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**Minutes of the Weilburg Conference**

**Prof. Dr. Klaus Schleicher: *Europe and its education***

European history lasts longer than the existing national states and has been for a long time less war-minded than during the last centuries. Unfortunately school has had only very little influence on martial ideas and for a long time national education reduced European cooperation.

It were Europeans who discovered the world, who colonialized and who industrialized it , and so, in spite of negative side effects, in the end Europe could export its ideas and its products very successfully. But today it's not enough to have a common symbol ( a flag) for promoting the advantages of Europe. There is a tendency among young people to think that democracy and Europe are not so important, there is even a growing interest in national thinking. This should be alarming for education. Research (of the University of Hamburg) proves that, the more people have got a good and solid education the more they see and understand the advantages of a European Union.

Unfortunately knowledge and attitudes are learnt mostly by ways of informal education (70% versus 30% by formal ways of education.) That means that we must try to educate pupils and students via other canals than only by intellectual learning.

A person is pushed to readiness for change

1. by personal basic needs (hunger, thirst)
  2. by informal education at home
  3. by every days' needs
  4. by educational institutions
  5. by educational politics
- (and some other items)

The most important decisions of our life (choice of a profession, choice of a partner, education of our children) are orientated to non formal education. We were never taught this at school or at university.

It's the same for Europe: the routes of trade and the routes of pilgrims (Santiago de Compostella) have spread the culture and have led to the romanization of Europe. Then it was the roman laws, later the invention of printing books and still later newspapers. This created a published public opinion, which didn't exist before in any other region of the world.

Artists were no national artists but they produced for different royal or ducal families all over Europe. The European identity is not static and eternal, we have to acquaint it always again and again. Education in school should emphasise more the history of awareness and less the history of royal families, national holidays or national heroes. Teaching history is too often the teaching of fairy tales (e.g. the assault of the Bastille was not done in order to give freedom to thousands of political prisoners, there were only 5 or 6 in it, but there were a lot of arms in it to be used for revolution). It's better (especially in professional schools) to contrast images and national interests with reality : the German Bank is mostly English, Danish Furniture is mostly Asian, German shoes are mostly Brasilian, Swiss cheese is mostly French or German etc.. UNO research says that Germany needs 1 million immigrants to assure the standard of living of today.

**Valerio Bonvini, Representation of the EU-Commission in Germany : “Brussels” looks for discussion with young people**

Mr. Bonvini reports about a project of the European Commission that aims at more and direct contact with young people. “Brussels” –that means the European Union and its institutions- is often felt as an abstract construction far away from its citizens. “Eurocrats” seem to be persons from another star. In order to change this opinion the European Commission wants to get in contact with youngsters and multipliers who work with them. An employee of the European Commission discusses with them all kinds of questions about the EU. The employee comes to the schools or receives groups of pupils in the German Office in Berlin.

Subjects are the EU and its institutions, the organisation and role of the European Commission, job and career – working in European institutions, questions about the integration of Turkey, the treaty of the European Constitution: past, present and future, the European money, EU critical points, hints for teachers. Special themes can be agreed on demand. The information is not only about the positive sides, critical points are dealt with in an open discussion. Youngsters are given the web-sites and e-mail addresses of Members of the European Parliament in order to ask them what they will do for them when they will vote during the next elections.

**Reports of the working groups:**

**Prof. Dr. Peter J. Weber: *Multilingualism***

Every day we discover new findings about multilingualism. It's more important to be able to communicate than to be able to speak without any mistake. What will we do with pupils coming from migrants' background and who have to learn German now? (There was a migrants' congress in Rüsselsheim organized by OPEL which couldn't give a clear answer.)

It's urgent to find new ways of education because these pupils are often not integrated in Germany and they are not accepted in Turkey neither.

**Prof. Dr. Susanne Popp / Prof. Dr. Bärbel Kuhn: *European Awareness***

Is there a sense in teaching a model of European identity? What is it? Does it exist? The influence of Arab and Persian culture in European history is often avoided. Tolerance is not a European invention (early Islamic cultures were rather tolerant of Christian churches).

European identity should not mean the opposite of national identity.

**Christoph Kodron: *Promotion of Europe by European educational projects***

Personal contacts in projects are very important though the effects in different areas are different, too. (e.g. the visit of a group of German pupils in a Romanian village is a subject of discussion for almost all inhabitants while the visit of a group of Polish pupils in a big and anonymous city like Frankfurt might not be noticed by many people. It's a pity that sport projects are much better financed than normal school projects. It was criticised that in spite of the big number of Slavonic speaking people in Europe the Slavonic languages are not taught very often in Germany.

**LSAD Werner Röhrig: *Presenting a project: “Germany, a member of the EU”***

The project was presented on poster boards in the hall of the conference venue. The posters (collages) had been produced by pupils in cooperation with professional experts. The posters were grouped around six items: 1 Country and people, 2 Datas, facts and developments, 3 A country doesn't live alone, 4 Culture doesn't know

borders, 5 The cultural heritage, 6 On the way to the common house of Europe. The exhibition was combined with a questionnaire for visitors (14 to 19 years old) in order to make them look and think in a more intense way, orientated to museums' pedagogics.

The exhibition can be lent out to schools and institutions in Germany and other European countries. Write to [w.roehrig@wlb.ssa.hessen.de](mailto:w.roehrig@wlb.ssa.hessen.de) (School Inspectorate of Weilburg/Hessen).