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NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION WORKSHOP: ACTIVE CITIZENS FOR EUROPE – THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN EUROPEAN MIGRATION SOCIETIES

Berlin, November 18 – 20, 2010

Organised by the Federal Agency for Civic Education and A Soul for Europe initiative, the NECE (www.nece.eu) took place at *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* in Berlin between 18th and 20th of November 2010. This year's workshop gathered 35 stakeholders from 18 countries and was dedicated to the main subject of *Active Citizens for Europe: The Role of Culture and Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies*. The main subject was further divided into three main points of interest: 1) Identities in Multi-ethnic Europe: Consequences for the Concept of Citizenship, 2) The Role of Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies and 3) Presentation of good practice projects and research results from the cultural field and citizenship education.

The first topic was presented by Dichev and Muhić-Dizdarević. The first presentation concentrated on the relation between passion and New media which Dichev see as the main issue that mobilises citizens in a positive way, but also creates explosions of passion and clashes. The growing mobility and fluidity of boundaries has mostly created negative passions like fear and humiliation, but also some positive ones like hope. Being omnipresent and highly anonymous, the New media first makes cultural clash an everyday and immanent topic and then not only presents, but creates critique and fear (through anonymous comments from the public) that this clash creates.

Muhić-Dizdarević confronted participants with questions about terminology and European identity as a narration upon which it can be created. Does the EU narration, which is the basis for any national identity, exist and, if not, who will create it? When do we feel our EU identity? It is felt globally (e.g. when travelling to another part of the world) and usually amongst mobile citizens (students and the elite), but national identity is still the main point of identity for most citizens of EU. Because of its influence and embedment in our consciousness, she believes that we should lower our expectations - since overcoming the national identity is, in itself, a vast step that requires time.

The second topic was presented by John and Oñate. Barbara John presented participants with her experience in working with (Islamic) immigrants. During her work, she often asked herself how can these marginalised immigrants overcome their marginalisation and become active citizens in German society? To answer that question, she initiated a self-organisation programme for immigrants which follows the laws of organic growth. In other words, every human being has a longing to be accepted and to grow. Not being accepted, immigrants cannot grow and their basic human needs are not satisfied. That is why they have encouraged immigrants to organise themselves first and then enter the general society, as a lobbyist group. In that way, they can create some kind of a first commune that has a high level of trust amongst immigrants and that can really represent that particular immigrant community.

Ms. Concepción Maiztrgui Oñate from University of Deusto (Bilbao) believes that the debate on civil education has to be interlinked with the ideas of social and cultural plurality. To create plurality we need trust, and trust can be developed only through a system of rules. Oñate believes that the ca-

pability to start and participate in a peaceful dialogue is a crucial skill, not only for individuals but also communities and nations. For Europe to have that ability, this means that EU has to have (not in a declarative but in a real sense): 1) Diversity and Identity, 2) Democracy, 3) Participation and 4) Social justice.

During the last session, four successful projects originating from France, Germany and Italy were presented. Angéline Escafre-Dublet presented the *ACCEPT Pluralism 2011 – 2013* project which is currently in a process of creating its conceptual framework by asking questions such as: How is diversity defined? What is considered to be a border? Do individuals, in being intolerant, reject individuals from other cultures, their practices or *them* as a group? In the year 2011, the project will research school life and education system (by using case study method and focusing on presentation of *Self* through religious signs), followed by research in politics (2012) and, finally, presenting concrete results and recommendations for educational system and polity makers (2013).

Representing Federal Agency for Civic Education, Christoph Müller-Hofstede presented their *Youth, Religion, Democracy: New Approaches to Citizenship Education in the Immigration Society (2009-2012)* project. The project is being implemented in six schools (in Berlin and Stuttgart) and it started by selecting so-called *Dialogue Moderators*. They apply voluntarily, undergo training and then try to start dialogue with pupils and define dialogue rules which can help pupils learn how to debate and participate. During the implementation of this project, they have discovered three main issues: 1) ethnic and national diversity, 2) media image and 3) religious issues.

Melita Richter from University of Trieste presented the project of *Intercultural Education* that they have organised in Tri-

este and in Nova Gorica. The idea for the project started in the 1990's when immigrants came from war inflicted ex-Yugoslavia countries. Working at all levels of education system, they organised the so-called *Cultural mediators* who are usually highly educated multilingual foreigners and whose job is to promote citizenship education amongst pupils and students. They use various methods (including painting, linguistics, story telling etc.) to get feedback from students (e.g. their stereotypical images of Mediterranean) and then to, by using students' own knowledge and language, question and deconstruct those stereotypes. During their across border sessions, they found four main issues: 1) concern for tradition, 2) language as basis for identity, 3) *size matters* (Slovenian students were concerned that their voice will not be heard in the EU) and 4) fear of cultural dominance.

The last presentation was held by Davide Trosco who recreated the process that led to filming and distribution of a documentary film *Me, my Gypsy Family and Woody Allen*. The documentary tells a personal story of a young girl, Laura Halilović, thus representing an issue of Roma people in Italy and prejudice against them. Also, the film is a story of perseverance (initiated by Laura) and of the need for young and discriminated people to speak up. The film won a number of awards, but its main purpose is to be used in schools for starting debates. This procedure was later evaluated on two levels: 1) amongst teachers and 2) amongst viewers (young people).

Judging by the intensity of the debates that NECE workshop stirred, there are three flammable issues in Europe today: 1) influence of New media; 2) questions of boundaries and European identity and; 3) relationship between terms *tolerance* and *acceptance*.

Influence of the New media (and its potential for the development of citizenship education, multiculturalism etc.) was vividly depicted by Ditchev's example. Apparently, contemporary television viewers in Bulgaria are watching very popular Turkish soap operas. The question is: how can an average Bulgarian viewer enjoy viewing everyday life of the «enemy» (as presented by the media)? The answer might be that people do not really hate each other and that this is a hate created by the (New) media and amplified by its anonymity.

Concerning the issue of boundaries in (and around) the EU, the conclusion is that they are multi-layered and multiplying (national, regional, cultural, euro zone, NATO etc.). It can also be said that political boundaries are, in a sense, a *centralisation project*, since people living near the borders have always co-operated, commersed, travelled etc. In other words, fear of *Others*

is really a fear of one nation's centre against stereotypically perceived *Other*. Perhaps we can learn from people living near borders how to co-operate and how to meet with *Others* and their cultures.

The most debated was the issue of the relationship between terms *tolerance* and *acceptance*. The debate still exists because of some of the EU bureaucracy procedures (in order to satisfy the bureaucratic form, the term had to be used in proposal for one of the aforementioned projects). The term tolerance (in a sense of social relations, multiculturalism and inclusion) is a negative one - since tolerance implies that there is one dominant side (which decides to tolerate or not), and one side which is really a nuisance which is to be tolerated. If we really want Europe with active citizens, and if we really want inclusion of immigrants and any other *Otherness* in EU society - we need to stop tolerating and start to accept.

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