

Statement of the chairperson at the first general assembly of the ACC, August 15th, 2000

Prehistory

What we have done is to found a European organization working for the development of an enlightened European debate. We consider a system of community colleges on a common European level to be an outstanding way of promoting this objective. Now, what is the history of this idea?

I think the overall history or background is, that it is necessary to discuss common issues among common people. Our association is only a brick in a huge puzzle, where more and more people will realize that common debate and knowledge of each other in a still more integrated Europe is a simple necessity. This is a necessity, if the Europeans want to develop, what Zygmunt Bauman, a sociologist from Poland, called “the art of living together”.

So, we are not outstanding, when realizing this necessity.

If you take it more narrow, I think the history of the ACC is linked up with the feeling, that developing the “art of living together” was exactly what took place at the so-called minority courses in 1997 and 1998 (and also in 1999 and 2000) –taking place at the Højskolen Østersøen.

If asking a participant in one of these courses after taking place, I think none of us/them would understand, why Europe has been the most violent continent in world history.

This made more participants ask, how they could set up institutions like it in their own countries. We call the institutions “Community College’s”.

Among them Laszlo, David some more..

Elly Andersen (also Højskolen Østersøen) and I figured then, it would be an idea to keep this network, which was established during the two courses and in future to link future participants in these minority- and similar courses as well. We wanted to make sense out of this network on this continent.

So, if we are outstanding in our idea, it is by linking a European network of people inspired and experienced with the boarding school format to the European integration process. The timing makes us special.

What happened before August 1999 was then, that we tried to find out, if there was interest in the founding of such an organization. There was really a lot, and we then asked people to sign up for membership. The sign up process was not that enthusiastic –only half of the half signed up before deadline. This made us decide, that we had to cancel the idea. I was at the minority-course in 1999, invited by Jesper Nielsen (the co-ordinator) to present the idea for the new group, but I actually already gave it up, when I had a very angry message from Mjellma in Macedonia. Some people can shout by e-mail, and

Mjellma was kind of shouting, that there was absolutely no way she would ever forgive, if we did not continue.

After the Minority course 1999, where there was also a huge interest in the project, we decided to establish the association. We invited then to the Statutory General Assembly at the 11/8 last years, and we made sure in beforehand, that there were candidates for all the positions in the board.

Since we insist on being a European organisation, and since we also would like to present ourselves as such, it is more than pure luck, that the board was put together by not only qualified persons, but also persons representing both north, south, east, west etc. and the board consists now of Siebren de Boer (Utrecht), Mjellma Mehmeti (Skopje), Linda Jakobsone (Riga), Dani Laszlo (Cluj-Koloszvar), Jesper Nielsen (Aabenraa), Conchi Gallego (Spain) and me + Eva Valvo and Josephine Listerby from Pisa and Mariehamn as substitutes.

The association was founded at a meeting on the Internet. It was on the 11/8 and if someone remembers, it was the day of the solar eclipse.

I think, that it was just when the ACC was founded that the light returned.

What happened during the year

Formalities: meetings and establishing

September 2nd: First board meeting of the ACC, Peoplesite

October 11th: Second board meeting of the ACC, Peoplesite.

November 19th - 21st: Third board-meeting of the ACC, meeting in Ohrid, Macedonia.

Same occasion: working meeting, preparing the Campaigning for Community

Colleges

December 28th, ACC-Latvia founded

January 25th and February 11th, Alliance between the IT-folkehøjskolen Snoghøj and the ACC. Unfortunately cancelled recently for unclear reasons.

February 12th, boardmeeting Budapest

Same occasion: working meeting, preparing the Campaigning for Community

Colleges

Same occasion: preparing the Transylvania Community College

March 7th: Informal board meeting at the Peoplesite

March 14th: Informal board meeting at the Peoplesite

May 10th: Board-meeting at the Peoplesite (www.people.hojoster.dk)

May 30th – 5th June: Meeting between president of the ACC Tautskolas Eiropai, Ivo Klotins, and John

July 27th: Boardmeeting, Aabenraa

Events: conferences, exchanges, community colleges

“Choice for the future”

November 19th -21st: Board of the ACC took part in the conference: “Choice for the future” in Ohrid, Macedonia. The conference was arranged by the “Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women”. Mjellma Mehmeti presented the idea of arranging international community college courses on women’s rights issues in Macedonia. The board-members carried through workshops on the topics: *Conflict transformation and Peacebuilding, Media and minorities and Adult education in the current historical context*.

“Vision for Europe and European Democracy. Intercultural dialogue within non-formal adult education”

After a lot of preparatory meetings:
The conference "Visions for Europe and European Democracy. Intercultural dialogue within non-formal adult education." was carried through from **26th-28th of July** at the Højskolen Østersøen, Aabenraa. It was a great success.

Speeches and papers by Marianne Horsdal, Margrethe Vestager (Minister of Education, Denmark), Conchi Gallego (ACC), Bertel Haarder (MEP), Ole Veje (Chairman of FFD, Danish folk high school association), Sigi Gruber (Secretary General, EAEA), Caroline Loup (EU-commission), Anne Marie Faradji (Council of Europe), Knud-Erik Therkelsen (Højskolen Østersøen), Thomas Whitfield and Peter Kovacs made the conference an interesting and exceptional contribution to the overall European debate of shaping future mechanisms, politics and institutions of non-formal adult education. Speeches and papers will be made available within short time.

Conchis speech is already uploaded to

<http://www.acc.eu.org/A%20vision%20for%20Europe.htm>

After the workshops lead by the ACC and the joint debate on Friday July 28th, lead by Kim Hjerrild (Secretary General of the FFD, Danish folk high school association), the ACC was asked to formulate the conclusion of the conference. The conclusion can be found at the address: www.acc.eu.org/Conclusion.htm and at the archives section of the

www.acc.eu.org in Danish, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Hungarian.

More languages will follow.

Folk high school associations from more countries were present, and we are looking forward to co-operate with these new partners in the time to come.

Thank you for co-operating on the project to Højskolen Østersøen and the FFD (Danish folk high school association) and especially to Jesper Nielsen, co-operator on the project and ACC-board-member.

“Exchange programme for Latvian and Lithuanian students”

May 30th – June 5th: John Petersen in Lithuania (Siauliai) and Latvia (Rite/Aknieste), interviewing students for the exchange programme

“Change here for the networking society”. Visiting together with Sandra Salmina (ACC) and Inese Ardone (ACC) the Rite Tautas Augstskola to prepare future cooperation.

Beginning their exchange on August 23rd at the IT-folkehøjskolen Snoghøj, Denmark.

Built in second step project in it.

The ACC International programme office

Visits paid by Jesper Nielsen, Elly Andersen, the accountant Lene Albrechtsen, Jette Nielsen, Søren Juhl, Mjellma Mehmeti (more times even), Linda Jakobson (more times), Barna and Agota

May 12th - 14th: Linda Jakobson visiting the ACC International programme office, preparing the Campaigning for Community Colleges / Working Camp at Rite

June 13th – 14th: Jette Nielsen visiting the ACC International programme office, Planning 2002 programme

July 23rd-30th: Mjellma Mehmeti in office, planning the workshops of the conference.

July 29th -Aug 13th: Barna Kovacs and Agota Illyes in office, working and fundraising for the Transylvania community college, 2001.

ACC International programme office is searching for a new address.

The old leader, Bøje Østerlund, was clearly the possibilities in it. The new one is busy finding its reason of being. There was no reason given for the dismissal.

I was fired. The board of the IT-school probably doesn't know about the alliance being independent of my person. I did not discuss it further, because I think it's the best for the office to leave this school, since a revolt must come up anyway.

More possibilities:

Bruxelles,

Other schools,

Rite,

Terschellingen/Skylge

The website

January 7th, The website www.acc.eu.org was uploaded for the first time Laszlo has the honour together with Markus Brandt delivering free hosting.

Others

October 1st - 6th: Mjellma Mehmeti gave information about the ACC at the State of the World Forum- summit in San Fransisco, USA.

October 20th: John Petersen:”Europa, demokrati og mindretalsbefolkninger”, speech at the Danebod Højskole, Denmark, including information about ideas of the ACC

October 27th: John Petersen:”Europa og Demokratiet”, speech at the Vestbirk Højskole, Denmark, including information about ideas of the ACC

October 28th: Chat-information-summit for new members, Peoplesite.
October 29th: Jesper Nielsen informed about the ACC at a conference for international networkers dealing with exchanges of young people between schools in Europe, Sydvestfyns Efterskole, Denmark.
November 11th: John Petersen introducing the ACC to the leader of the IUC (International Understanding and Cooperation), Ingolf Knudsen, Svendborg, Denmark
November 14th: John Petersen introducing the ACC to international students at the Ubberup Højskole, Denmark
February 8th: John Petersen introducing the ACC to international students at the IT-Folkehøjskolen Snoghøj, Denmark
April 3rd: John Petersen introducing the ideas of the ACC to the Social Liberal Party in Denmark (Radikale Venstre).
May 3rd: Mjellma Mehmeti introducing the ACC to new students at the IT-folkehøjskolen Snoghøj
July 20th: Linda in Passau meeting the staff of the Das Haus-La Maison-The House, preparing the Final Editorial Conference to take place in November.
August 6th- 8th: John representing the ACC at the FHS summercamp in Pärnu, Estonia.
August 10th: Søren Juhl visiting the ACC International programme office, preparing future cooperation, board not introduced to this idea yet, so lets wait.

Achievement 11/8 1999 – 15/8 2000

“a)-tasks” (for the law on European comm. coll.)

Articles about the idea have been printed in Danish and German newspapers, but not enough. I hope members will be more active by time. This is related to the c-task as well. Since this is very long term: think of it also as a way of provoking a debate. All the introductions and meetings referred to present the idea, of course. The conference at Østersøen and the conclusion especially The conference at The Makpetrol Hotel.

“b)-tasks” (proving by practise)

What we are parts of right now is trying to prove in practice This is the first real course we have made. Doesn't live up to ideals, because its only a week, but its sure better than nothing, and I hope you agree.

“c)-tasks” (lobbying)

I am trying to “sell” the idea of establishing common European institutions to the Danish central right party, Det Radikale Venstre. More letters to the Danish Minister of Education have been written. One of them was meant to provoke permanent subsidies to the minority courses at Højskolen Østersøen. It may have helped, because these courses are now supported by law, even though they are for non-taxpayers (people from abroad). The Danish minister of Education at least know a lot about who we are, since she was also present at the conference on Højskolen Østersøen.

Conchi has worked for us in Bruxelles and Strasbourg at different locations, and still more information coming from these places witnesses, that we are known in these institutions as well.

“d)-tasks” (debating network)

Personal benefits.

The very thing of having our European network is a huge advantage in a PR-perspective, so this should be seen also as a mean, and it works!

Debating network born by the Internet especially

Future perspectives

The ACC International programme office

Future programmes

Transylvania Community College 2001

European Charter Community College, 2001

Programmes in spe

Eva

Jette

Kerttu

Lithuania (Alicija)

Members

Today 87 ! Maybe we will reach a hundred this week!

Since it's the first time: The way we want to work

The Transylvania Committee (advantage of being a common European org., decentrally organized, committee set up (Laszlo, Agota and Barna). Help offered at the office, fundraising, project-description, budget etc.

Another way: The ACC Latvia. Same thing, but formally an organisation, branch...