This paper is taken from

A Europe of Many Cultures
Proceedings of the fifth Conference of the Children's
Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network

London: CiCe 2003

Cultural citizenship in the context of the EU: the attitudes and views of the teachers of civic education in the region of North Moravia and Silesia in the Czech Republic

Jelena Petrucijová and Marcel Meciar
University of Ostrava (Czech Republic)

Since 1989 the Czech Republic has been changing towards an open and multicultural society, rather than a society in which only one predominant pattern of culture, way of life and system of values was asserted. As a future member of the European Union, the Czech Republic must decide on an important complex of problems. Its multicultural character should increase through the influence of European integration, so the question of our tolerance for other cultures and other religious systems is increasingly discussed. This problem is closely connected with others, such as a new concept of citizenship (that of Europe), a new concept of European identity in relation to national, and the problem of a European demos.

The Maastricht Treaty (1991) created a new legal category – European Citizenship. Members

> […] resolved to mark a new stage in the processes of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities […] desiring to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their cultures and their traditions […] resolved to establish a citizenship common to nationals of their countries […] determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the people of Europe (The Maastricht Treaty: Preamble).

The important element is the intention that European citizenship should be seen as a complement to citizenship at a national level, not as its replacement. On the other hand, as a trans-national political formation, the EU in fact negates the traditional conception of the sovereign national state focused on 'national independence' and the congruence between state and nation. The context for citizenship based on belonging to a single nation is being eroded, but international law still fails to distinguish between citizenship and nationality, and regards the first as completely determined by the second. According to Shore this raises a future question of whether in establishing 'European Citizenship' as a status in law, 'the EU has not also created a de facto new form of nationality' (Shore 2000: 66). Another possible question surrounds the relationship between civic and ethnic cultural dimensions in the frame of the concept of European identity.

One of the problems in multicultural societies is a possible clash of cultural and civic identities, and this is closely connected to the problem of cultural exclusion or cultural inclusion. To be excluded from cultural citizenship is to be excluded from full membership of society (Stevenson 2000: 3). The concept of 'cultural citizenship' is the means for overcoming such problems, but what does this consist of?

Renato Rosaldo defines cultural citizenship as 'the right to be different' while enjoying full membership of a democratic and participatory community (Rosaldo 1994). John Urry suggests that we become cultural citizens through the growth of a 'surface' cosmopolitanism that helps produce a certain 'openness' to the rich patterns of geographical and historical cultures the globe has to offer (Urry 1995). Stevenson is of

the opinion that cultural citizenship should be viewed in terms of satisfying demands for full inclusion into the social community. Cultural rights in this sense herald 'a new breed of claims for unhindered representation, recognition without marginalisation, acceptance and integration without 'normalising' distortion'. These rights go beyond civic rights to propagate a cultural identity or life style (Stevenson 2000: 3). Cultural citizenship can be said to have been fulfilled to the extent to which society makes commonly available the semiotic and material cultures necessary in order to make social life meaningful, critique practices of domination, and allow for the recognition of difference under conditions of tolerance and mutual respect (Stevenson 1997: 42).

If it is possible to be, for example, a German and a European simultaneously, is it possible to be a Turk in Germany and also a European? The political efforts and initiatives of the EU seek to convince us of a possible successful co-existence of different ethnic, cultural and national groups in a democratic Europe. We should accept that different kinds of communities such as local, regional, national and European can co-exist, and that a national-cultural community can exist together with a more political supranational and civic 'demos'. While all European citizens should be convinced that the European Union and the work of the European institutions is for the common good, there are 'key specific groups who must be convinced', such as women, youth, members of ethnic groups, and so on (CEC 1988, Bulletin of the EC, Supplement 2). Solving the problem of the inclusion of marginalised groups becomes a necessary part of European integration.

An important area for Europe-building purposes is to be found within the field of educational policy. As a future member of the EU, the Czech Republic tries to be ready for integration processes, and our educational institutions are assimilating new methods of, for example, multicultural education and the European dimension of civic education.

The process of the integration of groups with different cultural, religious and other backgrounds (sometimes also potentially excluded groups) should be mediated by a system of agents, among which the teachers/trainers of European citizenship have an important role. Such teachers should be able
- to educate the children with different cultural, ethnic background and
- to mediate between members of minorities, immigrants (with their ambitions and needs on the way to integration) and the majority society.

They should exert influence on the social opinion of society and its willingness to co-operate with minorities, especially of immigrants and refugees and, in this way to overcome tendencies to separation, assimilation, segregation, marginalisation and manifestations of xenophobia and racism. On the other hand, the trainers should be able to influence the readiness of children

> to be involved in the new cultural and social environment, to receive new language competencies, to get to know new cultural habits and traditions, patterns of behaviour, social roles and to be prepared to become a full-fledged citizen. To be a citizen means to share the values of democratic society, to recognise one's duties and rights, to participate in social and political life and to co-operate with other people on the principles of freedom, tolerance, solidarity etc. (CIVITAS 1991: 27).

Although we differ in our cultural, ethnic, national and religious backgrounds, as Europeans share common qualities of citizenship. The cultivation of civic qualities in children as the new citizens of the EU, and in the teachers who mediate for them their new rights, duties, abilities and skills, is an important part of successful European integration. But to be able to mediate such kinds of qualities for children means that the teachers must possess them and use them in everyday practice.

As members of a Department of Civic Education which prepares future teachers of civic education, we decided to research the readiness of the current teachers of civic education to develop cultural citizenship, their experience of multicultural reality and multicultural education, and their points of view concerning European identity and European citizenship taking into consideration that civic education is not only about political knowledge and skills but is also concerned with social qualities (e.g. social emphatic behaviour as the necessary condition of non-violent co-existence), and general human values (humanism, tolerance, solidarity are closely connected with acceptance of the value of human being and life, necessity of freedom etc).

The research

This brief report is based on data gathered during a pilot study. A standardised questionnaire was tested and a set of open questions was put with the help of students of the Department of Civic Education. After collecting the results we gained a perspective of the positives and negatives of the questionnaire and a set of interesting 'soft data' from the open questions. What is presented here is neither statistical nor quantitative, but rather a qualitative view of the information we received from the teachers of Civic Education in the Moravia-Silesian region who conduct practical lessons with our students.

The questionnaire tested was designed to be used in an exploratory project called 'The Further Professionalisation of Teachers' and Trainers' Education', which is led by project co-ordinator Hana Lukášová-Kantorková. Two aspects of the question of citizenship are investigated. The first deals with the teacher's opinion about ways to including marginalised groups in society, with a particular focus on groups of newcomers with different cultural backgrounds, and the second seeks to investigate the teachers' affiliation to Europe and to their country of origin.

At a theoretical level inclusion or the process of integration is based on the three grade models - of assimilation, of the 'melting pot', and of cultural pluralism (Giddens 1999: 251):
1. The principle of assimilation is embodied in the loss of previous traditions and habits - immigrants are made to abandon them and to conform to the new social institutions of the receiving country.
2. 'Melting pot' means that immigrants' traditions and habits are not suppressed by the dominant traditions of the new country: the traditions are combined and so new cultural patterns evolve.
3. The view of supporters of cultural pluralism is to advance a pluralistic society which would respect a variety of diverse cultures as equal[1].

---

[1] Cultural pluralism in this sense is close to the concept of multiculturalism. But John Rex, for example, explains the notion of plural society as a model of racial domination – where 'one group dominates the others' (Rex 1997: 208).

© CiCe European Thematic Network

The Civics teachers we interviewed mostly tended towards cultural pluralism, but many of them expressed apprehensions about adherence to the law by newcomers: they judged inclusion through respect for the law. Their statements were a mixture of the first and third types of integration, where immigrants do not have to abandon their traditions but must conform to the values of the receiving country: under such conditions they can of course develop their culture as equal.

Various sources of such attitudes can be described. The emphasis on conformity toward major values and toward law-abiding has come about through the historical background and development of Czech society (the former Czechoslovakia) over the last 41 years. Isolation led people to unity and subsequently to more xenophobic attitudes than among people in multicultural environments[2]. After the so-called 'Velvet Revolution' the omnipresent catharsis has influenced many spheres of life including the application of law.

'Foreign' is seen as problematic and likely not to respect the law. Some studies (e.g. Freiová 1993) have acknowledged that immigrant groups in the Czech Republic do not participate more significantly in crime than the settled (native) population, but a stereotypical image of higher criminality in immigrant groups was revealed in the statements of some of the teachers we interviewed. A certain tacit coldness toward newcomers was noticed among teachers from areas with higher rates of social economical problems (i. e. counties of the research region with higher rates of unemployment, of criminality, and with an ageing population).

Fortunately the teachers overall considered tolerance and equality of opportunity to be an important part of society and of school education. Their history means that they are unused to diversity – this seems to be a deep anthropological constant of certain parts of contemporary Czech society (marginal regions, class and status groups concerned with maintaining their living standards etc.) - and only communication can make the situation better. Teachers stand in the front line ...

The question of European identity brought a variety of interesting reactions. It seemed that the teachers we interviewed felt no tension between being a member of a regional community (of the place where he/she lives, of a town, a city or a country) and being a potential member of the European demos. The feelings about Europe are most impressive on the level of cultural, historical, environmental and emotive meanings, as shown in Figure 1.

---

[2] The research into inter-ethnical co-existence proved that people in touch with another ethnic group have significantly more positive attitudes than members of the same group with lack of interaction with another group. For example Slovak social psychologist Viera Bačová has discovered this regularity between Slovaks and Hungarians living at the territory of the Slovak Republic (Bačová 1996).

Figure 1 The EUROPE - typology of textual statements about subjective perception of Europe from teachers of Civil Education, who led the practice of students in spring 2003

<div style="border:1px solid">

Environmental-emotive perspective

- *environment I like to live and to work in*
- *home (in a wider sense) I belong into*
- *home, a certain standard of living*

    Emotive-cultural sub-perspective

- *beautiful, well-educated, but unfortunately also at fault sometimes*

Cultural-historical perspective

    Civilisation-cultural sub-perspective

- *culture, national specification, religious uniformity (Christianity)*
- *Occident (Western Civilisation)*
- *cultivated continent*
- *continent, which was for a long era at the head of the development of civilisation*

    Historical-traditional sub-perspective

- *history, tradition*
- *continent with rich history, tradition and perhaps with civilised inhabitants*
- *the old continent, history, sights*

    Ethnocentric sub-perspective

- *cultural centre of the world*

Political perspective

- an idea of the United States of Europe - a basis: common interests, also common history of civilisation - perhaps the best journey to stability, peace and economic prosperity
- alliance of (the European) countries

</div>

The so-called political perspective, in which Europe is most frequently identified with the existing European Union, brought some apprehensions that were influenced by the forthcoming referendum in the Czech Republic.

The decision to join or not to join the Union is seen as crucial. The more critical respondents pointed out the importance of equality of all the member countries regardless of their size or power. On the other hand the clear significance of some big European countries was acknowledged. In the view of these Civics teachers there is a triad of countries which plays a dominant role in questions of policy among the European countries: these are Great Britain and the first founders of the European structures, Germany and France. Some of the respondents referred also to the importance of Russia.

Conclusion

The importance of an inclusive and integrative approach in European policy is evident on all possible levels - in individual, group and national spheres. One important way of

achieving this is though education. The concept of cultural citizenship opens the gate for everyone (every person, every country), but the success of a great idea depends on its being realised. We conclude our paper with the statement of one of the teachers answering the question 'Where does Europe end in your opinion?' 'It is Europe where people feel themselves to be Europeans'.

References

Bačová, V. (1996) *Etnická identita a historické zmeny. Štúdia obyvateľov vybraných obcí Slovenska [Ethnic Identity and Historical Changes. The Study of Inhabitants of the Chosen Municipalities of Slovakia]*. Bratislava: VEDA.

CIVITAS (1991) ed.Ch. F. Bahmueller. Calabacas: Centre for Civic Education.

Freiová, M. (1993) *Uprchlická otázka a my. [The question of refugees and us]*. Občanský institut: Praha.

Giddens, A. (1999) *Sociologie* [orig. *Sociology* 1993] Praha: Argo.

Höjelid, S. (2001) European Integration and the Idea of European Identity: Obstacles and Possibilities, in: *ECPR Joint Sessions Grenoble*. Workshop 19: Identity Politics.

Rex, J. (1997) The concept of a multicultural society, in Guibernau, M and J. Rex (eds) *The Ethnicity Reader. Nationalism, multiculturalism and migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1994) Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3): 402-411 in Stevenson, N. (2000) *Culture and Citizenship*. London: Sage.

Shore, Ch. (2000) *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. London: Routledge.

Stevenson, N. (1997) Globalisation, National Cultures and Cultural Citizenship, *Sociological Quarterly*, 38, 1.

Stevenson, N. (2000) *Culture and Citizenship*. London: Sage.

Urry, J. (1995) *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge. in Stevenson, N. (2000) *Culture and Citizenship*. London: Sage.