

Project description of the Schools for Europe Community College (SECC)/ ”Inspiration from Denmark to Denmark”

By the ACC International programme office

Summary

The ACC International programme office is going to organize the *Schools for Europe Community College* in order to (1) create a possible wording of a future catalogue of competences (a constitution) for the EU on matters of education, (2) draft a possible Act on Community Colleges as a follow up to the wording of the constitution, (3) systematically kick-start the European discussion on an eventually decentralized European policy of Education and (4) in this endeavor focus particularly on the Danish public, since it bears latently a heritage to be exploited for the common best of Europeans. 20 young European skilled writers inspired from the Danish Folk High School format are going to take part in this 6-days event from 27th of December to January 2nd, 2002

Background

We consider it a challenge, that EU states formally but the European countries in general, are caught in deadlock between the authority of the states on educational-institutional matters and at the same time an urgent need for forums for common debates and discussions on a public and non-professional level. We would like to make the Danish folk high school format and legislation into a source of inspiration, when gathering in December 2001 to write a proposal for a future wording of a common European constitution. We believe strongly in the model of the Danish/Nordic folk high schools, because it enables new educational structures to be created, which avoid the danger of centralization and homogenization and at the same time is born with the concept of participation. The idea could also be seen in the context of elaborating the concept of (active European) citizenship.

The members of the ACC are mostly previous folk high school students from international courses at Danish folk high schools. The ACC has been created within very short time and has an impressive history already. We have proved, that working on an inter-European level, across state- linguistic – cultural and other borders, is possible, when there is a common aim.

We are working very much by the help of the Internet. Working group meetings, board-meetings, info-meetings etc. are usually held at the so-called “Peoplesite” www.people.hojoster.dk The ideology and experience of the members of the ACC is though, that the cooperation would never have existed without the strong bonds created during the boarding school stay at folk high schools.

The basic question of the ACC-members is: why shouldn't all Europeans have the same chance we had?

The aim of the SECC and the issue is, in accordance with the general aims of the ACC, to stimulate a common European debate on questions and political problems shared by the Europeans.

The objects of the Schools for Europe Community College (SECC)

The SECC aims at (1) creating a possible wording of a future catalogue of competences (a constitution) for the EU on matters of education, (2) drafting a possible Act on Community Colleges as a follow up to the wording of the constitution, (3) systematically kick-starting the European discussion on an eventually decentralized European policy of Education and (4) in this endeavor to focus particularly on the Danish public.

In general the ACC is interested in stimulating a common European debate on issues common for the Europeans. The current political context of the EU and Europe in general is going to result in the discussion of a European common educational policy. It is the ambition of the ACC to stimulate and to begin this discussion through 2001. In principle we have Europe as our field, but in reality it would make strategically good sense to put special emphasis on the place, where the inspiration came from, because there is an extra chance that the Danish public will like the idea or at least take the discussion.

During the SECC we are going to translate articles, which do already exist, into other European languages and to produce new articles presenting the idea. We are going to address the Danish medias especially for upon mentioned reasons. The endeavors should be seen in the context of the discussions leading to the Inter Governmental Conference 2004, which probably will mean a catalogue on competencies for EU.

We would also like it to be seen in the context of the Danish chairmanship in 2002.

By organizing the SECC we hope to be part of a general tendency of promoting the idea of letting the citizens take initiatives by themselves. In short, we would like to be a part of developing the civil society not only as distributed in states but also in Europe in general, even though we are representing only a small piece of a large context.

This is also the reason why the EU-enlargement has taken place already in the ideological frame of the ACC. We consider it reasonable, that people who are influenced by political decisions taken, should also be present and heard, when the decisions are taken. The politics of the EU is influencing the non-EU-countries even more than influencing EU-countries, because of the general political balance of power. That is why we are going to invite also participants from non-EU-countries.

The utmost consequence of working for dialogue between the different identities of Europe in general and of stimulating contacts in particular would hopefully be a more peaceful 21st century compared with the catastrophes Europe has created for itself in the previous century.

Concerning the underlying debate on a philosophical level in these days Europe on an eventual common European ethics and on common sources of values, our ideology is clear cut: dialogue is the last source of rationality we have, since every other suggestion has lost credibility in the 20th century's catastrophes.

Target group.

It is crucial for us to find young representatives of many European identities to constitute the SECC. There should be no dominating groups and we want the group an International one. We are though aware, that in order to work with Danish medias, there is going to be some more Danish citizens present. The staff is probably going to consist of people between 20-30 years of age.

We have very skilled European students in our network of contacts. The editorial staff members of the SECC will be selected in close cooperation with the local members of the ACC.

To participate English must be understood and spoken.

We aim to receive 20 persons of whom most should be members of NGO's throughout Europe. The SECC participants are going to be invited by the ACC international programme office.

Timetable.

The SECC is going to last for 6 days and will take place from December 27th 2001 to January 2nd 2002. A media event will follow shortly after the SECC with the emphasis especially on Danish medias.

Organizational elements.

John Petersen (DK) is going to be the responsible coordinator of the SECC.

The SECC rent the facilities including the necessary Information- and Communication Technology at Højskolen Østersøen, Denmark during the Christmas holidays for the event.

The course language will be English, even though the communication out of the house is going to be mainly Danish.

Financing.

The project is going to be co-financed by the Højskolen Østersøen (facilities) and the ACC.

Program:

Please confer the enclosed draft programme.

Co-operational partners

The programme is carried through on ACC initiative. The ACC is a European organization. The secretariat of the ACC is situated at the Højskolen Østersøen in Aabenraa, Denmark. The ACC is cooperating closely with the Højskolen Østersøen. The recruitment of the editorial staff will be carried out in close co-

operation with the local branches of the ACC. We have representatives in more than 25 European countries.

Århus (Denmark), January 2001

John Petersen (chairperson) of the ACC