

INITIATIVE OF THE ACC: CHALLENGES OF ENLARGEMENT COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CECC) 2004

The working title of the project is: "Challenges of Enlargement Community College 2004 in the frame of the region on the Italo – Slovenian border"

Summary

The ACC (*Association for Community Colleges*) is going to carry through a two-week Community College event for 40 young Europeans, concerning the role of the accessing countries and the member states in the incoming enlarged European Union.

In the summer 2004 when the event will take place the enlargement will be a fact. In a rapidly transforming European Union the debates and discussions in the accessing states and the member states about the new shape of the EU are vivid and fervent. How can the accessing countries contribute to the enlarged EU and how can the member states help the integration process in the Union?

Particular attention will be devoted to crucial issues such as mobility on the labour market, agricultural policy, languages, security, political structure, crossborder cooperation and participation. The discussion will also deal with the role of cultures and identities in intercultural dialogue and regionalization in the definition of "15" and "25" Europe.

The historically plastic region of the Italo-Slovene international frontier where the event will take place can provide a concrete illustration of these issues.

The event is going to take place in the summer 2004 in Sežana (Slovenija) at *Mladinski hotel (Youth Hostel) Pliskovica* and in Trst-Trieste (Italy) at the *Dijaški dom Srečko Kosovel*.

Background

It is a fundamental belief of the ACC that a common European public and permanent discussion (public sphere, public opinion) is needed. This "community" debating common issues should not only be a professional one, but rather a real European political demos. Therefore, Europeans need to know much more about each other, in order to understand which specific cultural values the different European populations want to preserve and to discuss which values should be considered common among them. The vision of the ACC is that an innovative and effective way to build a European awareness is to let people from different European identities meet in a Community College context and learn by living together.

Community Colleges are inspired by the Nordic tradition of the so-called Folk high schools and can be defined as non-formal residential schools for adults that are characterized by local traditions and organise courses on topics of common European interest. The frame of the Community College offers a unique chance for experiencing an intercultural dialogue and a learning process by living together: this is why the social dimension is an essential part of this educational formula. It is our belief and our experience that people learn respect, tolerance and solidarity when they know more about each other.

The CECC2004 project is part of a long-lasting educational process, since it need to be developed in a follow-up experience, i.e. the CECC2005. This event is the first of its kind in the "Alpe-Adria" region, but we do see it as an experiment and a pilot-project aiming at organizing similar projects in the future. This area in general is not particularly familiar with the concepts of non-formal adult education and life-long learning. Therefore, the first experiment of a Community College in the region aim to be a way of showing and promoting a new and innovative educational model, a tiny step towards the development of European citizens.

We aim at cooperate with local NGO/VA in order to introduce and promote the concepts of mobility and participation among youth from a geographically less favoured area.

The success of the event is tidily connected not only with the cooperation with local, regional and national institutions of both countries (Italy – Slovenia) but specially with the interest of the young participants.

It is very important that young Europeans from different backgrounds can benefit from the everyday experience of a border region such as the Italo-Slovene where the fusion of different ethnic and national backgrounds is a matter of everyday life.

The object of the project

In order to let young people of all Europe become familiar with the different situations the enlargement will bring, the ACC wishes to put this issue on the agenda of a Community College event, taking place in summer 2004.

We hope that the group of participants will be able to develop throughout the shared knowledge a common strategy to encourage intercultural dialogue in order to prevent old and new forms of discrimination and social exclusion and to promote a debate on the questions of the enlargement.

On the other hand the event aim to promote the methods of non-formal education lifelong leaning and youth participation on the regional level with creating a connection between the participants and their NGOs and local NGOs that will lead to the natural follow up of the event: developing a European network as a frame for future cooperation between local NGOs in Europe.

Target group

It was crucial for us to find representatives of many European identities, social and cultural backgrounds. Less favoured youth is aim that in particular. It is only natural when dealing with topics related to the enlargement process as for example internal migration mobility, periphery areas and youth unemployment.

There should be no dominating groups and the group constituting the CECC 2004 should be a European one.

The main recruitment of participants was carried out in close co-operation with the local branches of the ACC and with its co-operational partners. The ACC has representatives in 36 European countries.

We aimed at inviting young NGO/VA-activists that are already part of local networks, in order to facilitate a wider promotion of the Community College format and to show to a

broad extent the benefits of participating in European youth events. We expect this people to be multiplying the intercultural competencies and experiences they may be enriched with.

We aim at receiving 40 participants between 18 and 25 years of age.

To participate English must be understood and spoken.

Contents

The main topic of the event will be the role of the accessing countries and its citizens and of the member states and its citizens in the enlarged European Union. The area where the events will take place it is the natural frame for exchange of ideas and the encounters and debates with local and national representatives (politicians, NGO delegates...) a starting point for discussing a common strategy.

Special attention will be devoted to mobility in the labour market and the differences of it in the member states and accessing countries, which will include the question of migration and integration of workers and their families as well ; discussing the variety of languages, identities, cultural backgrounds of the participants and within Europe will be the starting point of understanding the traditional diversity Europe can represent and the cultural heritage the accessing countries are bringing to the Union. The step forward will be recognizing how we can contribute to the crossborder cooperation among the member states and accessing countries.

Before attending the event, participants are asked

- (1) to gather background information on how media in their local and national community present the enlargement;
- (2) to investigate how the different topics of enlargement are received in their countries, with particular attention to the local population;
- (3) to analyse the situation of intercultural coexistence in their country/region;
- (4) to observe how their country/region is getting ready for the enlargement.

Active involvement of participants will be sought in defining the detailed programme of the event.

In order to give thorough information about the topics of the event,

- (a) experts are invited to present various aspects of the issue;
- (b) workshops, morning cultural sessions (presentations), market of ideas, excursions, simulation and role games, discussions having as starting point the information the participants collect in their region/country before the event, round-table debates with experts, intercultural games such as BumBall, an alternative to traditional games where people do not need particular linguistic and communication skills but they can just get to know each other in a funny and intercultural way, and various participatory activities are planned by the ACC, in co-operation with our partner organisations;

- (c) visits to different institution as the Slovenian parliament in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia in Trieste (Italy) and the office of the Istarska Županija in Pula (Croatia) as to present a region where the populations divided by nowadays borders have had common bonds for centuries and how through the enlargement and crossborder cooperation such bonds can be revitalized.

We expect the discussion on these issues to be participated by youth coming from both EU-member states and non-EU-member-states. It is crucial for us not to be a part of an exclusive thinking, but rather to be a part of an inclusive one, encouraging the inspiration to flow between EU-states, accessing states and non-EU-states.

Through the form of the Community College, we expect participants to obtain an understanding of which values could be considered European – this including respect for European diversity.

Timetable

The event is going to last for two weeks and will take place in the region on the Italo – Slovenian frontier. The event is going to take place in the summer 2004 in Sežana (Slovenija) at *Mladinski hotel (Youth hostel) Pliskovica*, Ljubljana (Slovenija) at *Mladinski hotel (Youth hostel) TABOR* and in Trst-Trieste (Italy) at the *Dijaški dom Srečko Kosovel*. We expect the exchange to be repeated in the following years and we hope to include more institutions in Europe in the process of developing a discussion on common European issues and a mutual understanding between different cultures and backgrounds.

Organizational elements

The ACC Good Will committee, headed by Daša Bolcina, in close co-operation with our partner organisations, will be responsible for the project.

The ACC played an important role as co-organizer and co-founder in the Youth2002 where the organizers themselves went through a new common experience, that of coordinating the course Youth 2002 (www.youth2002.org) in Denmark.

The working language will be English.

Financing

We expect the project to be supported by the EU-commission (Youth Programme), Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Comune di Trieste, Obična Sežana, Ministrstvo za Šolstvo in Šport, Credito Cooperativ del Carso – Zadržna Kraška Banka and the ACC International, as well as by other domestic public and private funds. We expect participants to pay a fee themselves.

Multiplying effect

Being this the first Challenges of Enlargement Community College taking place in the region of the Italo – Slovenian border, after evaluating the results of the event we plan at developing the initiative in the following years, in order to establish a sort of tradition for this kind of events.

Our aim is as well to create a **network**, by asking our participants to prepare a list of NGOs and association from their region/country in order to construct a **database (catalogue) of organizations available for crossborder cooperation**. That will connect local organizations in the European area promoting in such way not just youth exchange but exchange of all kind of associations.

The **catalogue** of possible future cooperation, articles, papers, stories, drawings, pictures, documents etc. and the database of the NGOs proposed by the participants are to be published in the **ACCENT** (ACC European publication made by young people from all over Europe), which will be distributed among NGOs, institutions and others related to European matters, and on the website that it will be created in the follow up.

It is a main vision of the ACC that many more Europeans should have the chance of participating in international/European community colleges some time in their life. The involvement of participants in the ACC-network will make it easier to establish another event in the following year and to take up new initiatives in the future.

Co-operators and Partners

The project is carried through on ACC initiative. The ACC is a European organization. Please confer the website (<http://www.acc.eu.org>) for further information.

We aim at cooperating with different organisations, in order to have a broader impact on local, national and European level.

Local and national Slovenian and European institutions such as *Comune di Trieste* (Municipality of Trieste: <http://www.comune.trieste.it>) and *Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia* (Region Friuli Venezia Giulia <http://www.regione.fvg.it>), *Obična Sežana* (Municipality of Sežana: <http://www.sezana.si>), *Ministrstvo za Šolstvo in Šport Republike Slovenije* (the Ministry of Education and Sport of Republic of Slovenia: <http://www.mszs.si/slo>), *Državni Zbor Republike Slovenije* (National Assembly of Republic of Slovenia: <http://www.dz-rs.si/en/home.html>) will be contacted for a possible cooperation. Furthermore, we will closely cooperate with the *Andragoški Center Slovenije* (Slovenian Institute for Adult Education: <http://siae.acs.si>), *Infopoint Europa* from Trieste (<http://www.retecivica.trieste.it/ipe>), and a number of local NGOs and associations.

We expect to co-operate with the above-mentioned organisations in planning and carrying out the project, as well as in inviting experts/lecturers and in recruiting participants.