

newsletter

June 2019, No. 13

Editorial

A hot summer has already started and it looks like consequences of the worldwide climate crisis will be dramatic and obvious in many parts of the world. The #Fridays4Future campaign that began in August 2018 by Greta Thunberg's strike sitting in front of the Swedish Parliament to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis receives more and more attention.

The hashtags #FridaysForFuture and #Climatestrike spread and many students and adults began to protest outside of their parliaments and local city halls all over the world against global warming and a lack of political action. Scientists and parents as well as church organisations joined the movement. Instagram and Twitter became powerful instruments to express the need of urgent action and the elections to the European Parliament in May became also a vote for more activities against global warming.

Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals is: *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* and part of the argument is as follows:

"Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, weather events are becoming more extreme and greenhouse gas emissions are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature is likely to increase by 3 degrees this century. The poorest and most vulnerable people are being affected the most".

The historic Paris Agreement provides an opportunity for countries to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. It came into force on 4 November 2016. But political action taken is not enough to fulfil these promises.

In contrast, the climate crisis affects both church activities and education Church bodies and Christian schools are aware of their responsibility concerning the integrity of creation, changing consumerist lifestyles and saving energy. They should be encouraged and supported.

We wish all readers a relaxing summer period.

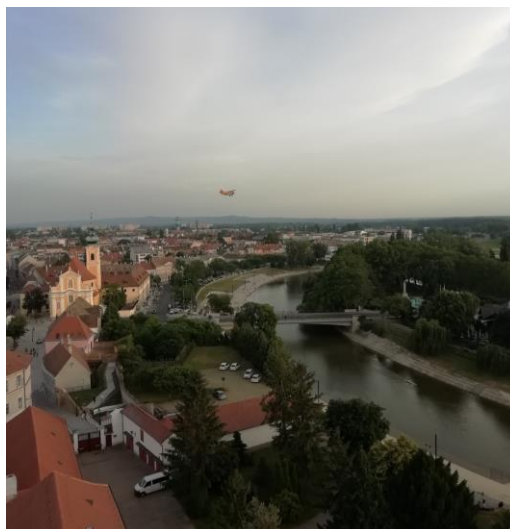
Dr. Tania ap Siôn and Dr. Peter Schreiner (ICCS)

Michael Jacobs and Piet Jansen (IV)

Information from IV and ICCS

IV: The IV Board met at Győr in Hungary

The IV Board met on 15-16 June at the Péterfy-Sándor-Evangélikus Gimnázium in Győr/Hungary. Board member Judit Hallgatone Hajnal was headmistress there for many years (until 2018) and proudly showed the comprehensively renovated school building with a complete new building wing in which excellent learning conditions exist for a total of approx. 900 children and young people from kindergarten to high school. It was interesting to hear that Hungarian President Orbán was personally dedicated to the maintenance and expansion of the school and also generally supports the denominational school system in Hungary.



Beautiful town of Győr, Hungary

Among other things, the board discussed the planned study trip for head teachers and education experts to Berlin, which will take place from 24 to 27 September 2019. Bianca Kappelhoff, the new researcher at the Comenius Institute working on European educational issues from a Protestant perspective, took part in the meeting. She coordinates the detailed planning of the study trip, maintains contact with the Berlin school principals and takes care of the supporting programme. Questions of religious education in the secular Berlin environment, instruments of quality development of Protestant schools and specific characteristics of the Protestant profile will be the focus of the school visits and lectures. Interested parties can register via the IV office at the EKD Church Office (see corresponding article below).

IV: Invitation to the General Assembly 2019 in Vienna

A further focus of the board meeting was the preparation of the next General Assembly on 15-16 November 2019 in Vienna, which will have the theme "Contributions of Protestant Schools to Education for Sustainable Development". President Piet Jansen and Secretary Michael Jacobs met the day before with Mrs. Schelander-Glaser of the Ev. Schulwerk Vienna to discuss details of the planning. The Ev. Schulwerk Wien and the educational network PILGRIM, which focuses on the topic "sustainability", will jointly host the general meeting and cordially invite the member associations of the IV as well as interested individuals to Vienna. As soon as the programme is ready, it will be posted on the IV website (www.int-v.org).

IV: IV becomes member of European Christian Convention (ECC)

In Győr, the Board also decided to become a member of the European Christian Convention (ECC). This major ecumenical event - a kind of European Kirchentag - is to take place between 2022 and 2024 and will bring together Christians from all over Europe and beyond. Founded in 2016, the ECC association is open to all who wish to preserve Europe's Christian heritage in ecumenical openness and to bring it to the forefront of current debates and developments. The IV, as an association of Christian school and teacher associations in 12 European countries at

present, would like to participate and join in the process of formulating Christian positions in dialogue and making the voice of Christians heard in the European context.

ICCS: Consultation in May - Relaunching exchange and cooperation

Members of the ICCS board as well as trustees and national correspondents came together for a consultation on future perspectives for the work of ICCS. The meeting was held in Quarteira/Portugal from 16th to 19th May. The group of experts discussed the various developments of church and school relations in different countries in Europe. While in many countries relations have become looser in recent years, in some others a renewed relationship between church and school can be stated. European cooperation can share experiences about a church-based understanding of school education and examples of fruitful relationships as well as identifying common issues for research and developments. A special emphasis was given to developments in the Council of Europe's education activities because ICCS is a participating INGO to the Council. It was agreed to include the national correspondents in the exchange more actively and to invite them for a consultation in 2020. It will take place at the Løgumkloster/Denmark from 2 – 4 June 2020.

ICCS and IV: Study tour to Germany open for registration

Exchange about education practice is at the core of both ICCS and IV. Therefore, the two organisations carry on an already well-established tradition of a study tour and invite you this time to Berlin in Germany. This year, we celebrate 30 years Fall of the Wall - time to discover how Christian schools have developed ever since in a reunited Berlin and how they managed to thrive so well.

The study tour takes place from 24 to 27 September 2019. If you want to participate, please register as quickly as possible by emailing the IV office via Kerstin Wiechmann (Kerstin.wiechmann@ekd.de). There is a fee of 500 Euros per participant which will cover accommodation, travel expenses on site, meals and cultural activities. Please find more information on the programme and the registration process [here](#) on the CoGREE website. The study tour is aimed primarily at head teachers from various European countries and seeks to give them inspiration and encouragement for further development of their own professional practice. Register fast, there are only 10 places available!

GPENreformation: “Vision Partnership” with UEM launched

The United Evangelical Mission's (UEM) in Germany and the Global Pedagogical Network - Joining in Reformation (GPENreformation) have joined forces with the goal of jointly promoting the systematic establishment and expansion of global school partnerships. Within the framework of their cooperation, schools are to be supported in their individual partnership projects and the worldwide networking of Protestant schools is to be strengthened. In future, the cooperation will be visible on the GPENreformation website: a separate "School partnerships" section will enable educational institutions to publish "requests" for school exchanges, transnational projects and partnerships.

Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity

Understanding and taking seriously young people's attitudes to religious diversity is a matter of pressing concern for both the United Kingdom as well as countries across Europe. This is the aim of the Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity research project led by the University of Warwick, UK. The project began by gathering data from over 2,000 students living in each of the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), and from London as a special case. In total, nearly 12,000 students participated in the survey.

Analyses of the research findings have been published in 48 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, with more publications currently being written. The findings explore a number of areas of relevance to researchers, policy makers and educators working in contexts where listening to young people's attitudes to religious diversity is important to take into account. Some of these areas include:

- religious and non-religious identities;
- the social and public significance of religion;
- the effect of schools with a religious foundation;
- the effect of religious education;
- relevant issues and debates for each of the five nations of the UK (London, Wales, Northern Ireland, England and Scotland).

Many significant findings from the project have emerged. A few examples particularly relevant to the area of church and school, include:

- students who are themselves religiously motivated hold more positive attitudes to religious diversity;
- there is no evidence that schools with a religious character produce students who are less accepting of people from other religious faiths;
- religious education does work in the sense of leading to attitudes that promote community cohesion, lessen religious conflict and promote the common good.

The same survey is now also being conducted in the Republic of Ireland and Australia.

An example of how such research can be related to practice is found in two original open-access storybook series for 3- to 7-year-olds, which draw on significant research findings from the project and have been sponsored by the Welsh Government (the *Exploring Why* series and the *Exploring Our World* series).

To read more about the Young People's Attitudes to Religious diversity project and to access a full list of current publications with abstracts as well as the open access storybook resources, visit: <http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/research/Diversityproject.html> .

ICCS Secretary Dr. Tania ap Siôn

CoGREE and member organisations



CoGREE: Steering group meeting in Vienna



From left to right: Lesley Prior, Michael Holzwieser, Michael Jacobs, Peter Schreiner, Piet Jansen, Bianca Kappelhoff, Guy Selderslagh.
Missing: Margaretha Hackermeier

The CoGREE steering group came together for its first meeting in 2019 in Vienna/Austria on 14/15 of June. Delegates of all member organizations were present. Together, they shared experiences from the European elections and how the common appeal that CoGREE made for the elections was received. Also, the participants discussed first ideas for topics for the next Klingenthal colloquy which will take place from 5 - 9 October 2020. Furthermore, the CoGREE members were very pleased to welcome a special guest, M Guy Selderslagh, the Secretary General of the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC). The Committee represents Catholic Schools across Europe and 29 Catholic education networks from 27 European countries are members. Learn more about CEEC on their [website](#). Everyone was happy about this opportunity to exchange and get to know one another a bit better. CEEC will decide about a CoGREE membership during this year. All current CoGREE members agreed it would be a win for everyone involved in the group.

EFTRE: Conference in August 2019 in Dublin, Ireland

The triennial EFTRE conference is coming up this year. From 28 to 31 August 2019 educators and administrators involved in Religious Education at schools will meet in Dublin, Ireland. Registration is still open! Under the slogan “Reconciling Realities in Religious Education” participants are invited to exchange about current challenges for Religious Education across Europe and learn new approaches from practitioners from various countries. If you want to find out more about the programme, the keynote speakers and workshops offered, visit the [EFTRE website](#). There, you also find the link to register.

Conference participants are also invited to extend their stay by two days and take part in the extension programme taking place in Belfast up until the 2 September 2019. The programme will include a tour of Belfast and the attractive countryside nearby as well as contributions from guest speakers on aspects of division and diversity in Northern Ireland, focusing especially on religion and education. For further information about the extension programme, please contact EFTRE board member Norman Richardson (mail to n.richardson@stran.ac.uk).

PILGRIM: Welcome of new members

At the celebration of the certification of schools and associated members like a winery, new members were welcomed to the International Network of Pedagogy PILGRIM in Vienna on 14 May 2019! There was a touching interreligious prayer with representatives of different Christian churches as well as of the Buddhist Society and the Islam. A special moment was when young

pupils were collecting ideas from the participants about how very concretely they want to take care of the Creation in the ongoing week. To underline the spiritual touch these papers with ideas were shaped like clouds and put into the air on a symbolic PILGRIM tree. Learn more [here](#) (link in German).

PILGRIM: Teachers conferences took place in L'viv (Ukraine) and Lublin (Poland)

At the teachers' conference in L'viv in April, the combination of ethics and spirituality in teaching were discussed with a delegation of PILGRIM at the centre of higher education. After some lectures, more than 100 teachers were participating in workshops thinking about how to change school and teaching towards more ecology and spirituality.

In Lublin in May, the conference took place at the famous KUL (Catholic University of Lublin) about the „Integral Development of the Person and the Protection of the Creation“. The PILGRIM/Vienna delegation contributed to the topics of Sustainable development, human development and spirituality by presenting the background of the pedagogy of PILGRIM. Learn more about the conference [here](#) (link in German).

CEC and CPCE



CEC: Governing board sets guidelines for 2019-23

The CEC Governing Board met in May in Strasbourg, France, to set priorities for the work of the CEC under the slogan "Together in Hope and Witness". The 20 members - representing the various member churches (see for a full list [here](#)) - adopted a [strategic work plan](#) for the years 2019-2023. Three main aims are defined: promoting peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe, strengthening ecumenical fellowship and promoting the mission of the Church as well as raising the churches' voice in Europe and the European Institutions. In the context of the first aim, the governing board decided to deal especially with the topic of education and therefore to create a working group on "Diversity, pluralism and education for democracy". This working group shall help member churches to deal with these topics and take part in the Council of Europe policies developed in this field. ICCS and IV hope to contribute to this group with their expertise in educational matters and with their experience in working with the Council of Europe.

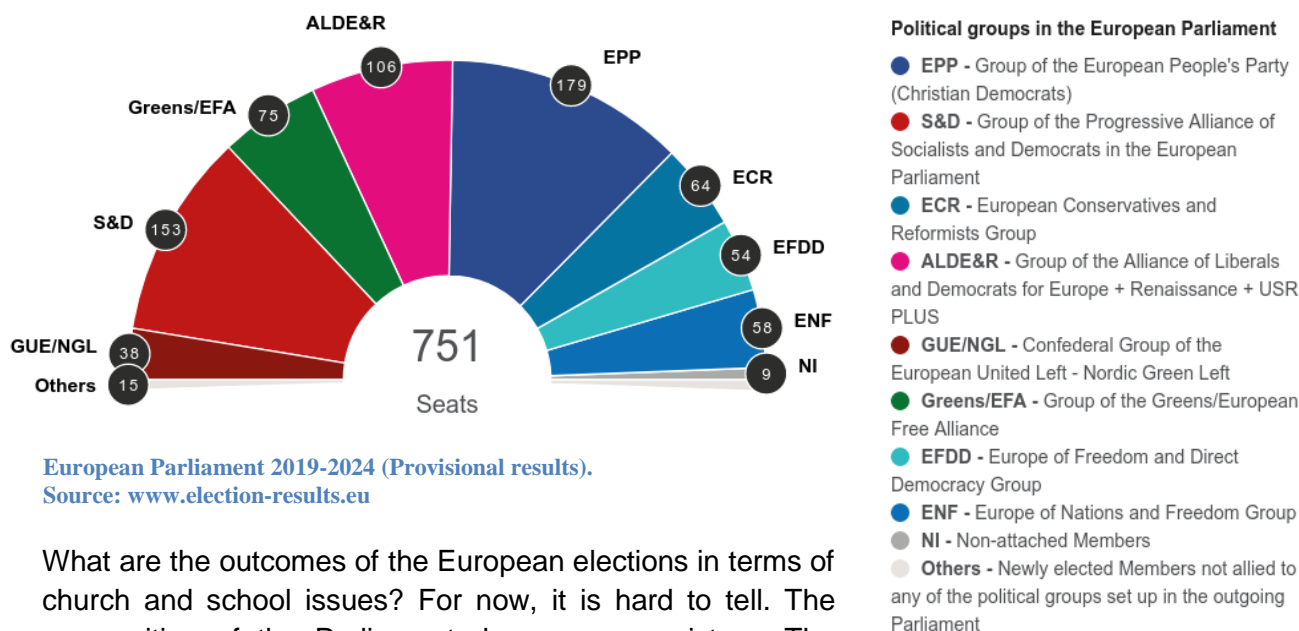
CPCE: New expert group Education to be founded

The field of education becomes more and more a core issue for the CPCE. Last year, the study of the Regional group Southeast Europe entitled "Education for a future" was published and adopted by the General Assembly. One of the suggestions made in the study is now to become reality. The CPCE plans to found a new expert group on education by the end of the year. This institutional frame will help create a space for exchange and discussion and keep this important field on the agenda. The group's composition and first working fields are to be put in more concrete terms by the end of the year.

Council of Europe and European Union



EU: The topic of Education in the new European Parliament



European Parliament 2019-2024 (Provisional results).
Source: www.election-results.eu

What are the outcomes of the European elections in terms of church and school issues? For now, it is hard to tell. The composition of the Parliament draws a new picture. The biggest political groups, S&D and EPP, lost their majority, the Greens and Liberals as well as the right wing groups will play a more decisive role. Until 1st July, the groups have time to notify their final composition. This will be decisive for their speaking time in plenary and the composition of the committees. By the beginning of July, we will know the committees' composition in terms of majority ratios and individual Parliament members. The constituent meeting for the new CULT committee, which is among others dealing with Erasmus+, is predicted to be on 10 July. Beforehand, the Parliament's constituent plenary sitting takes place from 2 to 4 July. Please find the CULT activity report from the last legislative term 2014-2019 as well as current news on the committee's work here <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/home.html>. Detailed results of the elections with figures and graphs for all member states are available here: <https://www.election-results.eu/>.

EU: European Parliament wants to triple funding for Erasmus+

The negotiations about the Erasmus+ programme for the 2021-27 period enter the next round. During the previous months, the European Commission's proposal had been discussed in the European Parliament's CULT committee (committee on education and culture). The committee members agreed on a number of significant changes. The European Parliament in its first reading on 28 March 2019 then approved the committee's amended text. One major resolution is to triple the Erasmus+ budget for this programme period instead of doubling it as suggested by the European Commission. Furthermore, the deputies want to make the programme more inclusive foreseeing special funds to allow people with fewer opportunities or disabilities to participate in Erasmus+ funded projects. Also, the Parliament emphasizes the possibility of online encounters becoming an additional component of the programme where personal encounters are not possible for various reasons but without replacing them. Particularly interesting to all those

wanting to apply for funds is that the European Parliament claims a simplification of the application and report processes. Now after the first reading in Parliament, it is up to the Council of the European Union, that is to say the member state's ministers for education, to deliberate about the legislative text.

Find the Parliament's adopted text here: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2019-0111_EN.html?redirect

EU: Second European Education Summit



The second European Education Summit takes place on 26 September 2019 in Brussels. This second edition will focus on the teaching profession discussing questions like: What challenges are teachers facing today – and what future developments do we need to anticipate? Are teachers adequately recognised by society? Do they receive the support they need? [Learn more here.](#)

Council of Europe: New training module for teachers

The Wergeland Centre recently published its annual report. During 2018, it lead 12 projects in 26 countries together with 60 partner institutions. '22. July and Democratic Citizenship', 'Teaching Controversial Issues in the Nordic and Baltic Countries' and 'Schools for Democracy in Ukraine' are only some examples of the projects organized in the field of democratic citizenship and human rights. Furthermore, the year was marked by the 10th anniversary of the Centre which had been established by the Council of Europe and Norway in 2008.

In the field of religious education, the Wergeland Center worked on a training module based on the Council of Europe publication *Signposts*. Colleagues from Albania, Greece, Norway, Sweden and the UK participated in this project. The now finished training module is a practice-oriented tool especially for teacher trainings that targets teachers who work on religious education and/or intercultural education. It is oriented towards helping adult professionals to deepen their knowledge and skills in relation to the world of religion, to develop positive attitudes and necessary competences. These include reflecting on their own identity; presenting religions and world-views in ways that promote dialogue and coexistence; and preparing in other ways to address the relevant issues in an educational context, by creating a safe learning environment, respecting diversity and combating xenophobia and radicalization.

Currently under revision, the training module will soon be available for download on the Wergeland Centre's website. You can find the whole annual report 2018 [here.](#)

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This Newsletter is edited under the responsibility of the Board of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School and the Board of the International Association for Christian Education.

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