

Information for members

May 2006

effe

*european
forum for
freedom in
education*

Dear Members

Last newsletter was full of events that happened in Brussels. This time we will concentrate on our organisation. It has been a very active month for *effe* again.

HEADING FOR HELSINKI – Interim report of 25th of May

This spring EFFE Austria is carrying its demands across Europe on a 1x4m colourful banner which says “Learning needs variety”. The action demands fairness for pupils in independent schools – also especially in Austria!

The campaign aims to bring attention from politics and public opinion to the schools participating. The official start was in Vienna at 16th of March. The destination of the banner is the EFFE-Colloquium in Helsinki from June 8th to 11th. This colloquium will be opened by the Finnish Education Minister, who finances independent schools in an acceptable way. From the 16th of March to the 2nd of May the banner toured about 23 Austrian independent schools. The banner was hung in those schools - sometimes just for a few hours, sometimes for a few days - and often accompanied by an article in the local press.

The youngest independent school in Austria –The Michaelis school in Kufstein -

had the honour to receive the banner first: it arrived on the 18th of March and even the mayor of Kufstein was present at this event, which was filmed by the local Television station TV-Tyrol!

Sometimes the arrival of the banner was combined with other festivities, such as the Maypole planting in the independent school “Growing with children”

From 3rd of May until the 14th of May the banner moved to Germany. Here about 6 schools joined the campaign. Finally, Henning Kullak-Ublick from the Flensburg Waldorf School brought the banner over the Danish border. Shortly before, we had a very anxious moment. We couldn't foresee if the banner would reach its goal in time, as we had to use the Deutsche Post to transport it from Göttingen to Flensburg. But all went well!

The Danish tour was perfectly planned by Ole Pedersen from the Dansk Friskolerforening, the Danish organisation for independent schools, representing over 260 schools with nearly 30.000 pupils. We were very happy that the Danish schools joined us. Apparently the *effe*-Newsletter is carefully read in Denmark! Seventeen (!!!) independent schools participated in Denmark and brought the banner from school to school until it was finally presented to 400 delegates of independent schools

at the Friskolerforening in Copenhagen at 20th-21st of May!! It was fantastic!

As this article is being written, the banner is already in Sweden ready to pass the Finnish border on the first of June. When it arrives on the 8th of June in Helsinki the banner will have visited more than 50 schools, seen by more than 5000 people, and will have travelled more than 3000 km – on foot, by bicycle, by train, by car and sometimes by post. In times of virtual cross-linking, this real network has been made possible by a good organisation through email and telephone.

As a coordinator of the relay, I encouraged the participants and would thank all those who carried it on. In the beginning it was only sure that the banner would start in Vienna and reach Helsinki at the end. We succeeded, and although I planned a totally different tour at the start, it is just perfect the way it has worked out since! You can find some photos and more information at www.effe.at
Angelika Lütkenhorst
for EFFE-Austria

New Impulses: In search of *effe*-Hungary

Looking for the beginnings of *effe*, you will land very soon in Hungary, as *effe* was founded in Velence in 1990. *effe*-Hungary was very active in the nineties, working intensively on shaping freedom in

education in Eastern and Middle Europe.

The results in Hungary itself can be shown proudly. For example, nowhere else will you find so many Waldorf schools and the Association of Hungarian Independent Schools represent about 100.000 children in 165 schools and kindergarten.

But in recent years things have been more and more quiet at *effe*-Hungary. Even more, it seemed that we had lost contact with this old active branch. Even on the practical side as our mail often didn't arrive. It was about time to go and see on the spot. And indeed the original "big people" of freedom in education were tired. The success of the Hungarian movement had offered them many possibilities on the professional side and finally gave them so much work that there was nearly no time left for the complementary work for the *effe*.

Did this mean the end of *effe*-Hungary? Collapse, due to success?

No, not really. The original members were willing to open the door to the next generation and it still was there: the enthusiasm and the willingness to take up the fight for freedom in education. So on the 25th of May 12 people gathered to discuss the future of *effe*-Hungary. *effe* was represented by its president Karel Rýdl, its president of honour and person in charge of the *effe*-project "Beautiful Schools International", the actual *effe*-representative in Hungary Attila Drescher, as well as by me (Lies Feron) Our partners were: Zsofia Bak from the Association of Hungarian Independent Schools,

Norbert Antal from the Social Arts Foundation, Nóra Pálvölgyi from the Institution for Waldorf Pedagogy, Anna Szeszler from the Lauder School, Zsolt Joanovits from Elternlobby Switzerland, who has Hungarian origins and was at this time in Hungary, Tamás Vekerdy und László Papp from the Center for Alternative Pedagogy and Andrea Liszka from the Hungarian Waldorf Fellowship. The discussions were very cordial and open and there was an interest from both sides to cooperate.

It was agreed that the *effe*-secretariat would send it latest newsletters to all the participants, so that they would get a clear idea of *effe*'s recent activities. The Hungarians promised to exchange and agree on future organisation of a new *effe*-Hungary. Moreover they promised to send us a report on the actual political situation in the educational sector.

Furthermore they promised to think thoroughly about the possibilities to organise an *effe*-colloquium in Hungary in the near future. Unfortunately there was no time left to make some very concrete decisions. We changed dates and will proceed with further contacts now electronically.

It seems that *effe* will soon have an active branch in Hungary again.

Lies Feron

New Members: APAPS and the Fédération des Écoles Steiner-Waldorf in France

In an earlier newsletter we spoke about our future plans. One of these projects is the revision of our website. The German site is as good as finished and the English site will shortly follow. To be able

to present ourselves also in French, we asked our members in France to help us with the translation of our aims. Jennifer Fandard from Les Enfants d'Abord helped us enormously and even did something more...she made contact for us with Anne Charrière, Vice-President of APAPS. APAPS stands for „Association des Parents et Amis pour le Soutien de la Pédagogie Steiner-Waldorf“, The Association of parents and friends of Steiner Waldorf pedagogy in France. Anne Charrière helped us with the translations and after a short time she kindly invited us to present *effe* and its projects at the board meeting of APAPS.

So, on the 6th of May I travelled to the Perceval School in Chatou, a lovely suburb northwest of Paris. The meeting was very instructive and productive for all and took place in a very pleasant atmosphere.

The Steiner Waldorf movement is rather small in France: there are only about 21 Waldorf schools with about 2300 pupils. Furthermore, only a small part of these schools offer education from kindergarten to university entrance diplomas. Reform pedagogy is generally only a niche in the French education system. Barriers are not only of an ideological kind: the tendency of the French state to maintain a strict division between state and religion already often led to discredit the Waldorf schools as being sectarian.

But there are also and above all administrative and legal problems, with which not only schools with special pedagogical concepts are struggling with. The French state only subsidises classes from

25 pupils on. If you don't reach that amount, the money won't reach the school. That system is also very problematic for many of the state schools in rural areas.

APAPS was founded in 2001, as a reaction to the accusations of sectarianism that plagued the Waldorf schools especially at the end of the nineties. Many parents thought that the accusations that their children were in a sect not just absurd, they also wanted make themselves known. They wanted to inform the public about the pedagogical concept and at the same time encourage and demand pluralism in the education system.

Today the association has about 800 members. APAPS is also an active partner of the Federation of Waldorf Schools in France.

The result of the meeting was very positive. The federation has renewed their membership with *effe* and has appointed Anne Charrière and Mariam Francq from APAPS. Mariam Francq will visit the *effe*-Colloquium in Finland. Furthermore it was agreed that *effe* would help in establishing contacts to other partners in France and that APAPS would help to find voluntary translators.

The meeting, which took place at a site that more than a hundred years ago had already inspired painters, was also very fruitful for us.

Lies Feron

Country report CROATIA

Effe-Croatia has been very successful in recent years. We were able to get funding to proceed with our work and

with that funding also gain recognition for this work.

About three years ago, the Croatian government decided, in order to support civil society, to finance NGOs from the income of a lottery. 50% of the lotto income thus goes to different ministries. They run public competitions every year in which NGOs can compete to get funding for projects. Furthermore the Government finances two institutions in charge of the establishment of a good working civil society: The Governmental Office for Civil Society and the National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society.

The National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (the Foundation) supports NGOs in two ways: they support projects that are somehow different from the programs of the government and so have a complementary value.

Secondly they provide basic support for the NGOs and grant money for administrative expenses: salaries, rent, communications, electricity, etc. When the application for such a grant has been approved the Foundation bears 50% of all the administrative expenses from an NGO for a period of three years.

Last year we ended 11th on a scale of ten, but this year, because of our growing fundraising knowledge, we ended up first on that funding list! Now we only have to raise funds for the other 50%. It is not easy, but we do our very best and last year, for example, we received some kind of funding from the Open Society Institute-New York.

We also have another partnership running with the Foundation. In the autumn of 2004 the Foundation started a pro-

ject "Teaching about the EU in Croatia" in partnership with the European Citizen Action Service/ECAS, a Brussels-based NGO which aims to strengthen the European strategy of NGOs in member and applicant States.

It was an open competition and *effe*-Croatia decided that I, as executive director, would compete for membership in a group of about 26 NGO-representatives from Croatia to participate in this one year long education program. After passing through the first steps of this competition, I was invited to an interview with the ECAS representatives and, yes, I was chosen to represent *effe* in this education project.

We passed through six workshops and one of them was even in Brussels and included a lot of visits to the different institutions of the EU. Unfortunately, due to health problems, I had to go back home early. Anyhow, after we finished this education project, the NGO-representatives decided that more had to be done with the knowledge and skills gained in this project. So in February 2006, 15 of the 26 representatives formed the Monitoring Committee of Civil Society with the purpose of monitoring the EU-Accession of Croatia. Informally, we receive some coordination help from ECAS.

We are now in the process of registration and we are looking for financial support for our activities. If we succeed in building up a good organization, we hope to be accepted as a partner in the governmental team negotiating about accession criteria with the EU.

Vesna Puhovski
Spokesperson of the Council

Brussels / citizens' initiative Time for participatory democracy: in search of one million signatures....

This time, it is the members of the European Parliament that called for an electronic vote. What is it about? The European Parliament is the only Parliament in the world that has two seats: Brussels and Strasbourg. It costs European taxpayers approximately 200 million euros a year to move the Parliament between Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France every month. And yes, even a lot of Parliamentarians are fed up with this time and money spent going and coming. The website mentioned here is an initiative of MEP Cecilia Malmström from the Swedish Liberal Party. She has been fighting for years to have Parliament located in just one place. She is trying now to change things through a citizen's initiative: Article 47 on participatory democracy in the proposed constitution for the European Union gives the citizens in the European Union the possibility to become more active and to propose their own themes. The premise is to collect about one million signatures. But this is all set in the constitution that hasn't been ratified so far. This action therefore has only a symbolic character. However, if this initiative collects the one million signatures, it could be effective. The European Council might be forced to at least talk about the issue. But that is about all the parliamentarians can expect. The location of the European Parliament is a very hot political issue. Changes to this regulation can only be made by changing the treaty. And guess which country will strongly

oppose to changing the seats to Brussels!

On the other hand, if this campaign is a success, it will surely encourage other citizen's initiatives. Eventually, the EU will have to take this evolution into account. Until now more than 300.000 EU-citizens have signed this initiative. You will find more information on www.oneseat.eu

Editors' remarks:

You will surely have noticed that especially in this newsletter our logo – *effe* – has not been written uniformly. This is no inattentiveness from our side, but an expression of the free development of our logo in different countries!

On the website of *effe*-Finland you can now find information about the speakers.

We received interesting books we would like to share with you. Unfortunately we momentarily only have the German version and we are about to find out if they have been written in other languages. We will put these book reviews on our website after the colloquium in Finland, and if there is any information about the books available in English you will find it there.

First book: „*Neue Lernkultur in Kindergarten und Schule*“, ed. by Rudolf Meraner. It contains many essays on many themes. For an example: about individualised learning (E. Risse); language teaching in multilingual education (Stadelmann); individual competences (Pircher); Harmony in primary education (W.Hövel).

Second book: recommended by Jutta Kraus: „*Sternschnuppen*“ written by Frigga Haug & Ulrike Gschwandtner. It is on the results of research on the future prospects of school attending youth.

Something important!

Our Autumn Colloquium will take place from **November 17th to 19th, 2006!**

Venue:

Gymnasium Schloß Hagerhof in Bad Honnef. (near Bonn, Germany) It is a boarding school, whose pedagogical concept is based on the principles of Maria Montessori. The accommodation will take place at the nearby Telekom-Akademie.

Theme: **Teacher Training**

What competences do teachers now and in the near future need. Has teacher training to be changed and how, etc.

A more precise concept will follow!

Please make a note of this meeting!

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