

# Annual Report 2012/2013

## *A Year in the Life of the Association*

Over the past year the Association could further reinforce and improve communication and cooperation with its members. At the same time the Association's repute and external activities saw substantial growth owing to a host of new contacts and projects. As a result the voice of protestant schools and teachers' associations in Europe could be heard not only in churches throughout Europe but reached the protestant educational system worldwide. (Admittedly, this required a significantly greater effort on the part of the secretariat and the board members.)

In the year under review the **Board** convened at three regular meetings: on 14/15 February in Hannover, 13/14 June in Soesterberg and 27/28 September in Hannover. In addition the Board met for informal talks during other events. To save time and travel expenses the meeting in February was combined with a meeting of the Board of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS), the meeting in June with the meeting of the steering committee of the Coordinating Group for Religion in Education in Europe (CoGREE).

Besides the elected members Wim Kuiper, Gerhard Pfeiffer, Bertrand Knobel and Rita Révész ICCS President Peter Schreiner had been invited to attend, as has been tradition for some time. In view of the close cooperation between IV and ICCS this has proven extremely successful. Another guest attending meetings was Mrs Izabella Gaál, who had been appointed by the Hungarian Reformed Teachers' Association (ORTE) to take over from former board member Sándor Szécsi as liaison with the Board of the International Association ('IV').

We could rely on the **secretariat** in Hannover, run by Mrs Kerstin Wiechmann, to continue its excellent work. An allocation agreement between IV and EKD provided a firm basis for the secretarial work – as before at no charge to the Association. For a few weeks during the year under review a major project of the EKD's Education Department, in which the IV is involved (see below) raised the work load to extreme levels. However, an additional staff member helped ease that load.

**Membership** has changed only by the inclusion of the Association of Friends of the Pilgrim School at the AMV 2012. Although new contacts have been established with representatives of protestant schools in Ireland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Austria, none of them have yet applied for membership.

The IV's **finances** are solid thanks to the regular membership fees that come in. However, events organised by the Association alone or together with other organisations require outside financing or financing by contributions by participants. We can pay part of the travelling expenses and conference costs for participants from Central and Eastern Europe without having to fall back on the reserve earmarked for that purpose. There has been a significant increase in project-related funding by third parties, raised by the Association and distributed for specific projects (see below).

The joint newsletter with ICCS, which is published in three languages (German/English/French), has proven a successful medium for the **communication with members and correspondents**. Two issues came out during the year under review (December 2012 and June 2013). A special thank you to Peter Schreiner and the Comenius Institute for their efforts. Of key importance is our website, [www.int-v.org](http://www.int-v.org), which is constantly updated and not just contains a calendar of scheduled events but also reports on and documents past activities (frequently accompanied by photos, courtesy of Leo Janssen).

Where possible, the e-mail correspondence with members is supplemented by face-to-face meetings. Whenever they have the opportunity the board members take part in meetings of member committees to report on the work of the international association and intensify the cooperation. In the year under review such contacts were established with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Schulbünde (AGES)*, the *Arbeitskreis Evangelische Schule (AKES)* and the Protestant Association of Educators in Germany (AEED) and *Besturenraad (NL)*. Rita Révész and Gerhard Pfeiffer gave a workshop at the AEED congress on the subject 'Self-Understanding and the Task of Protestant Teachers Associations' (24 November 2012, Hannover). Gerhard Pfeiffer further attended the annual assembly of the Hungarian Reformed Teachers Association ORTE in Oradea (RO) from 13 to 15. September 2013, where he spoke out in favour of European cooperation.

## **Key Activities**

The central theme of the Association's responsibilities is Civil Democratic Education at European Level ('European Citizenship') from a Christian angle. The Association has opted for four different approaches:

1. The planned **network of teacher training institutes** is still in the planning phase. The contribution of the *Besturenraad* will be decisive. At the incentive of the director of a Swiss institute the *Besturenraad* wants to open a conference scheduled for 2014 to participants from other European countries.
2. In the series **meetings of teachers** from different European countries in the context of seminars/continuing education the conference entitled „**Dancing with difference in Europe – Chances for Christian-inspired education**” held from 2 to April 2013 was a huge success. Cooperation partner was again the *Landesakademie für Fortbildung und Personalentwicklung an Schulen* in Baden-Württemberg, which made the conference centre in Bad Wildbad available. The 34 attendees came from 10 different countries. We were happy to welcome many teachers from the federal state of Baden-Württemberg.
3. The **publication** with the title **Education for Democratic Citizenship in the Context of Europe. Material and Resources for Churches and Educators**, published by Peter Schreiner by order of ICCS, IV and the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches met with great interest. The printed edition is almost out of stock, but the title can still be downloaded from the IV website.
4. As part of the facilities on **offer for school leaders** the **study trip to England and Wales** in cooperation with ICCS was held for the second time. The seminar from 16 to 20 April 2013 called 'Schools with a Christian Religious Character and Citizenship' was attended by eight experts from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and Hungary.

School leaders can also attend all events organised in the context of all forms of cooperation (see below).

## **„500 Protestant Schools Worldwide Celebrate 500 Years of Reformation’**

As reported last year the IV has assumed a key role in this project initiated by the **Evangelical Church** in Germany (EKD). This project aims at realizing a worldwide network of Christian schools on reformation principles, and should result in an intensive exchange about identity and practice. An essential tool will be an on-line platform ([www.schools500reformation.net](http://www.schools500reformation.net)), which will be accessible to the general public from October 2013 onwards. An international steering committee headed by Birgit Sendler-

Koschel, the EKD's educational advisor, is working on coordinating the individual steps. The President and the Secretary of the IV are members of this steering committee. The Association makes its expertise and infrastructure available for certain actions of the project. According to a decision of the Board this will be done in a cost-neutral manner and not affect the Association's budget.

So far the project has pursued the following activities:

- Applying for a grant of the *Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst* (,EED')/ *Brot für die Welt* a) for the participation of overseas experts in the preparatory conference, b) for drawing up and publishing documentation on the Protestant school system in several African countries, c) for regional partnership meetings and d) for setting up an on-line forum and a database of Protestant schools. The application for a total of EUR 100,000 was honoured in January 2013. The funds are gradually assigned to a special cost centre, from which they are allocated. The steering committee, the EED and the education division of the EKD are responsible for implementing the measures. The funds are managed by the IV office in agreement with the secretary (following a board resolution).
- Sponsoring the International Preparatory Conference in Eisenach from 10 to 12 April 2013. The 30 attendees from four continents included seven appointees from IV. The costs were covered by the EKD and external funding requested through the IV (in addition to the EED grant a contribution was made by the EKD's *Evangelische Schulstiftung*).
- Co-financing of the project's secretariat, which will be accommodated by the Chair for Teacher Education at Bamberg University for three years, in the amount of EUR 84,000 max. These, too, are fixed and constant commitments only, predominantly by BfdW/EED-domestic support.

There are signs that this cooperation project has already significantly raised the IV's repute and the opportunities for cooperation with Protestant schools. There are also chances for partnerships outside Europe.

In the year under review this was illustrated by, among other things, an invitation to the **Séminaire sur l'enseignement protestant**. This seminar was organised by Cevaa/Communauté des églises en mission and Defap/Service protestant de mission for churches in French-speaking areas and took place in Paris from 15 to 20 April 2013. At the organisers' request the IV's secretary spoke about the responsibilities and identity of Protestant schools in Europe, using selected examples.

### **Other Forms of Cooperation**

As before the cooperation with the **Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen (KEK)** is especially important to the IV. KEK, for its part, would do well to continue relying on the expertise and qualifications of the organisations with which it is associated. This position was stressed by the IV Secretary when meeting with other NGO's at the plenary assembly of KEK in Budapest from 3 to 8 July 2013. Following an animated debate the meeting decided to award associate members (including IV) the status of an 'organisation in partnership'. This status comes with the right to attend the plenary sessions and a membership fee waiver. Further rights and obligations should be discussed with the management boards.

The **Church and Society Commission (,CSC')** of KEK will go on for a transitional period. The IV Secretary took part in the Committee's plenary assembly 2013 (18-20 April, Brussels). The theme of the assembly was 'Europe and Citizenship', and focused on the

principles and possible actions for civic engagement from the church's perspective.

The Workgroup on Education in which Peter Schreiner (ICCS) represents our association also continued its work. Its achievements included organising a workshop about the EU's educational programmes and how the churches use those programmes.

At the initiative of the Church and Society Commission and the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy a training course will be organized in Palermo from 30 October to 1 November 2013 on the 'Churches Voice on Human Rights'. As human rights education is also a core issue of Christian education efforts, principal Michael Otte (Neuendettelsau, Germany) has been chosen by the Board to take part in the seminar and develop practical proposals for Protestant schools.

Human rights were also the central issue of the **XI. Internationale Nürnberger Forum**, which from 24 to 26 September 2013 expanded on 'Human Rights and Inter-Religious Education' from a legal, theological and pedagogical perspective. The Secretary took this opportunity to highlight the contribution of Christian schools in Europe.

The **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (GEKE)** has launched its project 'forum education Europe'. From 2014 onwards annual meetings at the Evangelische Akademie Tutzing should generate a network of experts on education. The first themes will be 'Contribution of protestant education / religious education to developing a European civil society' and 'Mobility as a challenge to protestant education'. Its secretary represents the IV on this group of experts.

The intensive cooperation with **ICCS** is fostered through regular contacts between the chairs and the secretaries. In the year under review the cooperation was expressed also in a joint newsletter and a joint board meeting (see above). The joint presence or mutual representation led to numerous external contacts and opportunities for cooperation in European education.

The same goes for the **Coordinating Group for Religion in Education in Europe (CoGREE)**. The steering committee, which includes Wim Kuiper and Gerhard Pfeiffer, met in Munster on 30 January 2012 and in Soesterberg (the Netherlands) on 14 June 2012. The general assembly 2013 coinciding with the conference on 'Religious Schools in Secular Europe' (20-22 November 2013, Soesterberg) is a product of this cooperation.

New is the contact with **KAICIID - Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue** in Vienna, founded by Saudi Arabia, Austria and Spain. KAICIID extended an invitation to the conference 'The Image of the Other' on 22 May 2013, which was accepted by 130 people from Europe, North Africa and the Near East (for IV: Gerhard Pfeiffer). Peter Schreiner will attend the „Global Forum on Interreligious and Intercultural Education“, which on 18/19 November 2013 concludes the series of conferences.

Ties with the **Europäischer Bund für Bildung und Wissenschaft / Association Européenne des Enseignants (EBB-AEDE)** were strengthened. The EBB/AEDE held its 14th European teachers' seminar on "Europe, nearing its limits?" in the Evangelische Realschule Ortenburg from 25 to 27 October 2013 (attended by: Rita Révész).

The IV was approached by **Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems** (Austria). In cooperation with the Graduate School of Education - Fordham University (New York, USA) the college offers continuing education for the administrative staff of Christian schools: "Leadership with Christian Values – Emerging Leaders of Christian Schools Programme".

Wim Kuiper maintained contact with the **European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools (ECNAIS)** and the **EMIE - European Meeting of Independent**

**Education** by attending their assemblies.

In conclusion we should like to remind you of the IV's mission as worded in its articles:

*'The International Association for Christian Education ... sets out to promote mutual exchange and encounter among Christian teachers from European countries; to coordinate the interests of Christian schools and Christian teaching in the educational and training systems of Europe; to give face and voice to Christian schools and Christian teaching in and before the churches in Europe and European Institutions (such as the Council of Europe and the European Union), and to provide appropriate institutional conditions for schools and teachers'.*

3 October 2013

Dr. Gerhard Pfeiffer, Secretary