



European Forum for Freedom in Education *Europäisches Forum für Freiheit im Bildungswesen*

www.effe-eu.org

contact@effe-eu.org

Dear *effe* members,

It has been a while, since we were in touch, but we would like to inform you about our activities and our plans for the future.

We wish you a Happy New Year and thank you for your support. We are looking forward to an active new year and wish you all the best.

The board and Elisabeth Köpke

Office in Brussels

Ever since Anne Liekenbrock's resignation as director of *effe* we have been lacking staff in Brussels who can continue to develop the connection to EU committees and other NGOs. Nevertheless the board, especially Dirk Höflich, has tried to follow up on current educational issues. He has attended important events and become actively involved.

The board has decided this year to step up its efforts in Brussels to ensure the pursuit of the interests of our members. We are excited to announce that Gerald Häfner, former MP and MEP of the Green Party of Germany, has agreed to support *effe* for the next three years. The main focus of his work is on the connection to the network that he established during his time as a member of the European Parliament. We want to expand this network into the area of education. Gerald Häfner has been host of the working group „Childhood“, so there is an already existing network that we can build on.

Gerald Häfner's main concerns with regard to education are economic influences rather than government control. These influences are becoming increasingly prevalent. In Sweden, for example, more and more of the Free Schools are managed as school corporations, which means that the educational freedom is questioned politically. The future we are working towards is about putting the child at the heart of educational discourse and to gain freedom from both economic influence and government control.

Some topics can be dealt with at EU-level before they are addressed at national level. If they are identified early enough it is easier to get involved in the process at this early stage. We think that Gerald Häfner, a trained teacher, is qualified to address these issues energetically.

The board will aim to fund the work of Gerald Häfner through foundations. The overall cost will be about 95,000 Euros. We would like to thank all members, who can lend us some help and we are looking forward to cooperating with Gerald Häfner.

Johanna Keller

Board and General Meeting in Alfter, November 7th 2014

During the board meeting Lilian Jüchtern, board member of the Freie Comenius Schule Darmstadt reported on an application of her school to the Erasmus+ program. *Effe* was listed as a cooperating partner. The idea of the application was to make practical experiences of Free Schools accessible via an online platform. Unfortunately the application was denied, with only 2.5 points out of 60 missing. There are plans to apply again this year.

In addition there was a conversation about opportunities for cooperation with Dr. Richard Landl, president of the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE).

We were very delighted about the attendance of Krystyna Norwa from Spolecznego Towarzystwa Oswiatowego (STO) in Warsaw. She gave an interesting report on the work of the Free Schools in Poland.

"Intensified attendance at members' events"

The board also discussed how to make *effe* more active and present. It was decided to become more actively involved in members' events. In the past this has been done mostly in cooperation with *effe Austria*. For this reason we would like to ask our members, to contact Elisabeth Köpke at the Dortmund office, if you are planning events in which *effe* could participate.

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Colloquium in Scotland on May 5th, 2015

After the colloquium, which was planned for November 7th and 8th, 2014 unfortunately had to be cancelled, we are pleased to announce a new colloquium. The topic will be "Improving social equity through education" and it will be held on May 5th in Edinburgh, Scotland. Among the contributors will be Andreas Schleicher (former OECD-coordinator for PISA, currently Special Advisor of the Secretary General of Education) and Pasi Sahlberg (currently visiting professor in Harvard). More information will be made available in the next few weeks.

In a time when a lot of societies are tending more towards inequality, it is important to investigate the reasons for increasing injustice. This symposium wants to bring together educators and politicians from all over Europe to facilitate dialogue in order to learn from each other and work together for a more inclusive Europe.

Anne Charrière

We have updated our website: www.effe-eu.org

