

EUROPEAN FORUM MINUTES
JULY 19, 2006 – 13.30 – 15.30 HRS
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
U.S.A.

Chairman: Marja-Leena Leskinen.
Reportes: Marja-Liisa Lehikoinen and Cor Wolff-Heins
Timekeepers: Sigridur Jonsdottir and Kate York

The business meeting included:

- Minutes of Turku, Finland 2005
- 2002-2004 Annual Report of the European Forum
- Guidelines for the European Achievement Award
- Other business
- Installation of Officers 2006-2008
- Closing business meeting

Welcome:

The chair of the European Forum, Birgit Svensson, being prevented from attending, Regional Director Marja-Leena Leskinen opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the European countries and the member guests from USA.

She introduced Ria Bleeker, who gave the Word of Inspiration.

Word of Inspiration: Ria Bleeker

Ria was honored to be asked to open this session. She told us that she often is inspired by stories. Stories affect the heart and the imagination in a way that we start listening more attentively. The right attitude is to believe the story and show no doubt. As an example she had chosen a story from the book “The Little Prince” from the French author and pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

Exupéry wrote this book one-year before his death. Ria quoted the conversation that the Little Prince had with the fox about “taming”.

The Little Prince wants to know what “to tame” means.

The fox said: “One only understands the things that one tames. Men have no more time to understand anything. They buy things all ready made at the shops. But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship, and so men have no friends any more. If you want a friend, tame me....” And then he explains that the Little Prince had to visit him every day and talk to him. So the Little Prince tamed the fox until the hour of his departure drew near.

“I shall cry” said the fox. The Little Prince replied: “It is your own fault. You wanted me to tame you. I did not want to do you any harm.” “You didn’t. It has done me good” said the fox.

“Good bye” said the prince.

“Good bye” said the fox. “ And now here is my secret, a very simple secret.

It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

“What is essential is invisible to the eye” the Little Prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.

Business meeting:

- The reporters, Marja-Liisa Lehikoinen (Fi) and Cor Wolff-Heins.(NL) were introduced. Also the time keepers, Sigridur Jonsdottir (Ic) and Kate York (GB).
- Minutes of the Forum meeting in Turku, Finland 2005. Marianne Skardeus (Sw) asked about the proposal of sponsorship. The proposal was made that each state could offer hospitality at their state convention to promote understanding between the European members. Marianne stated that it could be difficult to differentiate between the registration fee and other expenses. The decision was made that each state should decide how to facilitate. The minutes were approved and signed.
- The report of the European Forum 2005-2006 was read by Marja-Leena Leskinen

Guidelines for European Achievement Award:

An EAA to be given biannually in recognition of distinguished service given to Delta Kappa Gamma Society International in Europe -

- **Procedure:**
The name of a member from any European state may be submitted by European State Executive Boards to the chair of the European Forum by October 15, for decision of recipient of the award at November Forum Committee meeting. After the first year, the deadline for submissions to be October 15 in even-numbered years.
- **Award:**
The award to be a specially designed **pin / pendant, paid for by € 50 maximum** from each state organization in Europe.
- **Criteria:**
The recipient will be someone who *from among the following has:*
 - a) been active in *the development of the European Region*
 - b) held *leadership positions at European or state organization levels*
 - c) *supported and mentored* other members of Delta Kappa Gamma
 - d) been active in *raising the public awareness and the membership of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International*
 - e) given *lectures and /or workshops* at Delta Kappa Gamma meetings
 - f) increased *membership in her own state organization.*
- **Submission:** A recommendation form to be sent out by the Chair of the European Forum and to be completed by each State Executive Board. This form was created at the 2006-2008 European Forum.
It was decided that the EAA should be awarded at the next European Convention in Great Britain for the first time and then biannually. The recommendation form to be sent out in September in even-numbered years to the member states.

Other business.

Dorothy Haley (GB) reminded those present that the European Forum will celebrate its 10th anniversary at the European Regional Conference in Great Britain in 2007.

Marianne Skardeus (Sw) suggested the following :

- The European Forum Committee 2006-2008 to discuss and come up with the suggestions on:
 1. *“How to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the European Region, for example: documents, history and celebrations. London and Oslo would probably appreciate suggestions very soon.”*
 2. *“Voice of Vision” to be broadcas all over USA (a co-operation between the radio/TV stations to promote DKG in the USA).. How can Europe profit from this? How could we in Europe visualize DKG? How to finance a DVD and how to interest radio and TV stations in Europe to report about DKG?*

Installation of Officers 2006-2008.

Finland.....Marja-Liisa Lehtikoinen
Germany.....Gisela Baronin Von Engelhardt
Great Britain.....Kate York
Iceland.....Helga Tholacius
Norway.....Björg Nakling
Sweden.....Carin Ahlberg
The Netherlands.....Ria Bleeker, Chairman.

Attendance:

Finland – 4; Germany – 3; Great Britain – 6; Iceland – 2; Norway – 3; Sweden – 11; The Netherlands – 8; USA – 4.

The Business Meeting closed at 14.45.

Lecture: Practising Democracy at Schools. Ria Bleeker

Democracy in schools.

Traditionally schools are seen as hierarchical structures in which teachers have the task of “moulding” students and, if indeed, education implies a relationship of authority between those who teach and those who are taught. We see that more and more people are asking for more democracy in schools.

In order to make a school a democratic environment, it is first necessary to establish a democratic management system.

Not only students should be involved in this, but also their parents and teachers. Teachers are often considered more as service providers and are also victims of the lack of democracy in schools. Shared leadership in a school is crucial in democratic learning and democratic life!!

From the students’ point of view, democracy in schools is necessary for various reasons! Democracy is not a game of adults for adults, it requires a life-long learning process, which students need to practise at their own level.

Democracy in schools is an effective way of creating a climate of confidence and responsibility within schools, which proves very useful in preventing and fighting violence in schools.

Democracy in schools implies that students play an active role within their learning environment, for instance in the management of collective areas, planning and realization of school projects, support to student communication channels, even participation of students in defining the context of the knowledge they are supposed to acquire.

It would be much simpler to have one or a few people decide for all, and obviously building democracy will have its fair share of difficulties and conflicts – democracy is not the end of conflicts, but a humanistic way of dealing with them. Helping students become future adult citizens does not mean leaving them on their own; adult responsibilities have to grow on them!

The Netherlands.

In The Netherlands, citizenship education and democracy in schools are more or less linked together. Elements of citizenship are found in many school subjects – political science, history, geography; in secondary education it is called civic education.

The Netherlands has no state or national curriculum. Schools work with attainment targets or examination programmes – which leave considerable freedom to the individual school and the individual teacher – elements of citizenship education are included. Schools are more and more seen as institutions closely connected with their environment: lessons, sports clubs, neighbourhood facilities and sometimes public authorities.

Active participation of pupils, students and parents in school affairs is stimulated often through representative boards and many more informal channels (parents in the classroom/assisting teachers). That brings practical democratic processes into schools.

- Freedom of Education in The Netherlands – the rights of citizens to establish private schools/public funding that leads to civic presence in school governance.
- The Educational Inspectorate evaluates schools. The evaluation involves themes, which are linked to the social role of the school – the contents of citizenship education are not evaluated. Everyone can view evaluations; they are put on the internet.

Europe: the Education of Democratic Citizenship.

The EDC-project started in 1997 with exploring and developing definitions of education for democratic citizenship. Skills and competency for practising effective democratic citizenship were defined. Publications, sites of citizenship and a network of experts were established. 2005 was the European Year of Citizenship through Education.

The objective was “to bridge policy and practice by empowering policy-makers and practitioners at all levels to set up programs - “the EDC pact”

2006 – 2009 Next steps in the project are:

- Focus on social cohesion, social inclusion and respect for human rights, with special attention to the democratic governance of educational institutions, especially schools.
- To strengthen the capacity for teacher training and development within and across member states.
- To improve communication and information sharing.
- To develop and promote sustainable frameworks and mechanisms to make EDC part of everyday practices and processes at all levels of society.
- To promote working methods throughout Europe.

European Charter for Democratic Schools without Violence.

Young people from across Europe have prepared the ECfDSwV on the basis of fundamental values and principles shared by all Europeans.

More than 120 schools throughout Europe expressed an interest in the project. 26 contributions from 19 countries were selected. More than 50 students from these 26 schools were gathered in Strasbourg to draft and adopt the Charter. This group strongly recommended that schools throughout Europe consider using this model to stimulate democratic schooling without violence. The charter has been translated into several native languages and it is anticipated that 30,000 school students will vote on the final version.

While processing its spirit and general principles, the charter can be adapted and further strengthened by various countries or school communities.

The Workshop.

The instructions were:

- 1. Choose any of the items from the European Charter below and discuss measures that can be taken, or have been taken in your school. Of course you may also mention projects that have been developed to reach any of the goals.**
- 2. List these measures/projects in order of urgency/priority if possible.**
- 3. Choose the best, most important, most inspiring measure/project to be presented at the European Breakfast.**

European Charter for Democratic Schools without Violence

- All members of the school community have the right to a safe and peaceful school. Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to creating a positive and inspiring environment for learning and personal development.
- Everyone has the right to equal treatment and respect regardless of any personal difference. Everyone enjoys freedom of speech without risking discrimination or repression.
- The school community ensures that everybody is aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Every democratic school has a democratically elected decision-making body composed of: representatives of students, teachers, parents and other members of the school community where appropriate. All members of the body have the right to vote.
- In a democratic school, conflicts are resolved in a non-violent and constructive way in partnership with all members of the school community. Every school has staff and students trained to prevent and solve conflicts through counselling and mediation.
- Every case of violence is investigated and dealt with promptly, and followed through irrespective of whether students or any other members of the school community are involved.
- School is a part of the local community. Co-operation and exchange of information with the local partners are essential for preventing and solving problems.