



★ NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

European Workshop  
“City and Diversity - Challenges for Citizenship Education”  
24-26 June 2010 in Barcelona, Spain

## Welcome Address

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the NECE workshop concerning “City and Diversity – Challenges for Citizenship Education“, which is conducted in co-operation with the Bertelsmann Foundation.

This workshop is held to prepare the NECE Conference in September, to give us thought-provoking impulses and to gain further scientific knowledge.

I am very glad to see that you have found your way to the CosmoCaixa Barcelona in order to exchange experiences with one another, to discuss the diverse developments in the urban habitat and its challenges for citizenship education. We will also try to find some new, innovative ways to handle all those multilayered topics, that are on today’s and the next two days’ agenda.

This century is the century of the cities. According to UN estimates almost 50% of the world population lives in cities. It becomes already quite clear, that there is “a trend back into the city” and it appears, that – according to a prognosis of the UN – by the year 2030 the number will have increased to almost 61%. Consequently, there will be approximately five billion humans living in cities by then!

Cities are our places for the future: They are the carriers of cultural, political and economic development.

In the course of immigration into the cities, habitats have developed, in which ethnic and social communities with a wide range of cultural diversity live next to each other and together with one another. Thereby “diversity” has developed, which cannot be connected to the origin of the people that live in those communities, but to the variety of the numerous environments and lifestyles that – by themselves – have evolved.

Between individualized drafts of life and collective ways of living exist reciprocal effects that are leading to increasing inequality and conflicts of self-assertion.

It is obvious that these developments have tremendous potential for conflicts of all kinds. New types of pooling and newly established processes of urban identification can constitute valves, thereby using the dynamics of the urban cultural area for the profit of everybody in those public areas.

Thus citizens create new ideas of living together, new forms of locality and co-operation, and of economic relations. These reach from the informal sector, over organized enterprises up to the emergence of new subcultures.



Also the forms of political participation and political intervention have changed and continue to develop.

In European cities an unstoppable trend combining the increase of mobilization abilities with cultural styles can be recognized. The implementation of guerrilla gardening, street universities, flash mobs, internet-campaigns or smart mobs, just to give some examples for such phenomena booming lately foster this trend.

Citizenship education nowadays is confronted with the need to deal with participation and diversity in the cities and – keeping those in mind – to adopt a clear position.

We are facing a number of questions: How can civic education use the diversity in the cities for its own purposes? Can these new phenomena be regarded – also in a sense of political education – as connectable forms of participation and become a generator for new conceptions of measures?

Or should civic education ignore these cultural forms of expression and continue to focus on regaining people for classical forms of participation?

One might see all those things quite different. But finally all these facts form the background for an increasingly important field of studies that need to be analysed, so that we can react appropriately with new measures of political education.

It is a particular pleasure for me that we are coming together here, with the aim to approach all these questions today and during the next days.

I consider Barcelona, and I am sure that you will agree, a very suitable place for our meeting. We are in a city, where the regional government has a ministry for citizens' participation that acts in order to mobilise the population for the city and to make citizens active subjects in the process of city development.

In the context of this workshop, according to the written programme, there will be short introductions into the topics prior to the discussions. I am sure that we are facing some very interesting and enriching days.

I am also very happy to see that we may welcome experts from a wide range of different disciplines (city planners, architects and economists), which – until now – have played a more or less subordinated role at least for citizenship education.

So I am convinced that this workshop with all the lectures, sessions and discussions will be an extraordinary enrichment for our work in civic education.

I would like to thank our partners from the Fundación Bertelsmann and all the other co-operation partners, who have worked together with us in order to conduct this NECE workshop here in Barcelona.

Thank you for your attention!