdam, of preparing the Union for the admission of a significant number of new Member States. More information through:
http:// europa.eu.int/comm/nice_treaty/index_en.htm

White Papers

White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper published to launch a consultation process at European level. While Green Papers set out a range of ideas presented for public discussion and debate, White Papers contain an official set of proposals in specific policy areas and are used as vehicles for their development.

INFORMATION ABOUT CoGREE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

EAWRE: The *European Association for World Religions in Education* is an independent association of scholars and educators which fosters an accurate handling of world religions in school and education. Its overall aim is to strengthen a multi-religious orientation with emphasis on issues about world religions in education.
President: Dr. Herbert Schultze (Germany)
Secretary: Wim Westerman (The Netherlands) – WE.Westerman@psy.vu.nl
Member in CoGREE: Wim Westerman

ECCE: The *European Conference on Christian Education* is a forum for the exchange of ideas, models and discussions about issues of Sunday school work in particular. With its Christian orientation the conference is open for all those who are involved with Sunday school work and Christian education.
Chairwoman: Rosemarie Chopard (Switzerland) – rchopard@protestant.ch
Member in CoGREE: Ton Heijboer (The Netherlands) – ton.heijboer@wxs.nl

EFTRE: The *European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education* supports the European cooperation of national and regional RE teachers' associations as well as of institutes and organisations which support RE/RS (about 50 members from 10 countries). Its self-understanding is that of a non-confessional forum which represents the interests of RE teachers in Europe, independent of a specific structure and a confessional or non-confessional approach. Its aim is to serve and strengthen the work of all RE teachers associations, adopting a professional approach on RE.
Chairman: Jeremy Taylor (England) – jeremy@eftre.freeserve.co.uk
Secretary: Marit Hallset Svare (Norway) – Marit.Svare@dmmh.no
Member in CoGREE: Jeremy Taylor

ICCS, The *Intereuropean Commission on Church and School* is a network of churches, institutes for education and religious education, and state organisations (from 17 European countries) which deal with education and RE. ICCS creates a forum especially to discuss the relations between church and school. The work will foster an ecumenical orientation also in relation with other religions.
President: Hans Spinder (The Netherlands) – j.spinder@sowkerken.nl
Secretary: Peter Schreiner (Germany) – ICCS@comenius.de
Member in CoGREE: Hans Spinder

IV: The *International Association for Christian Education* is an umbrella organisation of Protestant national associations and organisations of teachers and schools (members from 8 countries).
The self-understanding of IV is to act as a council, which represents the interests of its members on the European level. It encourages co-operation amongst its member organisations and works on issues of the realisation of Christian responsibility in education in Europe. Its aim is also to strengthen the Protestant position in the discussion of education policy in Europe.
President: Gerd Poppema (The Netherlands)
Secretary: Eckhart Marggraf (Germany) – eckhart.marggraf@t-online.de
Member in CoGREE: Eckhart Marggraf

RE-Network: The *RE-Network for Christian Religious Education in Europe* gives practical support for the establishment of a Christian oriented RE in Middle and Eastern Europe, especially through seminars and providing information material. Its aim is to support religious education and to motivate activities especially in middle and eastern Europe. Special links are established with the Orthodox churches.
Secretary: Walter Sennhauser (Switzerland) – renetwork@bluewin.ch
Member in CoGREE: Walter Sennhauser

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