

CSC Education Strategy as adopted by the CSC at the Commission meeting in Haguenau/Strasbourg, 28 May – 1 June 2010

Introduction:

The Plenary Assembly of the Church and Society Commission in Prague in April 2008 “...suggested that a brain-storming group with representatives from member churches and educational organisations should be called together in order to reflect on the precise issues and the CSC mechanisms and methodologies in the field of education.” Education, although a national matter, gains more and more attention in European politics. A variety of European projects and strategies influence the national politics. The churches actively want to be involved in the shaping of Europe’s educational agenda.

The Brainstorming group met for its first time on 8/9 June 2009 where it proposed a rolling agenda for the work of CSC. On the basis of the outcomes of this first meeting and while taking into consideration other aspects (agendas of the CEC member churches and European institutions, CSC and CEC working priorities...) the group elaborated in its second meeting on 26/27 May 2010 a draft proposal for a CSC education strategy. The strategy has been adopted by the CSC Plenary in Haguenau/Strasbourg at its annual meeting from 28 May to 1 June 2010. The strategy is in line with the overall work priorities of CEC having been discussed in the CC and the Presidium.

The cooperation with associated organisations of CEC (especially youth and educational organisations like EYCE, WSCF, ICCS...) is crucial in the implementation of the strategy.

The following topics are proposed to be part of the CSC education strategy:

1) The European Commission Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in “Education and Training 2020” (ET 2020)

The ET 2020 document (being a part of the EU 2020 strategy) provides a long term basis for the further development of education and training systems in the Member States. It includes 4 strategic objectives and proposes reference levels of European average performance (“European benchmarks”) e.g. adult participation in lifelong learning or low achievers in basic skills. The document was adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2009 and the member states are asked to take account of priority areas that are identified for working cycles of three years.

According to the document the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems which are aimed at:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;(b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue. |
|---|

The framework should address four strategic objectives:

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;

2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
4. Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

The document includes a number of issues and challenges that are important for churches' educational activities such as the issue of the values in the document and Christian values.

Aims of the CSC strategy:

- Prepare a CSC/CEC information sheet to provide a summary of the document for the member churches including proposals of possible action on national and European level.
- Monitor the implementation of the strategy in the framework of "ET 2020" on European and national levels.
- Encourage a debate on quality of education which concentrates on basic values and strategic objectives taking into account the specific profile of churches in education eg. the spiritual dimension.
- Raise the awareness in the churches on quality tools and "good work"
- Work on a common statement on the strategic objectives and how churches contribute to these objectives in their education activities.
- CSC should propose a quality framework for education in churches and church organisations for the work of volunteers, taking into account the "European Year of Volunteering" 2011.

2) Education for Democratic Citizenship

EDC is perceived as an important issue covered by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU).

The churches are present at the grass roots of society. Therefore they have a lot of first hand information about the actual state of civil society.

The **Council of Europe** runs a programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) Learning and living democracy for all (2006-2009) constituted the third phase of the project. It includes a broad range of activities on education for democratic citizenship and human rights (EDC/HRE). In this programme citizenship education is inclusive of human rights education, civic education, peace education, global education and intercultural education. We need also to be aware of the work of the European Wergeland Centre, an initiative that was realised in cooperation with the CoE.

The **European Union** runs the Europe for citizens' programme providing the Union with instruments to promote active European citizenship. This involves a regular dialogue between the Commission and approximately 50 key European organisations actively involved in the Europe for Citizens programme.

In this frame can also be seen the newly developed tool of a European citizens' initiative (ECI). The ECI is a part of the Lisbon strategy.

Furthermore the EU is promoting key competences for lifelong learning, a strategy to foster citizenship learning throughout life in the formal, informal and non-formal learning sector.

What is the contribution of churches through their own experience of participatory and democratic processes within their structures?

What is their engagement with the democratic process?

How can they broaden awareness of citizenship and democracy at the grass roots?

Therefore the churches have a place at the table in making their specific contribution to this work.

Aims of the CSC strategy:

- To raise awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship within the churches
- To develop further cooperation with the Council of Europe and the European Union
- To share examples of good practice for EDC within churches and to provide a platform to support initiatives

Steps:

- Part of our strategy is to organise a conference with the churches as the first step (information and discussion). This might be organised in collaboration with member churches.
- As one of the first steps, online resources and materials on EDC will be made available on the CEC website.
- At a further stage, a cooperated conference with the Council of Europe as major stakeholder (engaging with the institutions) is planned.

3) Follow up and method

A working group will be established in order to work on ET 2020 and EDC for the implementation of the strategy.