



European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education



Joy of Learning

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The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE) comprises 19 national Waldorf Associations, representing 570 schools in Europe and another 140 in North America. There are around 870 schools in 60 countries worldwide and more than 1600 kindergartens.

Our purpose is to strengthen and develop Steiner education in our member countries by active interest and a mutual sharing of experience.

The international Steiner curriculum provides the key principles for an education founded in the local culture and context. Our innovative approach encourages children to grow as confident world citizens, capable of valuing their own circumstances and background within diversity. Self-esteem, respect for the culture, values and traditions of others, tolerance and understanding are essential qualities for the unfolding of individual potential as is a commitment to lifelong learning.

As a group of national and international Associations we take our pedagogical principles into account in the way we work together. In an increasingly turbulent and changing world, we

Who we are.

attempt to show by example that international, cross-cultural activities can be inspiring and beneficial and can help children to develop the perspectives and skills to make a real difference.

Our Aims.

To be an international platform for member associations.

To exchange information and experiences and develop educational practices for the benefit of our constituent schools and institutions.

To create and co-ordinate a common policy on a European level and undertake the relevant activities.

To promote quality care in our institutions.

To discuss, choose and implement international projects.

To engage in dialogue with fellow educationalists, academics, politicians and education policy makers and all those who care for the well-being of children.

To influence politics and legislation both on a national and European level for the benefit and protection of Childhood and Youth.



Learning Together

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Members

Austria* (12 schools) www.waldorf.at
 Belgium (19) www.steinerscholen.be
 Czech Republic (8) www.waldorf.cz
 Denmark (18) www.rudolfsteinerskoler.dk
 Finland (21) www.steinerkoulu.fi
 France (12) www.steiner-waldorf.org
 Germany* (187) www.waldorfschule.de
 Hungary (18) www.waldorf.hu
 Italy (21) www.rudolfsteiner.it/federazioneintro
 Luxembourg* (1) www.waldorf.lu
 Netherlands* (90) www.vrijescholen.nl
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 Sweden* (40) www.waldorf.se
 Switzerland (36) www.steinerschule.ch
 United Kingdom and Ireland (31) www.steinerwaldorf.org.uk

* Board members

Affiliate member

North America (140) www.awsna.org

Other European Countries

Croatia (2) Estonia (9) Iceland (2) Latvia (4)
 Lithuania (4) Moldavia (1) Poland (2)
 Romania (13) Slovakia (1) Ukraine (7)

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Why we are in dialogue.

As we approach a new era for European cultural and political cooperation and another step in the development towards a European educational space that will give rise to a new spirit and ethos within European educational establishments, we welcome the opportunity to offer some ideas and practices.

We promote the educational welfare of all children in Europe regardless of background, ethnicity, creed, financial status or gender. For most of the last century we have been pioneering an approach that genuinely attempts to work with young human being in an

integrated, creative and respectful way.

A well-grounded and diverse dialogue is essential for all our futures. By developing concepts and practices about how citizenship, responsibility and freedom can best be fostered in the child, we hope to ensure a fulfilling and meaningful life for everyone. We feel the time is ripe for such a debate and wish to contribute to this.

We see the need for all those involved in the education of children to look beyond externally measured outcomes towards an educational policy and practice that takes the human spirit into account.

We celebrate the diversity and rich cultural tapestry of Europe and the child's essential immersion in the culture and environment of their birth. However we also believe that in a cosmopolitan age our children need a global foundation so that they can become responsible, tolerant and interested citizens of the world. Respect and wonder for the natural world together with a love of one's fellow beings is the foundation for a moral ecology to meet the challenges of an increasingly challenging and complex world.

CITIZENSHIP, EUROPE AND STEINER EDUCATION.

Towards promoting pluralism, inter-operability of educational systems and horizontal subsidiarity in Europe.

Education's task is to assist children and young people to find their own paths in freedom, giving them the tools to develop their own values within a framework of tolerance, trust and interest in others. They should be enabled to respect and celebrate a wide diversity of cultures, while perceiving the common humanity in all people. This goal should include teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age, as agreed in principle by the European Council in Barcelona on March 15-16 2002¹ and as pioneered by Steiner Schools around the world.

The basic principle of universal access² can be difficult to accomplish due to inadequate funding for schools not directly run by the state. Genuine mobility should include geographical mobility as well as increased permeability between the teaching and other professions. This must include increased recognition for non-

formal learning in gaining qualified teacher status. This development is essential for increased openness to the wider world³.

Schools imbued with European ideals need to be encouraged to work across national boundaries and endeavour to foster a civil society that is truly trans-cultural, without discrimination or prejudice.

Children are the citizens of the future and deserve due regard during their education in accordance with the vision of a Europe peopled by citizens able to live together in harmony and tolerance.

The task of education professionals should be recognised and supported beyond national interest and commercial gain. This includes the right to teach creative and integrated curricula, the right to schools' self-governance within agreed levels of accountability, provision of quality care and the right to consistent and non-intrusive

financial support. Within a policy of pluralism, financial support should also be available for schools which do not follow national curricula, if they are striving to accomplish the inter-operability of educational systems and methods at the European level and are genuinely inclusive.

Steiner Waldorf schools are prepared to work with all educators and policy makers in order to facilitate constructive dialogue. We can learn from each other and thereby improve and develop schools that are real learning communities giving all European children the educational opportunities they deserve.

¹ Document No. SN 100/02 ADD 1 EN of the European Union with the Conclusions of the Barcelona European Council March 15 and 16, 2002. Paragraph 44

² *idem.* Paragraph 43

³ *idem.* Paragraph 33 and 43

Nimble Fingers : Nimble Minds



Resolution on Freedom of Education in the European Community. Passed in the European Parliament 14-3-1984.

In accordance with the right to freedom of education, Member States shall be required to provide the financial means whereby this right can be exercised in practice, and to make the necessary public grants to enable schools to carry out their tasks and fulfil their duties under the same conditions as in corresponding State establishments, without discrimination as regards administration, parents, pupils or staff.

Nurturing Childhood



Some Key Characteristics of Steiner Waldorf Education.

- All schools are co-educational, fully comprehensive and integrated from the age of 6/7 to, ideally, 18/19.
 - They are run co-operatively by a College of Teachers using a flat- management system. All have a legal Council of Management and there is active parent participation in all areas of school life.
 - All pupils share the broad, internationally recognised Waldorf curriculum, which is non-prescriptive and proven over 80 years. It is in accord with their developmental needs, without undue early specialisation or inappropriate academic pressure.
 - Schools are extended learning environments for parents and teachers to work co-operatively in support of children's education.
 - Formative assessment rather than a testing regime is practiced.
 - Schools work with the ideal that such education should be accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, creed or financial circumstances.
 - Two modern languages taught from the age of 6.
 - Whole class teaching in aesthetically pleasing and secure learning environment where qualities of childhood are nurtured and respected.
 - An accompanying class teacher from school entry age for several years in succession.
 - Children based in their own home classroom except for specialist areas.
 - All-age schools with mixed ability classes according to the age of the child and not streamed by achievement.
 - Science and technology taught throughout in age-appropriate form.
 - Key skills such as numeracy and literacy presented in an imaginative and creative manner.
 - Enhanced mobility and international school exchanges because of common ethos and related core curriculum.
 - Children being well grounded in their cultural environment and also conscious of being world citizens.
 - The development of a European-wide leaving portfolio.
- Steiner schools continue to pioneer
- An integrated balance of artistic, practical and intellectual content in the curriculum with an emphasis on social skills and spiritual values.
 - An early years approach that provides time and space for development of key skills is a basis for later literacy, numeracy, social and emotional competence.
 - Block periods for core Steiner curriculum.