NETWORKING **E**UROPEAN **C**ITIZENSHIP **E**DUCATION

Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies
Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts

Report and Conclusions: Perspectives for 2008

Christoph Müller-Hofstede,
German Federal Agency for Civic Education, Bonn

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www.bpb.de/nece

Participants and Cooperating Partners

Around 200 young academics, students and representatives from schools, educational institutions and NGOs took part in the two-day conference in Lisbon. With participants from 29 different countries, including many multipliers from East and Southeast Europe, the event also had a broad international base.

This third major European conference taking place within the NECE framework (after Santiago de Compostela (2004) and Berlin (2005)) once again brought the German Federal Agency for Civic Education together with old friends and new cooperating partners for a single purpose. We would particularly like to thank:

- the Goethe Institute Lisbon, for providing indispensable logistical and academic support, and helping to open many doors in the Portuguese capital.
- the German "Remembrance, Responsibility, and the Future" Foundation (http://www.stiftung-evz.de) for supporting the organisers by inviting young experts from East and Southeast Europe to attend the conference, and providing financial aid when necessary.
- the Portuguese Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, for supporting the conference both in financial terms and with expertise in the fields of migration and integration.
- the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, which has been involved with the NECE project since 2004, and worked hard to help make the conference a reality.

Other partners and supporting institutions that provided invaluable assistance include the Institut International des Relations Internationales (Paris), the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, (Vienna), the Center for Citizenship Education (Warsaw), and the University of Lisbon's Institute for Social Sciences.

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Goals and Crucial Questions

The primary goals of the Lisbon conference were to summarise the conflicts and crises surrounding the politics of integration and migration in the EU's numerous member countries, and to draw conclusions that would be useful in citizenship education theory and practice. Have these conflicts had an impact on European educators and citizenship education professionals? If so, what exact impact did they have, and what are or should be the necessary conclusions for the field?

The crucial questions posed in Lisbon focused on both these three key areas and the following theses.

A Change of Paradigm – a Precondition for New Paths in Citizenship Education?

'Multiculturalism', which is defined as intellectual, political and social trends that emphasise and encourage difference over common political values, is clearly in crisis. Societies in Europe have recently been viewed as 'sleepwalking into segregation' or 'living apart together'.

Is a 'change of paradigm' therefore a necessary precondition for a 'rethinking' of citizenship education in Europe? Should key issues in European societies today focus instead on the role of immigrants as citizens – irrespective of origin, skin colour or religion?

Consequences for Citizenship Education

If integrating immigrants into a 'society of citizens' requires efforts from both immigrants and their host societies, what implications does that have for the role of citizenship education in this process? In European societies, how can educators and citizenship education experts facilitate an immigrant's feeling of identification with the country he or she lives in? With its language, its cultures and its laws? How can and should concepts of citizenship and citizenship education be adapted to meet these new challenges?

Europe as a New Immigrant Continent

1. How can we reconcile national integration requirements and feelings of identification with the European Union? What role should Europe, European history and European values play in a new curriculum for citizenship education that is geared to the needs of an immigrant society?

2. How can we strike a new balance between migration and integration in Europe? How can we achieve a coherent policy that combines successful integration of immigrants as future citizens of Europe with the necessary public support for a controlled and coherent immigration policy?

Progress and Conclusions: Assessment

It is no easy task to summarise the convention's dense program, plenary events, six workshops and 'laboratories', and range of cultural events. Most of the participants and speakers agreed that the conference succeeded in addressing the most important questions and trends surrounding the European debate on immigration and integration, as well as other closely related topics (relationship to religion, role of the nation). Key speeches from contributors hailing from Germany, the Netherlands, Britain and the US highlighted the diverse controversies and perspectives that have been dictating the course of the debate:

1. The international aspect of the conference contributed to the development of a 'European public'; the participation of a large number young people from East and Southeast Europe was particularly encouraging.

2. A 'new realism', especially a critical evaluation of conventional multiculturalism theory and the cultural difference paradigm (Kenan Malik, Paul Scheffer) shaped both contributions and the overall debate. Stefan Auer (Melbourne) provided several provocative theses at one of the laboratories, which spontaneously developed into a debate on the idea of the necessity of a *Leitkultur*, or defining culture. No consensus was reached by the group, but participants did

seem to agree that the question of how we can 'create a common ground in an epoch of increasing diversity' was central to the debate.

3. Through the lecture given by Prof. Jose Casanova (New York), the conference also produced a range of new central questions about the role of religion and the future of secularism in Europe. Does the anti-religious equation inspired by the Enlightenment – that repressing 'the religious' is equivalent to progress and modernisation – continue to hold true? Could Europe learn from the American model of secularism, which allows religions to compete for 'customers' without any government interference or involvement? What contributions can 'Islam' and Muslim citizens make to the development of European civil society? The fierce controversy that flared up in the 'Religious Identities' plenum and workshop, not only between participants but also between speakers, revealed that Casanova's comments struck close to the bone.

4. Along with the '*Leitkultur* question', the contributions from Stefan Auer in particular focused on the question of the relationship between national and supra-national identity (Europe). What can and should a transnational concept of 'European citizenship' mean, in an age where national identity and nationalism are clearly unfolding in new ways on a European stage? Can a new understanding of nation and nationalism, compatible with democratic principles, bring us any further? Questions like these remain unanswered, and have to be resolved.

Journalist Jörg Lau from the German weekly *Die Zeit* provides an excellent overview of the course of the debates and the conference's most important contributing lectures in this report.
http://www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/VUOW2G
His article also contains an array of critical remarks on the format chosen for the plenary debates and workshops that we are discussing here.
If you'd like another assessment, then take a look at Susanne Schwalgin from the
Georg Eckert Institute's comments (only in German):
http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=1588

Suggestions for improvement
In his evaluation report to the Federal Agency for Civic Education, Peter Henckenborg (Professor for the Didactics of Civic Education, University of Marburg) praised the conference's international and professional scope. However, he also criticised the fact that a range of pedagogical and didactic aspects were barely touched on, among them:

- The self-image and practice of citizenship education in individual European countries;
- The public's image of various individual approaches to citizenship education
- Practical citizenship education approaches in daily interactions with migrants

Prof. Henckenborg was also disappointed that the question of a change of paradigm had little impact in the workshops, and said it was questionable whether or not the topic had filtered down to the pedagogical level of citizenship education. He concluded that a designated international pedagogical-didactic lecture on the conference's central topic would have helped round out the political science and sociological contributions.

Last but not least, he mentioned that although a large number of practical approaches were presented in the workshops, there were too few intra-European comparisons, and too little debate of the conference's key questions.

Several of Prof. Henckenborg's points match up with critique garnered from the more than 50 evaluation questionnaires that were filled out and turned in by participants. Although nearly everyone gave content aspects, general atmosphere, and organisational aspects a positive grade, participants were much more critical when it came to the arrangement of the workshops, the amount of time allotted for plenary debate, and especially the 'open arrangement' of the 'laboratories' that took place on Saturday. We agree with assessments that the extensive range of topics, as well as the conceptual and practical approaches, need to be more tightly bundled in a single package, and that they have to be better tailored to meet the most common challenges in the field. On the other hand, it is also important to remember that formats and conceptual approaches to citizenship education in the now 27 (and counting)

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member states are so diverse that it has become nearly impossible to elect a coherent panel for a large conference that is simultaneously representative. We will certainly pay attention to requests that keynote speakers also be more involved in discussions taking place in the workshops between practicing professionals, and also seek to address central controversies in open questions in smaller forums. Preliminary concept groundwork and consulting will focus much more strongly on this point. We will also look for ways to make direct participation easier than it has been up until now for those taking part, for example with 'open space' formats. Finally, we will also try to take to heart the remarks made by Marino Ostini, who has worked for many years at the European Council's 'Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights' project (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_EN.asp?). He said he would appreciate it if the work already accomplished by the Council of Europe was more often taken into account, particularly the work it has accomplished in nations outside the EU.

Perspectives for 2008
We are planning to continue the NECE conference series in 2008, and hope to once again cooperate on a major scale with other education institutes and foundations to make them a reality. Next year the conference will take place in Sofia, the capital of new EU member Bulgaria. Several of the questions discussed in Lisbon, in particular those dealing with the political and social debate in East and Southeast Europe, will be pursued there. The current question of common European values and the search for a European 'defining culture' will also be a question that binds East and West European viewpoints more tightly together. Current populist and nationalist tendencies in several of the EU's new member states, as well as attempts to define national histories in an essentialist or political fashion, are provoking new controversy, and stand in direct opposition to the idea of a transnational or European citizenship and to citizenship education in general. It's a huge challenge for those who work in the field. The NECE conference in Sofia is slated to take place in September/October of 2008. For more information, please visit www.bpb.de/nece