

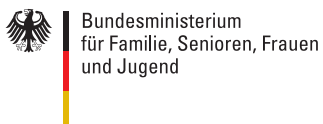


**Start-up Conference for European Partner Cities
Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Istanbul, London,
Madrid, Moscow, Paris, Prague und Warsaw
November 14 – 16, 2005 in Berlin**

Intercultural Learning and Trans-national Dialogue

Human Rights Education
Preventing Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance (RAXI)
Youth Participation

Promoted in the framework of the action program
“Youth for tolerance and democracy – against right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism”



Impressum

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Hartmut Brocke, Co-Executive Director of the Centre Français de Berlin

Welcome speech

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Hartmut Brocke and I am one of the Co-Executive Directors of the Centre Français. I would like to welcome all participants very cordially. I am very pleased that we can welcome guests from Brussels, Budapest, Istanbul, London, Madrid, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Warsaw and Berlin.

This is a starter conference, a start-up conference, a partner cities start-up conference. We want to speak about the human rights education, preventing racism, anti-semitism, xenophobia and intolerance, youth participation. We do hope that this is not a one-time conference, but that we will start a common process of exchanging experience, of learning. We are being supported by sponsors. On the one hand it's the Council of Europe, represented by the Directorate of Youth and Sports. I would like to welcome very cordially Mrs. Rothmund and Mr. Lauritzen and the Congress of the CLRE, of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mr. Bohner is supporting us very much. Thank you very much for this.

And there is another sponsor, the German UNESCO Commission. I would like to welcome Mr. Möller very cordially. And of course, I would like to thank our sponsors very much. That's the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Mrs. Damerau is among us representative and the Senate Department of Education, Youth and Sports. Mr. Schulz and Ms. Hermanns are representing the Senate of Berlin. Welcome.

And especially, I would like to welcome our facilitators, the trainers, who worked for quite some time together with you. And, I also would like to welcome the observers of this conference: NGOs, non-governmental organizations, which will see to it, that we will not create new networks, but that we will rather come to learn existing networks better and that we will be able to join interactivities of existing networks.

My role now will be to welcome the presenters for the greetings. Then I will explain to you the goals of our Start-Up Conference once more. And then Mr. Royon-Weigelt will explain you our technical framework conditions a bit, to keep you well informed. And, we do not want to loose you while the traveling through Berlin. And after all this, we will get down to work.

I am very happy to be able to introduce to you Guillaume Dufresne, the Co-Executive Director of the Centre Français de Berlin.

Welcome Speech

Hello, after Hartmut Brocke, my colleague, the Executive Director of the Centre Français de Berlin and on behalf of Anna Royon-Weigelt, I would like to welcome you very cordially for the three days in front of us. And of course, I would like to tell you that it is a great honor for the Centre Français de Berlin to organize this very first Start-Up Conference. Ten cities are being represented and we do feel the responsibility, we are having by organizing this conference and of course it was a pleasure for us to do it.

Unfortunately, we couldn't organize this conference in the Centre Français. At the moment another meeting is going on there and we do not have the place to accommodate several meetings at one time. And we find it very important to organize everything in one premise. And that is, why the organizing team decided to organize the conference in this hotel, where you are staying as well. We hope that you will have the opportunity to come to know Berlin at that, and that you will also have the opportunity to get to know the Centre Français de Berlin, which has existed for ten years by now.

The Centre Français de Berlin has existed for ten years by now. It was created upon the basis of the German and French initiative. And that's why it's called Centre Français de Berlin. It's not French only, but there is a co-group, focusing on the exchange of young people between France and Germany.

We organize many activities. We organize internships, meetings, trips. And we have also founded an office in order to be able to help young people in Europe, to make internships in Europe. However, now it's more difficult to do this kind of organization as we have 25 European member states now instead of the formal 15. We do want to have a lively exchange of young people among our countries. And this is one of the tasks of the Centre Français de Berlin, to organize this kind of exchange.

There also is another task, which relates to topical issues. The German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Berlin Senate has passed on task to us, has commissioned us with task relating to youth policy, the prevention of violence and anti-Semitism, xenophobia et cetera.

And in the cause of these three days we will deal with one of the main tasks of our Centre Français de Berlin. And I think that those questions are more topical than ever before. I live in Paris. You will know, what is happening right now in France. This situation is really a kind of explosion. Some who say, that the problems in those urban areas, which are overpopulated, is something, which need reactions. This is something that we have saying for 15 to 20 years by now. We have always wanted reaction. But unfortunately, now happened what has happened. This kind of outbreak, the violence have taken place, but not only in Paris and around Paris, but everywhere in France. And it is difficult to handle this kind of situation. But this shows how topical the theme of our conference is. Well, there were set backs, especially with regards

of the prevention of violence, but also the integration of foreigners, of migrants.

And now, we are harvesting the fruit of what has been sown. And we did warn, but what the event, that happened now, happened elsewhere before. And that also happened in the cities, represented here today. We really need to do something about this problem. And it is our wish that our conference covering three days will not be a very official conference. But this will be really a work meeting, during which we can really tell the names of things.

Problems are there and we can see them on a daily basis. And I think that this conference maybe important and we will be able to say at the end of the three days, that we done a good job. And we will be able to do a good job, if we can benefit from our experience. And of course, there are common issues and by exchanging our experience and by relating to the different levels of responsibility on part of those, who were elected within our municipalities as regard the letter of those, who work in non-governmental organizations and in other positions.

All us, we have got the task to take a positive reaction upon the different phenomena, which can be seen nowadays in France. And we really have to bear in mind. And it will be dangerous, if we won't react, because this might aggravates the situation. This might lead to even more brutal results.

I hope that this conference will be useful, when we will exchange our experience concerning what we have experienced so far. It's not enough to meet occasionally but it's very important to start a regular exchange. And we do hope that this exchange will go on in the future.

I do wish all of us three fruitful days of work.

Antje Rothmund,
Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest, Council of Europe

Opening Address

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the Council of Europe's youth sector was first approached by the Centre Français de Berlin about organizing this conference, the request put towards us was the following:

“We would like to make a relevant contribution to youth participation in the promotion of human rights education. We know that the Council of Europe youth sector has over 30 years of experience in involving young people in the promotion of intercultural education as a means to counteract racism, xenophobia and intolerance. But we do not want to reinvent the wheel or repeat what is being done already. We would like to step forward and build on the approaches and knowledge already available and accessible.”

This was the basis on which the format of this conference was developed. When a variety of partners start planning something together, the first step is always to take stock, to appraise the knowledge, capacities and motivation the partners share and how they can complement each other.

What can the Council of Europe youth sector offer in this respect?

We can offer our knowledge of and experience with the outstanding contribution young people can make to build a democratic and pluralist society with regard to human rights. This contribution is also recognized and widely encouraged by governments and local authorities. In the course of the day, my colleagues from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe will be discussing the measures taken in this field.

We can offer our established and ongoing experience in human rights education. “COMPASS – the manual on human rights education with young people” is one of the main references for this conference. For several years it has been used successfully in most of the 46 Council of Europe member states and beyond. Its success has taught us a lot. It has taught us, for example, that young people are inspired to act not only for their own benefit but also for that of the world around them. We Europeans share achievements like the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, a Council of Europe treaty regarded as the world's most effective regional human rights protection system. It was created immediately after World War II in response to some of the worst forms of war and barbarity that humankind had ever experienced. The legal texts and monitoring mechanisms give us guidance in times of uncertainty and change.

However, the values of human rights, their appreciation and implementation in people's everyday lives cannot be ensured by legal texts alone. They need to be understood, protected and nurtured by everyone.

Young people are motivated and committed to stand up for human rights values, for

equality, justice, human dignity, non-discrimination and freedom. At the present moment, with the images of young people rioting in the suburbs of French cities on our minds, we must avoid the trap of stigmatising young people once again as aggressors, as perpetrators of violence, violence being one of the most frequent manifestations of human rights violations. We should rather be aware that everyone, young and old, can at one and the same time and as one and the same person be victim, perpetrator or bystander when human rights are violated. We must make a common effort to encourage and empower people to become protagonists of human rights and show courage in defending rights and universal values in everyday life, for themselves and for others. Human rights education therefore focuses primarily on promoting equality in human dignity and goes far beyond merely providing information on existing legislation.

There are many strategies in public education, policymaking, civil society development and research. And they have one major shortcoming in common: a lack of cooperation between sectors and of consolidated inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary approaches, with the result that no sustainable measures can be guaranteed.

This brings me to the innovative character of this conference:

Local authorities of ten major European cities, youth and human rights organisations and international organisations are working together to develop sustainable solutions for commonly defined challenges. Over the coming three days, we will have the opportunity to exchange experience and develop common strategies. This might sound banal, but indeed one of the most exciting challenges of the event will be the dialogue between participants. Intercultural learning is about overcoming stereotypes and prejudice, it is also about getting to know and understand “the other” and “otherness”. This applies to life in our multicultural societies as much as to the meeting of different work cultures and communication patterns. To understand what NGOs and public authorities have in common, we must understand what differs in their respective approaches.

This afternoon, the “Agora” will be a place for discussing examples of good cooperation between public authorities, civil society organisations and young people. I trust there will be many such good and innovative examples. Although this is not exactly in keeping with political correctness and the positive thinking approach, I would like to share with you an “example of bad practise” in cooperation between young people and local authorities, an example from a different field of work.

In the capital of one of the Nordic countries, the local authorities were faced with ever-increasing damage to their premises and vehicles through graffiti and scratching, mainly by young people. With the help of a social worker, a meeting was set up between the graffiti artists and the local transport authorities. It goes without saying that the setting-up of this meeting was a success in itself, as the “secrecy” of their action is inherent in the subculture of many groups of graffiti artists and sprayers. Anyway, after some weeks of preparation the meeting took place. Obviously, the young people were informed that the aim of the meeting was to find an acceptable compromise: possibilities for the young people to make their graffiti, while reducing the damage caused to the transport authorities. To cut a long story short: during the meeting photographs were taken. Afterwards, the photos of the young people were

distributed to all railway stations with the instruction to expel these individuals the moment they entered the premises or approached any public transport vehicles.

Needless to say, this cannot be considered a positive example of confidence building.

On this note, I trust that we will make best use of our common time here to listen, to understand each other's interests and motivation with the aim of developing sustainable cooperation on human rights education and youth participation.

The organisers have deliberately called the event a "starter conference." Let's start the "Intercultural Learning and Trans-national Dialogue" here and now.

Alexander Bartling,
The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Address to the Conference on “Intercultural Learning and Trans-national Dialogue”

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The most important principle for life in society is the respect of others. This principle is grounded in reciprocity. Where respect for others and their otherness is lacking, unrest knows no constraint – witness the incidents in Clichy-sous-Bois and other Paris suburbs.

The Council of Europe has no patent recipes, but it does offer tools for participating in and shaping a democratic society, which have hitherto been only hesitantly brought to bear.

Erich Fromm once wrote: “Every increase in joy that a culture can bring will contribute more to the moral education of its individual members than all punitive systems and exhortations to virtue.” What does he mean?

Perceiving oneself as a useful and valuable member of society is crucial.

Young people in Paris and elsewhere no longer see such a prospect for themselves, either now or in the foreseeable future. They feel excluded, thrust to the margins of a society that no longer has any use for them.

This is the state of affairs which elected local authority and regional representatives must address. Active collaboration by young people at the local and regional levels can build bridges for better mutual understanding through concrete cooperation among everyone involved: the young, politicians, social workers, teachers.

Participation and the Promotion of Democracy are Vital to our Work in the Council of Europe

The two concepts go hand in hand. They are key notions on the road towards greater political engagement and less political disaffection.

In both Europe and Germany we have realised that social engagement and participation by young people must be a priority in all government endeavours. They offer the only perspective for counteracting frustration and the spreading disaffection with politics.

Many young people simply lack the prerequisites for greater participation. They have no confidence in politicians, they are uninterested in politics, and they have little knowledge about rights and concrete opportunities for participation.

This is a challenge for all of us. Our conference in Berlin is an opportunity to bring together youth representatives and local government policy makers and trainers to exchange experience and ideas and adapt our efforts to changing conditions.

Allow me to touch on a number of elements and policy approaches.

We welcome and support initiatives like that of the federal government that aim to promote binding opportunities for participation by young people at all political levels.

In the course of implementing the national action plan for a child-friendly world and through projects like “Project P – Get Involved,” possibilities for young people to participate and collaborate are being developed and tested. “Project P – Get Involved” has important sponsors: the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth together with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpj), and the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR) are carrying out this initiative to promote political participation.

It targets children and young people throughout the country between the ages of 12 and 25. The initiative also calls on politicians to be more receptive towards the young.

This is the ambition of the Council of Europe and its Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life.

Education for democracy and tolerance are priorities in youth policy in combating xenophobia, intolerance, and racism. On the occasion of its third summit in Warsaw in May 2005, the Council of Europe placed special emphasis on this important objective. Numerous “Entimon” and “Xenos” action programmes therefore address issues relating to education and the reinforcement of democratic behaviour and civil engagement, as well as the promotion of tolerance and open-mindedness.

In 2005 the Council of Europe has devoted greater attention to the role of education in furthering civic awareness, and to this end is conducting a campaign in all Council of Europe member countries.

The motto is “2005 – European Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education.”

I am happy to inform you that the Slovak authorities have undertaken to train 400 teachers in the context of this “European Year of Democratic Citizenship through Education” in implementation of the “European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life.”

Other priorities in this field are the development of media competence in children and young people.

There is a campaign in Germany addressing the subject which could be interesting for other countries. It is entitled “SCHAU HIN! Was Deine Kinder machen” (“Watch What your Kids are Watching”). The aim is to foster public awareness for the issue of “children and the media” and to inform parents about the electronic media and how to deal with them. Specific, integrated educational tips are provided for 3 to 13 year-olds, along with practical help for dealing with the media in a way suitable for children, concrete advice and sound knowledge from experts for parents, families, and teachers.

Another priority is the federal campaign “Youth Goes Online.” Following the equip-

ment campaign launched in 2004, the second component is the new youth portal www.netzcheckers.de. This new portal integrates existing learning, counselling, information, and entertainment services at the national, state, and regional levels, tying in with the European Youth Portal. Young people can themselves become “online checkers” or actors and collaborate actively in designing the website with their own texts, pictures, or audio and video contributions.

In the Congress cultural committee we have had the opportunity to discuss the far-reaching possibilities of the Internet, especially how to exploit this technology more efficiently to give young people a heightened awareness of democratic decision-making processes. The idea is to place new technologies at the service of democracy.

The aim of all these initiatives is to induce children and young people to become involved, to arouse their interest, to instil democratic ideas.

We must ensure that children and young people find institutionalised procedures at all levels for taking their interests into account.

To this end, the Council of Europe has developed an important tool, the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, adopted on 21 May 2003, which Mr. Ulrich Bohner, Chief Executive of the Congress, will be discussing in greater detail in the course of the conference.

The motto to adopt is “do good and talk about it.” This is the only effective way to publicise and valorise the work done by the Council of Europe.

Allow me, therefore, to say a few words in favour of this charter and its direct implementation.

The European charter prepares the ground for young people to participate actively in decision-making and activities at the local and regional levels.

We are all convinced that more democracy and solidarity is needed in our society, not less.

Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

Permit me to quote a few passages from the preamble of the “Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life” showing how these guidelines can help us define urgently needed policies to give young people their indispensable place in society for building a living democracy.

“Local and regional authorities, as the authorities closest to the young person, have a very important role to play in promoting youth participation. In doing so, local and regional authorities can ensure that young people not only hear and learn about democracy and citizenship, but rather have the opportunity to practice it.”

“However, youth participation is not solely about developing active citizens or building democracy for the future. It is vital, if participation is to be meaningful for young people, that they can influence and shape decisions when they are young and

not only at some later stage in life.”

The founding of youth councils, youth parliaments, and youth forums provides the scope needed for the effective institutionalisation of links between local and regional politicians and interested young people.

Again I quote a relevant passage from our charter.

Article 59:

“Effective participation of young people in local and regional affairs should be based on their awareness of the social and cultural changes taking place within their community, and requires a permanent representative structure such as a youth council, a youth parliament or a youth forum.”

The commitment of the Congress to giving political weight to these demands is what has brought us together here. It is my hope that a signal for renewal will go out from Berlin for the more concrete implementation of the Charter by local and regional authorities throughout Europe.

We need the support of all European countries to ensure ever wider implementation, creating a space in which young people can grow up to become full actors.

Today we need the active participation of young people more than ever.

I call on all of us to make our contribution to this task and wish us every success at this conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Dr Lutz Möller,
Head of the Section for Science of the German Commission for UNESCO**

Opening Address

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international conference: “Intercultural Learning and Trans-national Dialogue”, organized by the Centre Français de Berlin in the framework of the entimon project is fully supported by the German Commission for UNESCO. Our Executive Board has granted its auspices to this conference two months ago, and it is my pleasure to convey to you the warmest greetings of our president Walter Hirche and our Secretary General Dr. Roland Bernecker.

I do not want to repeat what previous speakers have said about the usefulness and value of this conference. I would only like to highlight the two most important aspects of this conference which led to granting our auspices: it combines the “abstract learning” of contents of human rights education with a trans-national perspective, with a perspective of cross-cultural understanding and it is not a standalone event, since the trainers will be available to the participants also in the follow-up to the workshop.

Instead I would like to lay out to you the connection between the issue of this conference and the International Day for Tolerance of UNESCO, November 16, which is the final day of this meeting.

UNESCO, the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science, Culture and Communication was founded in 1945, almost on this day sixty years ago. On November 16th, 1945 representatives of 37 countries met in London to sign UNESCO’s Constitution which came into force on November 4, 1946. Today, UNESCO has 191 member states and while the words through which its mission is expressed have changed, the spirit of UNESCO’s mission is unaltered.

This spirit is contained in the preamble of UNESCO’s Constitution: “SINCE WARS BEGIN IN THE MINDS OF MEN..., it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

This is the key message about UNESCO: It is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, Science and Culture are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of men. Today, UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse – for the dissemination and sharing of knowledge – while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. In short, UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its Member States in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

It is sometimes an argument of academic dispute within UNESCO, what exactly the most important word which captures the essence of UNESCO: is it humaneness, is it human dignity, is it human rights, is it philosophy or is it tolerance? I believe that

this debate is in vain; all these words capture very different aspects of one idea. Let me just point out this word “tolerance” which is the point of this three days.

As concerns tolerance, it is fitting, that upon an initiative by UNESCO, the United Nations decided to proclaim 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of both organizations, the International Year for Tolerance. 10 years ago, on the day of its fiftieth anniversary, 16 November 1995, UNESCO’s Member States adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. In addition to pledging to promote tolerance and non-violence through educational policies and programmes, UNESCO Member States declared 16 November the annual International Day for Tolerance.

International days and years are occasions to generate fresh thinking, debate and awareness. Most often, they focus on a specific target group, field of action or issue. The International Year for Tolerance and the International Day for Tolerance, for the first time, put the accent on a personal virtue that is increasingly viewed as a political and legal requirement for peaceful co-existence.

Of course, these initiatives were also an answer to the armed conflict in the Balkans, the alarming increase of racial assaults in Western Europe at that time or the genocide in Rwanda. The initiatives FOR tolerance were an initiative AGAINST intolerance.

UNESCO defined five answers how to counter intolerance:

1. Fighting intolerance requires law to enforce human rights, to ban and punish hate crimes and discrimination against minorities, to ensure equal access to courts
2. Fighting intolerance requires education against ignorance and fear, against an exaggerated sense of self-worth and pride
3. Fighting intolerance requires access to information, since intolerance is most dangerous when it is exploited to fulfil the political ambitions of hatemongers.
4. Fighting intolerance requires individual awareness against bigotry, stereotyping, stigmatizing, insults and racial jokes
5. Fighting intolerance requires local solutions.

UNESCO’s Declaration of Principles on Tolerance affirms that tolerance is neither indulgence nor indifference. It is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. People are naturally diverse; only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe.

Since 1995, UNESCO and the United Nations have started a number of additional initiatives in the same direction; I can only mention the Decade for Human Rights Education 1995-2004, the International Decade for a Culture of Peace 2001-2010. While the success of these multiple initiatives might certainly be a matter of debate, all in all they indeed have contributed substantially to the formation of a global civil society. Issues of concern today such as economic globalisation, international terrorism, and religious fundamentalism have to be answered by a global civil society, which is convinced of the positive value of tolerance, multiculturalism, and global diversity, religious and cultural dialogue.

We understand that this conference expresses a strong will to bring responsible city actors from different European cultures together, to build cross-cultural networks, to add value to the individual work for human rights education in your cities through integrating the experiences made in the partner cities. To further human rights locally, i.e. to further tolerance locally by benefiting from experiences from other cultures requires tolerance. That with this conference you will live up to the ideal, which later you plan to propagate at home, is the reason why this conference fits perfectly well into the framework of UNESCO' activities to promote tolerance.

From the side of the German Commission for UNESCO, we thank the organizers of this conference for taking this initiative, we thank the German Federal Ministry for Families, Elderly people, women and youth and the Berlin government for funding this project and we wish you, the participants, that this will be a fruitful and successful meeting.

Thank you!

Peter Lauritzen, Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Lecture “The Social City as a Space for Citizenship in Human Rights Education for Young People”, 15 November 2005

The Council of Europe is the Human Rights organisation par excellence in Europe. There is not only the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights as the standard setting instrument and institution for the implementation of Human Rights, but there are also all kind of efforts and activities made to create and pertain a culture of Human Rights in the member countries. These are a club of 46 member states, including the Federation of Russia and all European CIS countries. The core values of the Council of Europe are Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law; the organisation is also called ‘the home of democracy’.

Of course, the European space of the Council of Europe, which has a geographic West-East extension from Funchal to Vladivostok, is not a standardised space, where the social, political and cultural reality of its citizens is the same, wherever you are. In fact, there are considerable economic and social differences between member countries and in many cases also within the countries themselves; the efficiency of democratic institutions is very different as well and so are the outreach of media and new technologies, the education system and the opportunities for free movement.

The most fascinating challenge to the organisation is its incredible cultural diversity; a source of enjoyment and rejoicing, but also a potential for stereotypes, prejudice, misunderstandings, intolerance and racism. This is what has to be learnt for Europe to have a future: the ability and willingness to live with cultural diversity, both within member states and between them.

How can such a big European organisation with such a wide mandate reach out to citizens in Europe, how can it reach out to young people, is there any chance that this organisation could make a useful contribution to young people in depreciated urban areas, does it have any relevance to the concept of the ‘social city’?

I would like to take these questions both at theoretical and institutional level and also provide some practical, ‘hands on’ elements to my answer.

Let us turn to the transformation processes modern nation states undergo right now and see how this effects the concept of citizenship. In the old understanding, and indeed today we are citizens of one nation-state, accountable to this state’s laws and institutions and entitled to access and specific rights and responsibilities. The state ‘...exercises power resting on a “tripod of sovereignties” – economic, military and cultural: the ability to balance the books, to control its borders and to legislate the norms and the patterns by which all its subjects were to compose their customary conduct.’ (Zygmunt Baumann).

How stable is the tripod these days? With Baumann I see the legs of the tripod become increasingly wobbly under the following influences:

- ◆ Globalisation. The speed of global financial transactions, the deterritorialisation of company structures and of both capital and labour, the cut-throat competition and what is called today ‘wild capitalism’ have crumbled the concept of national

economy ('Nationaloekonomie'). Who balances the books now? Much of the modern welfare state could only be developed because what has been earned was reinvested into state and welfare infrastructure within one territory; the 'national wealth' was subject to social struggles concerning its distribution – what do these social struggles look like now, what is their dimension, where and how do they take place, if at all?

- ◆ European integration. 25, soon 27 and later more member countries of the Council of Europe are members of the European Union. They have accepted the logic of supranationality, which simply means that whatever is subject to the European treaties as they stand is no longer a national matter, it is a community item. This concerns in some areas (agriculture) already more than 80% of what used to be national competence, in others less (education, culture), but it is a fact, that it is very inconvenient to have an incomplete European Union side to side to incomplete nation states. Logically the Union competence will constantly increase despite occasional set backs, simply because you cannot really be 'half pregnant' – only by completing the political, economic and social agenda of the European Union can one fully benefit from membership and eventually turn to other crucial areas such as peace and security and ecology more energetically. Which means that already a 'pure' definition of the nation state as a sovereign policy actor is obsolete; within the Union we deal with European states, made up by nations with common objectives, history and destiny.

Globalisation and European integration being the strongest agents of transformation of the nation state, other strong influences contribute to the modification as well:

- ◆ the increasing importance of civil society. The nineties of the last century have seen the birth of "governance"; a kind of contract between civil society and public authority. In practically all areas of potential governmental action there will also be interest groups, associations, lobbies and all kind of other civil society actors around and they will strongly mark what the legislator will do. They will also stay around and keep an eye on public authority in such a way, that governmental action will become "governance", which indicates mutual communication and cooperation between state and civil society. This sector has grown so much, that Hans Magnus Enzensberger in a Spiegel essay of more than 10 years ago simply put into doubt, that any state action against an organised group in society was still possible. Whatever this means for democracy (Is the influence of the Rifle Association on US government really such a good thing?), it clearly means reduction of state power.
- ◆ the 'lean state philosophy'. Everybody demands reduction of public spending not least through the reduction of a publicly paid work force. Bureaucracies are screened according to market criteria and have to learn how to behave within a market; what can be privatised will be privatised and what can be outsourced will be outsourced. Within modern service societies the distinctive behaviour of public authority becomes more and more alike to any market actor. Again, the nation state has less resources, becomes a lean state indeed.
- ◆ Decentralisation. Whether states are federal states or states with traditions of devolution of power, or, on the contrary, central states with centralised power

structures, they all have a tendency to empower local and regional communities and to give these communities strong responsibilities. This is particularly true with regard to social assistance, prevention of risk behaviour and social exclusion, dealing with poverty, exclusion, migration and multicultural affairs in urban areas. The welfare state or the social state appears often in the form of the local community and what it can do or not do. The other side of the coin is the local community as economic actor and area; attractive communities will be able to host industries, training facilities, research and education infrastructures and service providers. This is a positive development, but it weakens the nation state's power base all the same.

- ◆ International terrorism. This worldwide development has introduced new dangers to the life and security of citizens, which cannot be met appropriately with the concept of national defence and territorial armies. What is required is world wide co-ordination and a combined integrated operation between armies, police forces and secret services. With no international force of this kind in place and faced with insurmountable differences with regard to what is now called "the war on terrorism" by the US administration even the classical function of the nation-state - to protect the integrity of its territory and its citizens – is endangered. Presently the Council of Europe is in the process of carrying out an investigation on this matter: have the US been able to torture European citizens in special camps and prisons? Have European citizens been literally kidnapped and brought outside their country? Whatever the answers will be, it seems that international terrorism has created facts outside national and international law to the detriment of the nation-state's integrity.

What I want to show is a transformation process of state power. Zygmunt Baumann calls it the divorce of power – the politics stays territorial, while economy, military force and culture become even more global and thus extraterritorial.

In such a world – how to deal with identity and citizenship? On paper this looks easy: citizenship will have to be understood as a differentiated citizenship, same for identity. Why can a global citizenship not be a possibility, many widely travelled artists and writers have felt as global citizens? European citizenship is under construction, it grows with the European project, so does European identity. National citizenship and identity are still dominant patterns, they exist and will last. Regional and local citizenships and identities have always been – so why can citizenship and identity not simply follow the complexity of today's world? Are all these concepts not complementary to each other?

They are, but in reality, this does not work. The above is too abstract or only liveable for a few. For a great many, particularly young people, identity formation and citizenship become an individual burden because the collective side to identity formation works badly. This overlaps with other developments: secure jobs become part-time jobs, careers turn into a sequence of occupations, good school and university results count only for little on the labour market and flexibility is the virtue number 1. All in all, this is a scenario of insecurity and insecurity is what we have to deal with.

What the nation-state cannot provide fully any more, what the European Union will probably never be able to provide and what remains a bit cloudy in global citizenship

needs to be tackled from the local level first. There, the idea of “citizenship” and of “community” are integrally connected.

“Citizenship and community are words that relate to the fundamentally human business of living with others. The two words depend on each other. Citizenship has no meaning on its own; you have to be a citizen of something, namely a community. And there are no communities worth the name, which do not afford members a sense of something shared and a common status of belonging (a status which one can call “citizenship”). Understood broadly, these concepts are as old as human civilisation itself.”

Hall and Williamson 1999, p.1

Placing understandings of identity and citizenship in a local context is a first step in dealing with insecurity and all the practical difficulties will be present: what is a community, if we are talking of big cities? A borough? An administrative unit? Maybe, but in the first place it is a human fabric of neighbourhoods, workplaces, educational facilities, town halls, pubs and sport and leisure locations, it is an urban environment and it will be, normally, a heterogeneous community formed of members of many different origins, belonging to different faith groups, representing class-, gender-, age- and income differences. It is a ‘warm’ context and it can make people experience the emotional side of citizenship; it is belonging, not concept.

It is for this context, that the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe has, in close co-operation with my service, the Directorate for Youth and Sport, developed the “Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life”. This charter is a concrete set of guidelines on how to involve young people in sectoral policies, which concern them (employment, housing, transport, health, gender, minorities, anti-discrimination, criminal justice etc.) and how to promote their participation through specific instruments.

Thus the big item of ‘participation’ is introduced. The more the world shows itself as complex and differentiated’ and the more access to power seems impossible, the more discouragement with the political process will raise and this is particularly true for young people. Their abstinence to politics has become proverbial; it is of utmost importance to reintroduce youth political participation “...with the clear intention of also giving them roles and responsibilities at a very young age. Someone who can develop a computer company in a garage can also have his or her voice heard in the city council; someone who understands complex computer programmes at a young age can also contribute to the teaching of mathematics and informatics at school; and trendsetters in modern lifestyle sports can also say a lot about the organisation of urban space.” (Lauritzen, 2005, p.5)

The most important educational strategy in respect of citizenship and identity is Human Rights Education. Speaking for the youth field, this means for us to introduce Human Rights as a condition for human existence and the awareness of and knowledge about them as prerequisite to lower existing levels of humiliation and discrimination. In other words, we understand Human Rights Education as one way of doing youth and community work. The methodology is based on a very comprehensive handbook, the COMPASS. This is a compilation of youth and community work methods which is truly intercultural, inclusive of minorities, sensitive to ra-

cism and discrimination and leading to develop coping strategies and solutions. The text consists now in almost 20 languages, including Arabic, and the Directorate of Youth and Sport and particularly its Youth Centre in Budapest direct international and national training courses with multipliers in order to make the methods known and effective. Recently a Human Rights Education e-learning community has been created and the whole programme is a huge success.

For us, in the Council of Europe, working with young people on items such as citizenship and identity in a changing world means, paradoxically, to go local. In a second step it means to confront what makes up our own identity – Human Rights, Democracy, the Rule of Law – with the concrete life circumstances of young people and to show, how relevant these concepts are to living a decent life.

In a third step it means to develop youth policies and to see to it, that these are closely connected to youth and community work practice. Without opening the big chapter of what youth policies are about in Europe – this is not the right space for it – I would like to point to the triangle of ‘personal development – employment – citizenship’. This basic understanding requires that what is done for young people’s personal development alone, a classical youth work objective, is not enough; there must also be an employment dimension and what is done for employment might be just as well called ‘vocational training’, if it has no citizenship dimension. By proving the relevance of working with young people, of empowering them and by including them into the running of public affairs youth and community work is a key area exactly for better employment prospects and active citizenship.

Within the local community, within the social city, citizenship and identity can become real and human rights a common good. The social city represents the space for reconstruction, which has gone lost in the nation-state and is not or may never be there in Europe. For the concept to hold, it needs networking and exchange, it needs trans-national associations, intercultural communication, democratic diversity management and a constant awareness of global and European policy processes. This is not about Russians not being Russians any more or Germans not being Germans or Turks not being Turks – it is about the divorce of affectionate citizenship from power, the incongruence of what is believed to be the unshared power of the nation-state and what has become the real structure of power in Europe.

I have said already, with others, that Europe has to learn to live its own cultural diversity successfully. This will not be possible without an idea of social justice, of respect and dignity and of full citizenship for everybody – still a long way to go.

**Ulrich Bohner, Chief Executive of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe
of the Council of Europe**

The Revised European Charta on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life as an instrument of Human Rights Education

Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear friends!

The topic of today's conference which is the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance as well as youth participation, is closely related to Human Rights Education. This subject has gained in importance in the last weeks due to the outbreak of the revolts started by young people in a lot of French suburbs, first notably in urban areas of Paris.

In order to prevent this kind of development in the future, the Council of Europe has created a project called "Making democratic institutions work" already a few years ago. The lack of transparency and the almost inexistent involvement of the youth in the democratic process are a new challenge for our democracy. Since the formation of the Council of Europe 56 years ago, 46 states have become members and propose different values in our understanding of a democratic system. We call these values human rights, pluralistic democracy and pre-eminence of right.

As a matter of fact, democracy cannot exist without the respect for human dignity of every single citizen or person who lives in a certain country, region or city. Any exclusion or segregation of groups, be it youths, the unemployed, foreigners or women, represent a violation of human dignity and put the functioning of democracy into question.

Nowadays, we cannot afford to live in countries where big groups of inhabitants are systematically excluded from democratic institutions as it was the case in the Roman Empire just before it declined. That is why the involvement and participation especially of young people have become so important in our days. This participation should not be limited to the right to participate regularly in votes, as noted in the Protocols of the Convention on Human Rights. It should be expressed by devolution and it should be implemented on a grass-roots level. An editorial journalist of the French newspaper "Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace" said this as follows: "The crisis must be solved by our mayors. They know about the inhabitants' moods and feelings since they partake in the life of their cities. They are wise. So we should listen to them and help them."

Is our democracy stuck in a crisis? Crisis, this word is perhaps too strong, but undoubtedly our democracy is confronted with defiances and the necessity of changes. These changes result from the Warsaw Summit of the Heads of State and Government which took place in May and where the "Forum on the future of democracy" was created. The forum's first meeting in Warsaw under the topic of civic participation took place in November.

If some deputies, even on a local level, worry that they might be hindered in their work by a stronger participation, they become sceptical. Inversely, a lot of citizens content themselves with what is called "The right to happiness" in the Constitution of

the United States. That means that they are satisfied with their individual rights and retreat into their privacy. Not only the social life and the principle of solidarity suffer from this attitude, also the social cohesion – a necessary condition for the endurance of democracy – is endangered.

It is difficult indeed to imagine democracy without the guarantee of a minimum of civil rights like the right to employment or the right to decent housing. Facing the globalisation, many people get unmotivated and think that they have no opportunity to influence politics. Further, they do not trust politicians any longer and in their opinion, politicians make use of citizens and cheat on them. In addition to that, traditional values and particularly religious values are on their way to disappear but new values linked to human rights, democracy and pre-eminence of right are not yet integrated in the life of our population. The consequences of urbanisation, the lack of social cohesion and the insufficient integration of certain groups, especially immigrants are to be kept in mind, too.

As a matter of course, democracy also means separation of powers, management and decision-making process of public authorities. But at the same time, the term “democracy” implies that the power comes from the people, that it remains in the hands of human beings.

Obviously, there is a certain contradiction between our traditional system of representative democracy and the principles of direct democracy which is in accordance to the tradition of only a few countries – for example Switzerland. However, this is difficult to implement in other countries. When citizens feel excluded from any democracy in their system, explosions quickly follow as it occurred at the end of the 1980’s in the German Democratic Republic when the people defied the government by saying: “We are the people!”.

In the same way we should keep in mind the extra-parliamentary opposition (APO) in Germany at the end of the 1960’s and the recent wave of terrorism in the United Kingdom, triggered by youths who have grown up in that country and are British. The whole difficulty consists in involving the population in the democratic decision-making process. This kind of integration should be based on mutual respect.

Therefore, a Convention of the European Council from 1992 provides for a voting right for immigrants under specific conditions.

At first, several member states considered it impossible, but as of 1994 they conceded by the Maastricht treaty at least the right for EU-citizens to participate in local elections.

In the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities we are persuaded that it is not possible to live in neighbourhoods, where 20, 25 or 30 % of the population are excluded from any form of democratic participation. By the process of Stuttgart, we stood up for a pact for integration. The first part of the pact contains the establishment of an Immigrant Council and in a second phase the immigrants’ participation in local elections – knowing that this does not constitute a panacea.

Furthermore, efforts have been made with women participation coming by the recognition of their individual voting right and models of affirmative action which have

already proved their values in many countries of Northern Europe.

With regards to minorities, a European Charter on Minority Languages has been conceived, as well as a Framework Agreement in 1994 for the protection of national minorities. For 25 years, the Charter of Local Self-Government, ratified by 41 member states, has been specifying “that the civil right to partake in the administration of public matters is one part of the democratic principles which all member states have in common”.

In 1992, as a result of a conference in Llangollen, Wales, the European Charter on Youth Participation at Local and Regional Levels has been conceived. We are aware of the fact that the European Youth Centre has been the symbol of co-management for more than 40 years since there has always been a parity of youths and government in the decision-making process.

Indeed the governments had had apprehensions but it emerged that democracy would have no future without youth participation. Also the local deputies who have had apprehensions at first, understand that even if the decision-making process became more complicated by participation, in the long run it would last longer, become more sustainable and better solutions could be found for each city.

In 2002, the Congress and the European Council, Directorate of Youth and Sports, organised a conference to revise the European Charter on Youth Participation. This conference took place in 2003 and this revision has become a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers in 2004.

The revised form of the Charter basically consists in three parts. The first part contains directives for the local and regional authorities concerning the realisation of politics dealing with youths in many domains. The second part names instruments that can favour youth participation. Finally, the third part contains advice for the construction of an institutional frame of youth participation.

The first section covers different politic sections: from sports, leisure and associative life through employment and the fight against unemployment among young people, environmental policy, housing, policy of education and formation favouring youth participation to a policy of mobility and exchange, health policy, gender equality policy, specific policy for rural districts, culture policy, policy of sustainable development of the environment, the fight against violence, delinquency and discrimination and finally a policy on sexuality with standardised measures for sex education and a policy of access to rights and law.

Some “moralists” might have difficulties in accepting the policy on sexuality. But it is deep-seated in the text and split up into three parts:

- ◆ non authoritarian sex education at school,
- ◆ organisations and services offering information about relationships, sex practices and family planning,
- ◆ collective reflection in this domain. Furthermore, the communities and regional corporations are asked to facilitate young people’s access to their rights, particularly by letting them participate in the elaboration of new rules.

The instrument of youth participation provides elements of formation and information, the implementation of information and communication technologies, promoting youth participation in the media, the facilitation of honorary work and the defence of common causes, aid in youth projects and initiatives and finally the encouragement of youth organisations. Youth participation in non-governmental organisations and in political parties is also recommended as a crucial element for the functioning of a democratic system.

Among the institutional instruments, the Charter provides for youth councils, youth parliaments and youth forums; mainly on a local and regional level it recommends the aid of public authorities, regarding the structures of youth participation. In this domain a guarantor – one person or a group of persons – to whom young people can refer if necessary, is to survey the claiming of help and to assure that the young people's concerns are made aware in the Council of Europe.

We will endeavour to disperse the Charter and mainly its version which is close to the users. Besides, we are planning to publish a CD-ROM about "best practices" in the domain of youth participation in different corporations of the Council's member states which will be available on-line, too.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear friends,

I hope that you do not mind if I re-emphasise, regarding the recent events, that the existence of our democracy will not be ensured without youth participation in the democratic process. It is on the local and the regional level where the young people stand a real chance to influence their daily surroundings.

If we wish to ensure the future of our democratic institutions, we may not forget that young people often are unoriented and do not find their places in our system. To conduce to positive development we have to combat discriminations which might concern young people. Furthermore, decent conditions of employment, housing and urbanism in general have to be established. This must be done on a grass-roots level, close to young people especially in big cities.

In the context of the conference which brings us together today, the exchange between the partner cities becomes much more important since we are all co-operating on aims we have in common.

The Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities would like to make a contribution to this procedure: with the competent German Ministry we will organise a starter conference in January or February 2006 in Strasbourg under the topic *Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: what opportunities for children and young people?*

Of course you are welcome to have a share in this exchange.

Thank you very much.

Hartmut Brocke, Co-Executive Director of the Centre Français de Berlin

Address on the Aims, Methods and Program of the Conference

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will present you the aims, methods and program of the conference.

Why these cities?

These cities are European twin cities of Berlin (Los Angeles is a twin-city of Berlin as well, but it is not an European city, so it is not relevant for our context).

Why we do focus on the two basic documents: the “Compass” and the “Youth Charter”?

Our wish is to connect to a common program and not to organize something completely new. Insofar we thank Antje Rothmund once again, who organizes this program from Budapest for the Council of Europe in the field of Human Rights Programs. Thank you.

Why trainers?

The Council of Europe has a pool of trainers. They are committed people, qualified and trained in these programs of the Council of Europe and active in the 46 member states of the Council of Europe. We made use of; we were allowed to make use of this Trainers’ Pool. For that reason we are convinced that conferences, like this one, are important and necessary, they should not remain just conferences. Therefore, we have a trainer for each of the cities, who are participating here, and who co-operates in between conferences with representatives of the UNESCO Authorities and colleagues of the non-governmental organizations.

What is the content we are talking about?

The future of cities – so the futurologists and the demographers say – will be multi-ethnic and intercultural. We realize again and again that those, who are socially and economically disadvantaged, are threatened with exclusion, that the social cohesion of the societies, especially in the urban societies, is becoming more difficult, not only in Germany but in all European countries.

Our idea is that we need two movements: The first is a bottom-up movement, from bottom to the top, starting from the NGOs, from the participation of inhabitants, minorities and inhabitants with a migration background. The second is a top-down movement, starting from the communal representatives, from the city elites. These two movements have to meet. Essentially this should not be a conflict but a mutual co-operation. This requires that the cities, that the town policy changes from the culture of sovereignty, of governance, of order into a culture of participation. We noticed such developments/ transformations in all cities and I am happy that we can welcome the representatives from the metropolis here at the conference. This co-operation is not the rule at all, but a constant effort to implement it.

We wish, we had a share in your experiences in the fields of Human Rights Education and Antiracism, but also in all the other fields that we have already mentioned. We wish that you communicated your experiences to your colleagues from the other cities. Our task is on the basis of a federal and a Land program. Our job is to summarize and document all this in the framework of the federal financing and of the Land co-financing of the “entimon” project, so that both Berlin and the Federal German Republic get a surplus value from your contributions.

The task of our Start up Conference is first of all to get to know what everybody here is doing, what experiences they made. Secondly, to reflect on how we can all continue at home – each of us on our own but also together. The third question is in which form do we think we could meet well again? How can you imagine that we find ways to include the youth, the young adults in the framework of this project financing that we have at our disposal until the end of 2006?

The trainers prepared the program considerably and paid attention that we have a broad variety of initiatives and of participants, as broad as possible, so that nothing doubled here. This does not mean that Berlin is representative only for these projects now, but that we selected the participants in such a way that we have a broad range of committed NGOs, of citizens’ and inhabitants’ initiatives here.

I do hope, that at the end of the conference we can say how we can continue our work in 2006. I am quite sure, that if we bring up good results, if we can prove, the it makes sense to keep on co-operating, each of us at home and in regular common meetings, if we can expand the fields, if we relate to existing networks and not try to organize new one and if we co-operate with international organizations like the Council of Europe, the CLRAE and the UNESCO, then we will certainly continue cooperating beyond 2006. I have read the draft of the coalition treaty, where the field from which the entimon project gets financed is given particular emphasis as being extremely worthy of support.

There are so many opportunities to be found out. That is why we found it useful to focus on the city twinning, not only to limit the framework.

In conclusion I would like to mention the European discussion about “good governing”, “good governance”. During our preparations we have discussed about and asked ourselves, how would this look like for us. We have developed a model thanks to our experiences, which we could make out of other federal programs for economically deprived areas like the “Social City”, a model that we would like to introduce to you carefully here, not as a “must”, but as an orientation, namely an agreement plan. It is a kind of a contract between public and private representatives about how we can produce local development initiatives that are close to the municipality, where we can explain who is in charge of certain tasks, where the “interfaces” are, how one can check the success or the failure, where one can make a firm statement about how the funds can be used and about the funds available, in order to implement the guiding and development goals.

One thing is for sure: One cannot prescribe social integration. Social integration cannot be forced. Social integration is about participation, involvement and self-determination. I do hope that we can produce new innovative ideas for the city

governments and for the NGOs here.

Thank you very much.

Péter Wootsch, Freelance expert and trainer

Introduction to the “Agora-Café” Method

Good afternoon ladies und gentlemen, Willkommen – Bienvenue – Welcome... here in Berlin.

This is the first time that we meet all here together. And, probably you've had a long travel and you are tired, because usually traveling is a physical challenge. And we have a physical challenge in this room as well, because we are sitting so close to each other. So close to those, we have never met before.

I would like to present this idea first for all to you: Agora is a historical phenomenon. It's a Greek word. Agora was a marketplace in the antique Greek societies, where people could not only buy goods but it was a meeting place for the citizens. And if people meet each other, they are usually talking with each other. If they are talking with each other, they are sharing ideas with each other. In every idea you can have something interesting. We are holding, carrying ideas and that is, which we would like to have in this Agora. Consequently, Agora is a meeting place. Agora is a meeting place for citizens. It's up to you, how you can find a definition of the citizen. In our conference, Agora is a place for all of us to meet, to talk, to learn about each other, to learn about the cities. In our conference Agora means to share ideas and to introduce methods, programs and actions.

How does it work?

Please take a look around; you will see posters with presentations, written materials, photos, documents, different other things. There are materials on the tables, which might be interesting for you, kilograms of papers, documents.

So, we have brochures materials, pictures. And we have the opportunity to visit each other's exhibition, tables, because we would like to keep these tables as the home of the cities. We have the opportunity to have presentations of the cities. There are delegations, who will have a PowerPoint presentation. There are some, who don't. But we would like to give every delegation the opportunity to introduce their city in maximum 10 minutes.

We will also have an opportunity for open exchanges. “Open exchanges” can mean everything about human questions, about all the questions, which are in the air in this room. And we have three symbols, which are three concrete flipchart-boards. One flipchart is in that corner and the other two here with three different elements, which we would like to ask you to use.

What type of information we would like to have or we could have for each other? Maybe something related to the urban areas, to our working environment? You are coming from well-known cities, which are known for most of the tourists of the world. We don't want to have tourist information of the cities, because we are working for and with young people. We are touching hot social questions like social cohesion, Human Rights, exclusion. So, we would like to see what is behind the

curtain. Not for the tourists, but for the citizens who are living in that cities.

What type of information? Participation of young people, even promoting the values of human rights: that will be interesting to listen. What is your experience about the cooperation within the NGOs, within the civil society and the representatives of the civil society and the local authorities?

Here some examples:

It's a natural question: Where do you come from? Or: What do you think, what was the most successful project you've had? Or: What do you think is the biggest challenge you are facing in your work, if you are working with young people? What experiences about the cooperation between NGOs and local authorities did you make? Or: How do young people involve in your work? How does it work?

I would like to invite the cities to have a 10-minutes-presentation before the coffee break. After the coffee break, I would like to pass the floor freely for the exchange of ideas.

After the first round of presentations, please collect your questions, your comments and your ideas, and feel free to visit your colleagues from the other tables and ask your questions directly to them. And after this exchange, it will be another round for the city presentations. Afterwards we will open the round for exchange and visit for you.

A few words about the function of the three corners: If you wish to exchange and you find the possible time to exchange your ideas, we can offer you the option of having meeting points with three questions:

When you meet each other, you have the option of choosing between three questions to ask: The first question is: What was the most interesting thing that you found as a major challenge related to youth participation, human rights and social cohesion? You as a person, as a youth worker or a civil servant, working for a municipality can ask the following question: What is the major challenge? What is the major area that challenges you when working on these issues?

There is another meeting point for good examples and best practice. That's also interesting to know, who is doing what, how and in which way? We can learn from each other's methods and concepts.

And the third one: What concrete forms, structures, and methods did you find for the cooperation between public authorities and NGOs in those cities?

“All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy” said one wise man. The Agora function is to recreate our democratic feelings. For those, who feel confused in this situation, I would like to offer some very small tips: In such a situation it's very easy to use a sheet of paper. All of you have some. You can create a little question box, like this. This is the easiest way to have an analysis area on one paper. For example you can write this kind of question: What do I do? That's a question for yourself, but it is also a question for the other, you will meet. Or: What do you do for or with young people? Do you do something with them concretely, indirectly? Are you responsible for a big office as a civil servant or are you working as a hardliner

youth worker on the street in a heavy urban area? Or, what is about my city and the relation with youth? Is your city an animated one, full of programs or graffiti? And what about the Human Rights Education and the “Compass”? Do you use it? Do you know it? Or: What is your “Compass”? What is your own personal “Compass” for your Human Rights Education?

And, there is a corner for resources. That is that table, which is in front of the interpreter’s booth. Different materials cover it. You can take a look. You can have a talk about this. There is the “Compass” in different languages, but there are some other useful materials as well, relating to our work.

And later we will have another round, when I would like to ask my colleagues to present the workshops for tomorrow. It’s also an opportunity for all of you to meet with the trainers, who will be with you in this process from the beginning to the end.

It’s important not to forget that the most important political office is that of the private citizen. We are citizens and we are on Agora. Agora is a meeting place for the citizens. So, I would like to pass the floor to Berlin, who will have a ten-minute-presentation.

Thanks.

Report on the Start-up Conference for European Partner Cities “Intercultural Learning and Trans-national Dialogue”

Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Istanbul, London, Madrid,
Moscow, Paris, Prague, Warsaw
14. – 16. November 2005 in Berlin

The Entimon program (“Entimon” – Together against Violence and Right-wing Extremism”) is a federal program supporting projects and initiatives combating violence and rightwing extremism among young people. The project, which the Centre Français de Berlin (CFB) proposed for the Entimon program, has received financial support for two years from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth and the Berlin Senate Department of Education, Youth and Sport. At the end of 2006, the CFB will be drafting recommendations for the sponsors on the basis of the results attained.

The concept for a European conference was developed in the spring of 2005 in close collaboration with the Council of Europe, especially with the management of the Council of Europe European Youth Centre, Budapest. It has been placed under the patronage of the Council of Europe (Directorate General of Youth and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe) and the German Commission for UNESCO on the occasion of the UNESCO International Day for Tolerance (16th November).

Owing to the particular interest of the CFB in encouraging and supporting cooperation between NGOs and local government, one criterion for selecting the cities to participate was that they had concluded a partnership agreement with Berlin. This limited the number of European cities in question to nine. Participants from these cities were recruited from local administrative authorities and non-governmental organisations.

The concept of the Conference

The conference combined the characteristics of a training course and a conference with the aim of achieving strong participant involvement. The conference focused on group work and participant contributions, working with professional trainers prior to and during the event.

Trainers were chosen on the basis of their experience in the fields of human rights education, anti-discrimination work, and participation, as well as their local ties and knowledge of local organisations, networks, and local authority activities relating to youth affairs, participation, and human rights. The organisers were also concerned to strike a balance as regards age and gender among trainers.

Experience with international conferences has shown how difficult it is to establish a sustained dialogue with political representatives of local authorities that enables plans to be put into effect. For this reason the CFB placed value on the work level. Participants were intended not only to represent the political level but also to address practical problems. They were, however, to be in a position to exercise influence vis-à-vis local authorities.

As a rule, four participants were invited from each partner city, two from local NGOs and two from the municipality. All participants were to be engaged in youth work and/or human rights education, integration, or racism and violence prevention. Unfortunately, some municipalities sent no representatives or none that satisfied the criteria laid down. The Berlin Senate supported the organiser's efforts by establishing contact with the twinned cities and fostering awareness about the conference among their contacts in the various cities.

Generally speaking, trainers on the spot were often required to invest a great deal of priming and persuading to identify the right contact persons, to discover who in the local administration would ultimately make the decision to participate in the conference, and to convince both of the utility of taking part. In certain cases (e.g., Warsaw) no representative of the municipality ultimately took part, and in other cases the names of participants were unknown until shortly before the conference (Moscow, London, Istanbul, Budapest).

Some institutions were invited as observers: the Anne Frank Centre Berlin, the German Institute for Human Rights, the Franco-German and Polish-German Youth Offices, the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the European Network ENAR and the Antiracism Information Centre ARIC-Berlin, the Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth, and Sport, and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Unfortunately, only the last four of these institutions attended.

At the end of the conference, participants were invited to name fields for possible cooperation and to express their interest in the proposed project ideas. This made it possible to materialise the contacts that had been established on the basis of concrete project proposals and hence to visualise the networks that had developed between cities.

The aims of the Conference

The conference embedded in the Entimon project was designed to generate a process of reflection in cooperation between local authorities and local NGOs on democratic citizenship in the broadest sense of the term and on participation by young people, with the aim of developing sustained cooperation between civil society and local government in human rights education and in the prevention of violence, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and discrimination. The purpose was not to create something new but to optimise existing structures and networks and to stimulate cooperation. The second phase of the project, to be completed by the end of 2006, will continue to pursue the institutionalisation of a local action plan in each of Berlin's partner cities and Berlin itself, a plan to be accepted by local authorities and civil society and integrated into a "sustainable impact plan" (SIP). This SIP is to involve the active participation of the parties affected; it is to be results-oriented and binding for both youth work and the local authority. A second European conference will take place with the same cities at the end of 2006.

Evaluation

Among their conference documents, participants received evaluation sheets in three languages (English, German, French), which were to be filled in at the end of the conference. 39 sheets were returned (a return rate of over 67%). The quantitative evaluation of the conference is based on these results.

The broad diversity of participants was deliberate, constituting both enrichment and an additional difficulty in preparing and staging the conference. Intercultural, linguistic, and “working culture” aspects raised barriers, surmounting which cost a great deal of time in discussing and reaching agreement about divergent backgrounds and approaches.

However, this reflected the reality prevailing in both European and local government cooperation, and supplied participants and organisers with ample material in this preliminary stage of cooperation. Precisely this diversity came to bear in the context of the Agora Café.

Participant Preparation in the Run-Up to the Conference

In the run-up to the conference, participants were requested to prepare a joint presentation of their city, addressing activities in the fields of youth affairs, participation, and human rights. Overall, this proved a good preparation for active involvement in the conference, enabling initial cooperation and coordination between local authorities and NGOs for their joint presentation at the conference.

Moderation by Trainers

Moderation by the trainers was judged very good by 51.5% of participants, and good by 45.5%. Individual trainers were praised for their work, and both the co-operation between the trainers, as well as the very idea of deploying trainers for the conference were commended.

Agora Method

The use of the Agora Café method met with strong approval from participants and did much to ensure that they rapidly engaged in discussion with one another. It proved to be a “place for citizens to meet and exchange views.” The spatial design of the agora (in a large conference room, with city tables and presentations of the different cities using a range of media) was decidedly participant-centred, allowing flexible use of the available space and media. The conference venue was highly suitable for this purpose, and participants explicitly stressed the professionalism of the service offered.

Conference Contents

As far as conference contents are concerned, the program points judged to be most interesting were the expert lectures (the paper by Mr. Lauritzen was very frequently mentioned), the workshops, and the Agora Café with city presentations. Participants also stressed how useful they found it to get to know other organisations, methods, and problems and to exchange experience on the issues. Most participants would have welcomed an opportunity to go into greater depth.

SIP and Project Proposals

The notion of SIPs was judged affirmatively, especially in connection with concrete project proposals and ideas, which had taken shape by the close of the conference. The difficulty of shifting from the project-related level to strategy and planning became apparent in the process. Some NGOs fully recognised the potential offered by these exchanges, and, we are informed, have maintained the contacts with other cities established during the conference.

Practical Relevance

54.5% of participants who returned the evaluation sheet found the event useful, 45.5% even very useful. The primary reason for this assessment was, for 40%, the opportunity to make new contacts and to engage in networking. Almost 88% of respondents affirmed that the conference had provided ideas for everyday action. But participants would also have welcomed more suggestions and examples of how the charter can be put into practice and used for concrete projects. This indicates that interest was aroused in this tool, which had been unknown to many.

Conclusions

The ten participating cities represent a mosaic of different cultures, covering a complex, international reality. But all of them face the same problems of practice and strategy in relation to HRE and RAXI. This conference was a point of departure for an exchange of experience and the beginning of cooperation in these fields.

The great willingness of participants to learn and their curiosity about other practices and projects, as well as their strong interest in dealing with the issues in greater depth form a very good basis for constructive and creative cooperation. It will be possible to exploit these forces to specific purpose in the various components of the follow-up conference.

One very positive result is that information about the charter was successfully publicised and aroused great interest. How the charter could be used to promote the prevention of RAXI in metropolises could be more clearly demonstrated. The joint discovery and development of concrete forms of co-management and participation in democracy also appears to offer great motivational and cooperative potential for participants, which can be utilised during and in the run-up to the follow-up conference.

One priority that obviously needs to be set is involving local authorities, since this poses a range of problems. The CFB could offer support through its networks and partners.

The format used for the European conference appears to have been well chosen from both a methodological, organisational, and substantive point of view. The combination of learning and meeting/contacting, in particular, established interesting interaction between training and conference.

For the continuance of the project it is extremely important to sustain the élan with which those attending the conference participated. This depends in strong measure on the participants themselves. But the CFB will do everything in its power to help

participants maintain contact. In the course of 2006, this will be pursued by means of the CFB website and a newsletter.

Berlin, January 2006