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Regione Emilia-Romagna



EUROPEAN YOUTH MEETING 2009


Bologna, 25-28 November 2009

“Our Europe, my values, 20 years after
the Fall of the Berlin Wall”





Introduction



After the successful results of the European integration process, first with the adoption of the Euro and afterwards with the gradual enlargement to the now 27 member states, today, following the defeat of the European Constitution project, and while waiting for the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union is undergoing a transitional period. It is searching, in fact, for a new organizational framework to bring an increased effectiveness and coherence to the European actions, scope and to its institutional functions, increasing its transparency, its administrative and communication simplification and its efficiency in managing the European resources.

In a moment such as the present, of profound crisis, not only economic but also cultural and in terms of values, with a significant impact on the social protection system of the European countries, there is the risk that the progress and the achievements made until now are again questioned and mistrusted and that past threats as the nationalistic closures and even worse, the division between rich and poor countries, are revived and again put forward.

The answer that the European Union must give, first of all to its citizens, should include a renewed culture of integration and cooperation and should give a fresh impulse to the European spirit. This European spirit must advance the great political project and ideals that overcame the historic tragedies that Europe went through in its recent past.

Issues such as social cohesion and active citizens' participation, together with solidarity and cooperation between rich and poor regions, old and new generations, between Europe and developing countries must be the main topics of debate on the agenda of the national Governments and of the European Union.

In such a context, it is absolutely necessary that the European Union rediscovers its true nature and re-launches the unification process reaffirming and upholding its fundamental values on which the entire European project was built: peace, democracy and human rights.

The recent elections for the renewal of the European Parliament have witnessed, on the one hand, for the first time since the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and since the greatest European enlargement process, the simultaneous participation of all 27 member States in electing a Parliamentary Assembly which represents almost 500 millions European citizens.

On the other hand, the low participation rate and the centrality of outright anti-European, xenophobic, and racist discourses lead to the necessity



of reviving the debate surrounding the concept of an united Europe and the importance of intercultural dialog.

2009 marks also the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, which was for years the main symbol of the dramatic division of Europe into two spheres of influence. On November 9th 1989, the Berlin wall fell, which for 30 years had stood as a testimony of the Cold War, of the Iron Curtain brutally and unjustly splitting in two the European continent. From this moment on, Europe began a historical phase, experiencing an unstoppable democratic process which also involved the east-European countries, leading to the peaceful reunification of the continent.

In this political context, the European Union has been a guiding beacon for the expanding democratic process in all the European countries, which found in the European project their space for values and democracy, up to the two memorable enlargements of 2004 and 2007.

In view of this fundamental Anniversary, of this historic process and of the present political and economic situation, it is of primary importance that the new generations, witnesses of a new Europe, begin to wonder what the European Union means to them, and what its future and mission will be, what kind of Europe they want based on its fundamental values, and what meaning such values as **Dignity, Freedoms, Equality, Solidarity, Citizens' rights, Justice and participatory democracy** have in their daily lives as European citizens and in their local political context.

Thus, they will also be asked in what way they feel represented and how they experience the pact of mutual trust sealed between the European Union and its citizens which was built upon human dignity, individual freedoms, inalienable human rights, solidarity, responsibility, upon state of law and equality before the law, upon cultural diversity and the safeguard of the development of local and regional autonomies.

With the aim of encouraging the debate on these topics and on the future of the European Union among young generations, the Legislative Assembly of the Emilia-Romagna Region, in collaboration with the Regional Government of the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Municipality of Bologna and jointly with the European Commission Representation in Italy, the European Parliament Office in Italy, the Regional Education Department of the Emilia-Romagna and the European College of Parma Foundation, organizes the **5th edition of the European Youth Meeting**, in which students and teachers' delegations from the 27 European countries, plus Turkey and Norway, will participate to discuss, and to create a European Forum of Active Citizenship.



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The European project is based on the fundamental values of democracy, personal freedom and rule of law, and it also safeguards the characteristics and diversity of each people.

The very motto of the European Union “Unity in diversity” reflects its engagement in the promotion of a citizenship based on common values, and at the same time the awareness of the importance to protect local identities. The current economic crisis and the social tensions which it created have emphasized the urgency to strengthen these objectives as well as the search for social cohesion between the European countries.

The increase in human mobility together with the process of economic and social globalization have created new forms and new opportunities of contact between different cultures, ways of life, religions and traditions which, on a background of economic recession, raise new challenges, new questions, and the need to find new answers.

In such a moment, when worries and fears arise, there is the need to revive the European spirit built on common values and on fundamental rights, which is essential to the construction of societies based on cooperation and mutual recognition.

The safeguard of fundamental human rights should represent a constant objective of all European policies. The European institutions should commit themselves to actively promote and protect them, and to keep them in mind when drawing and adopting the European legislative framework.

Among the guidelines for the achievement of these objectives, the European Union has singled out Education of the young generations to the values of tolerance, mutual understanding, solidarity, and democratic participation, as a decisive aspect.

Overcoming the old and new “walls” on the economic and social front, in the direction of a culture truly based on human rights against all forms of discrimination, is as much a task for the national governments and for the European institutions, as it must be the aim of all socializing activities of the young generation, starting from School, which should have a widely educational role, stimulating the curiosity of its students, their critical thinking, and their democratic participation.



The project

The proposal intends to offer students and teachers an opportunity to debate on the given topics from different, but at the same time integrated points of view.

The project aims at enhancing dialogue and understanding among young Europeans, giving them a chance to get together and to exchange experiences. The starting point of the debate will focus on the values and on the principles they embrace, thus emphasising that the cultural, religious and geographical differences are not an obstacle to achieving a shared and aware European citizenship, instead they represent a heritage to be valued.

Moreover, the project has at its core the belief that every policy or activity which aims at promoting and sustaining the young generations' democratic participation in public life must have an effective listening capacity, and a political dimension assuming their needs, demands and aspirations.

20 years from the fall of the Berlin wall, symbol of the divisions and gaps that Europe has experienced, the project aims at encouraging the youth to reflect and debate about the singular fundamental values of the European Union.

These fundamental European values, considering the local geographical and socio-political diversity and characteristics, will be approached from an opened point of view which will emphasise their innovative aspect in respect to the past, promoting at the same time their concrete enforcement.

Participants:

Students and teachers from 29 European countries.

Students and teachers from the Emilia-Romagna Region.

Each delegations will consist of 4 students and 1 teacher.

Total: 120 students - European delegations 120 students - Italian delegations 60 teachers

Working language: English

Place: Bologna (Italy), 25-28 November 2009



Methodology

- ▶▶ Group work with the support of facilitators, experts of the European Commission and Parliament, through an active and participative approach;
- ▶▶ Workshop for teachers on the subject: “Active methodologies for teaching rights”;
- ▶▶ Meetings and sessions for debate between students and the representatives of the local and European institutions.



General objectives



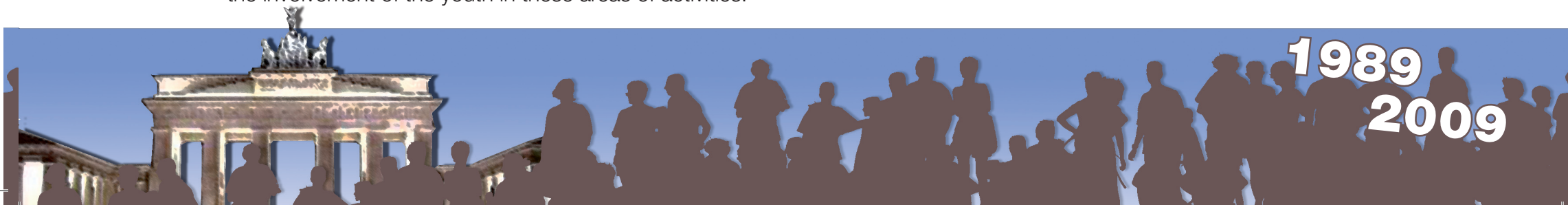
- ▶▶ To promote a sense of European identity and its values among the youth;
- ▶▶ To promote the young generation's active citizenship, in general, and European citizenship, in particular;
- ▶▶ To promote youth mobility in Europe;
- ▶▶ To develop a feeling of solidarity among the youth for strengthening the European Union's social cohesion;
- ▶▶ To favour mutual understanding between the European nations through its youth;
- ▶▶ To develop a feeling of belonging of the youth to the European Union;
- ▶▶ To encourage the young generation in practicing and promoting solidarity, intergenerational dialogue, and cooperation as means of fighting against racism and discrimination;
- ▶▶ To promote youth participation in democratic institutions and processes.

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Specific objectives

- ✓ To create meeting and exchange opportunities for young Europeans, and to foster occasions of participatory democracy, experience sharing, and dialogue between different cultures, being aware that Europe needs youth to look ahead;
- ✓ To value the importance of youth participation in public life, and to identify the social multiplier role that everyone can have in their own local reality in order to promote and safeguard the protection of fundamental rights;
- ✓ To foster intergenerational dialogue between youth and teachers on the topics of diversity and the culture of rights;
- ✓ To deepen awareness of the relation between cultures and rights, within the sphere of universal rights;
- ✓ To educate the youth to a fuller and more responsible involvement in the social and economic development of the European Union, through careful consideration and debate on economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of the European Union;
- ✓ To contribute to the development of the quality of school systems oriented to the promotion of the European citizenship and to democratic participation;
- ✓ To develop and strengthen the partnership between schools of the European Union, supporting educators' cooperation through the exchange of good practices;
- ✓ To promote the respect for human dignity and rights in all their forms of manifestation among the young generation, and to encourage the involvement of the youth in these areas of activities.



The key topic



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The key topic is founded on the common Legacy of Values, stated, proclaimed, and enclosed in a unique system of norms constituting a European “moral code”, consisting of liberty, rule of law, safeguard of human rights, tolerance, equality between men and women, solidarity and democratic participation, with a view to a Europe characterized by pluralism and diversity, and able to protect this legacy.

In this context, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in its articulation, offers a valid reference path, and a valid key to consider the perception level of these rights, values, and principles, how they are practiced, and how they should be adequately protected, not in abstract, but in European citizens’ daily dimension.



Learning activities for students



Outline to follow:

1) *Dignity and Freedoms*

Dignity: human dignity, right to life, to the integrity of the person, prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and prohibition of slavery and forced labour.

Freedoms: right to liberty and security, freedom of thought, con science and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and of association, freedom of the arts and sciences, right to education, freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work, freedom to conduct a business, right to property, and right to asylum.

2) *Equality and Solidarity*

Equality: equality before the law, non-discrimination, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, equality between men and women, rights of the child and of the elderly, and integration of persons with disabilities.

Solidarity: Workers' right to information and consultation within the undertaking, right of access to placement services, protection in the event of unjustified dismissal, fair and just working conditions, prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work, reconciliation of family and professional life, social security and social assistance, health care, environmental protection, and consumer protection.

3) *Citizens' rights and Justice*

Citizens' rights: right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European parliament and at municipal elections, right to good administration, right of access to documents, protection by the European ombudsman, right to petition, freedom of movement and of residence, and diplomatic and consular protection.



Justice: right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial, presumption of innocence and right of defence, principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties, and right not to be tried or punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same criminal offence.

The young participants, assisted by experts and facilitators through specific workgroup activities, will discuss how they live and perceive these values and principles: they will freely develop ideas, proposals, concepts, and they will represent their own key and vision, in particular on:

- ▶ **the meaning and importance they attach to each of these values and principles;**
- ▶ **how they live and conjugate them in their own Country, political and social context, in their daily life, in the relations with others, and faced with large social and economic phenomena as the world crisis, migrations, diversity, freedoms, right to work, to healthcare, to education, and various forms of discrimination (gender, minorities, etc.);**
- ▶ **if they foresee possible difficulties in their application, especially when faced with other fundamental principles of social harmony;**
- ▶ **how they would like the European Union to act in order to better safeguard them; which positions, acts, policies and proposals it should adopt.**





In the months preceding the event:

- ✓ each delegation will choose, based on its interests, and educational and socio-cultural experience, to which group it will subscribe;
- ✓ on the basis of the choice made, the delegations will be able to group with one or more delegations in order to start a discussion on the chosen topic, through the establishment of an on-line community aimed at elaborating a common path;
- ✓ each delegation will prepare a paper discussing a particular aspect or episode of daily life, which offers a general and present-day interpretation of the chosen topic. This will be the starting point for discussions in the work groups. For better underlining the core of the activities of the workgroups, the paper will have to be submitted no later than the 24th October.

In Bologna:

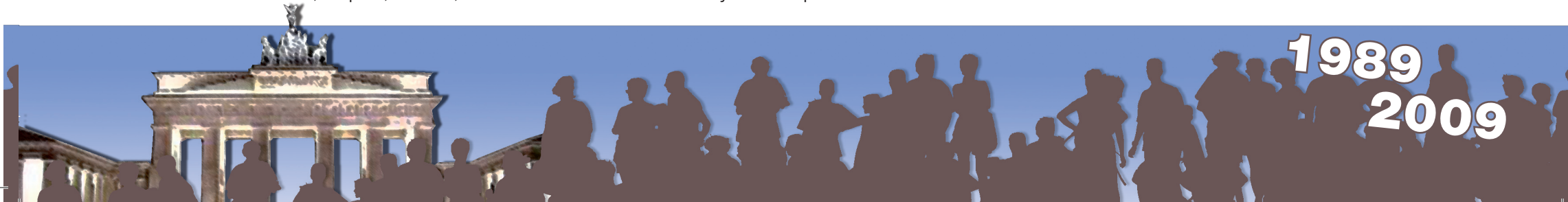
Based on the subscriptions to the indicated topic outlines, **3 different work groups** will be established.

- ▶▶ The groups will share their own papers, and will continue the discussion on the chosen topic with the assistance of facilitators and experts.
- ▶▶ during the plenary session, the work groups will present the conclusions and proposals of their group work;
- ▶▶ the group work will be aimed at elaborating a “Document - proposal” that will be presented during the closing event, representing the point of view and the proposals expressed by the students during the learning activities.

Expected results:

In this scenery, the young Europeans meet and get to know each other, respecting their diversity, but also uncovering elements of a common identity, made of shared values and principles.

By analyzing their experiences and comparing their own daily life with that of other young people, they will discover that they share the same interests, hopes, needs, and thus a common identity of European citizens is built.



Learning activities for teachers



The school is the institution where young people spend most of their time and follow a programme of formal education, but it is also a place where most of their opinions and visions of life are forged.

It is essential that young people, with the assistance of the educators, are accompanied through a path where participation, active citizenship, and participatory democracy are taken and developed as essential values. Schools, as places aimed at the socialization and education of future citizens, can bring their fundamental contribution to this perspective.

The topics of culture and the safeguard of fundamental rights are primal to develop an education to youth active citizenship in a European and Intercultural framework.

In this context, the creativity of education and educators is challenged on the difficult, ambitious, but fascinating track that connects identity and difference, local and global, specificity of roots, and capacity to contaminate and integrate.

Education on the topic of safeguard and respect of fundamental rights, in a larger view, does not only involve some fields of experience and some subjects, but it constitutes a dimension of teaching guiding all the course of education and orientation.

Therefore, education is a place of learning and experience of democratic cohabitation and new citizenship, being aware that the education to the safeguard of rights and to conscious participation confirms the meaning of democracy at the local and global level.

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Teachers' workshop

Parallel to student activities, a Teachers' workshop will take place, on the subject: "Active methods for teaching rights". The teachers will attend the same outline as the students, with an extra attention to the role of School in the development of discussed topics.

Teachers' activities will be based on the following cornerstones:

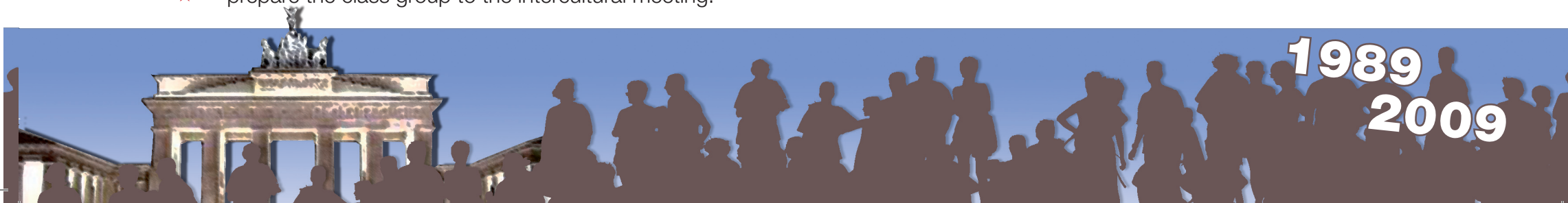
- ★ practical activities similar to the students' ones (for active learning and experimenting of group tools to be used also within one's own school context);
- ★ a moment of work in common between groups of teachers and groups of students in order to share concepts and guidelines raised during group work;
- ★ production of a document with proposals and keys, in the role of educators, on the tackled topic;
- ★ working hypothesis in order to give continuity to the Meeting's activities.

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Learning activities during the weeks preceding the event

This activity aims to:

- ★ support the group of involved teachers in elaborating the chosen topic;
- ★ share some good practices already used in class groups on similar topics;;
- ★ elaborate some proposals of teaching tools (also through methods of non formal education) for the presentation and development in class of the topic "Active methods for teaching rights";
- ★ prepare the class group to the intercultural meeting.



Learning activities during the event

The learning activities have the following objectives:

- ★ to foster discussion and sharing between colleagues on the activities made in class in preparation of the event;
- ★ to compare education methods developed on the topic “Rights” between schools of different participating European countries;
- ★ to elaborate the topic “Rights” through comparison of national experiences and theoretical contributions;
- ★ to elaborate a working school programme on the topic of “Rights”, starting from all the realized experiences.

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Expected results:

From local to global: a general survey on juvenile condition in Europe starting from the experiences of the group.

The possibility to discover the conditions of the youth in Europe today, through reciprocal narrations, and to compare juvenile tendencies, will be very important in order to better understand and protect the “Rights” of each individual as if they were the rights of all.

To sum up..: The group of teachers will produce a final document summarizing the experience. For the elaboration of this document, the group of teachers will have the possibility to cooperate, in some moments, with the representatives of the students.

The document will be presented and discussed, along with student groups’ proposals, during a final public moment.





“After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the new Europe is born”

2009 is the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (EYCI), aimed at enlarging awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation as key competencies for personal, social and economic development. By underlining creativity and innovation, the European Union intends to forge the future of Europe in a context of global competition through the stimulation of the innovative and creative potential of its citizens.

In this framework, the idea is to offer each participating delegation the opportunity to interpret and represent what the fall of the Berlin Wall has meant for Europe, and how this event has changed the destiny of an entire continent and opened totally unseen scenarios, up to bringing to 27 the number of the countries who are now members of the European Union.

Each delegation, individually or in cooperation with a partner school, can present a **video clip** with a maximum duration of 3 minutes.

The **video clips** will have to reach our offices **no later than 4th of November 2009**.

The **video clips** will be presented during a specific moment in one or more evenings. The first top-rated ones will be awarded a prize.

