

Thessalonica-Delegation

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Aabenraa October 7th 2002

Dear Madam/Sir

In the summer of 1999 the youth magazine *Das Haus La Maison The House* brought to light the idea of a future European, non-formal, decentralized and government independent school system.

Within this system it would be possible *for* Europeans through a common financial source of support to organize courses *for* Europeans and *about* European issues.

The same autumn you could read in a Danish daily that young Europeans had founded an association to work for the idea of future European Community Colleges. The aim was and is to create a European public realm as a necessary complement to the European institutional-political system.

The *Association for Community Colleges* wants to create a European public realm through general education.

Free and easy it was counted on that when Greece in 2003 would take over the EU-Presidency, it would also be the time to talk about non-formal education and including the residential school format and the pedagogical model represented by the Nordic Folk High Schools. It would be the time to start talking about successors to the existing Socrates- and Youth-programmes of the EU. This could very well begin in Athens.

We called the vision for the "Athens-Treaty" and later on it found its concrete form in the "Act on European Community Colleges", which was elaborated by 20 young enthusiasts from all over Europe.

The "Act" is a maximum model and it may be too much of what is good in its current shape. Nonetheless a number of principles can be extracted from the "Act"; principles that could be guidelines for a supportive programme, which should be included in the next move for common European educational progress. Dear politicians of education and youth in Europe. Please help us to carry these recommendations into the forums of European politics:

- We need to develop a common European public realm.
- It should be possible to offer courses of general educative nature with economical support -when promoting the debate of common European issues.
- Courses should contribute to the general educative level via the concept of "learning and living together" / residential school courses /personal meetings between Europeans.
- Make possible European citizenship through knowledge, skills and competences developed in non-formal educational frames.
- There should be a subsidy per week per participant from a common source (e.g. 175 € per week) and it might be preconditioned by a similar support from a local, regional or national public administrative unit.
- Everybody should be allowed to take part and relations with associations or the like should not condition participation.
- The group of participants of each individual course should be composed as diverse as possible (measured on national, cultural and other identities).
- The staff of organizers of each individual course should be composed as diverse as possible (measured on national, cultural and other identities).
- Courses should have duration of minimum one week and preferably minimum four weeks.
- Courses should be offered by government independent groups of citizens who are in general independent of outside interests and who are in decision concerning the contents (i.e. like a Nordic folk high school).
- All participants should understand and speak the language of the course.

Since these principles were composed we have, in the ACC, worked for proving the viability of these principles also in real life and on a European level. Thus the ACC together with a number of folk high schools and associations in Denmark carried out the project Youth2002.

The Youth2002 was mostly exposed in the public as a forum that made a proposal for a common European constitution. Nonetheless, the other main point of the project is clear in the minds of the 1000 young European participants: European Community Colleges, the non-formal residential school format, is the future for the development of a European public realm.

Our very best regards

John Petersen, chairman

Enclosures (1) Act on European Community College (2) Declaration of Youth2002