

***The Europeanisation of culture and education:  
propaganda or open debate?***

**SUMMARY**

*On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007 Global Vision hosted a seminar with Chris Heaton-Harris MEP and Dr David Green, Director of Civitas. A summary of the key points from their presentations and the subsequent discussion are detailed below.*

**Chris Heaton-Harris**

The central problem here is that people look at any top-line that says 'education' and just think – this must be good for you. In fact most 'educational' material emanating from the EU is more like pro-integration propaganda.

Everything the EU does within education is based on the premise that '*it must be pro-European and it must be propaganda*'.

The EU Commission's 'Lifelong Learning Programme' has four aspects for different levels of education:

COMENIUS for schools

ERASMUS for higher education

LEONARDO DA VINCI for vocational and educational training

GRUNDTVIG for adult education

More worrisome appears to be the larger, transversal Jean Monnet Programme. According to official literature its objective is to support the other programmes '*stimulate excellence in teaching, research and reflection*', so far so good, but such excellence is to be promoted solely '*in European integration studies in higher education institutions*'. It is not there to spread best practice in teaching, or anything other than to spread the word of European integration as a purely good thing.

Between 2007 and 2013, EUR 7 billion will be invested in the Lifelong Learning Programme, with 6 million individuals expected to participate in the Comenius and Erasmus sub-programmes alone.

Jan Figel (European Commissioner responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth) has written that '*ERASMUS has been and remains a key factor in the internationalisation and "Europeanisation" of education in the EU.*'

As part of the Lifelong Learning Programme there is also funding available 'to support European associations in the field of education and training or which pursue an objective which is part of an EU policy'. The only organisations eligible to receive such funding are those which 'exist as a body pursuing an aim of general European interest', i.e. you have to be 100% behind European integration to receive what is ultimately propaganda money.

One must wonder how much our government knows, or cares, about the number of youth organisations receiving funding from this source, including the YMCA and Girl Guides. It means the EU's 'tentacles are now reaching right down to organisations you and I would consider otherwise innocuous.'

The most despicable method the Commission employs to get children more interested in the ideals of the European elite is a cartoon it funds through the European Movement, called 'Captain Euro'. It entices children with comic exaggeration, depicting EU representatives as the 'new ambassadors of global peace', locked in perpetual battle with an evil organisation fronted by Dr. D. Vider, who aims to divide Europe and create his own empire. This is quite clearly the most blatant indoctrination of children, from a very young age.



Both the Commission and Parliament produce a substantial quantity of supposedly educational literature – such as 'The European Union: What's it all about?' This pamphlet is sent to every school in the country and presented as a guide to the EU for both students and teachers, but its real content is indicative of a broader misdirection. While the introduction states that 'all too often myths and fairytales about Brussels obscure what is really happening in the European Union; so uncovering the facts is important'. What then follows is surprisingly light on facts, focusing instead on promoting Europe as a 'rich, exotic cultural and racial mix' and suggesting the importance of the EU's role in determining 'your standard of living...career opportunities...rights as a consumer... rights to travel', rather than actually detailing any of those facts. The suggested further reading includes other Commission sponsored publications, including one entitled 'When will the euro be in our pockets'.

The Comenius School Partnership scheme that ran between 2003 and 2006, included an investigation into what was referred to as a 'Democrisis'. It aimed at 'awakening the interest of young people in participation in political life' including at a European level by 'studying the lack of, and threats to, democracy in different parts of the world'. It might be suggested they could look closer to home!

Such materials present just one side of the argument, hidden behind a notion of education, which it patently is not. Education requires presentation of facts, the detailing both sides of an argument and equipping individuals to analyse information themselves before coming to their own conclusions. These biased materials are typical of 'educational' resources produced by the Commission – full of pleasantries about shared social and cultural ties within Europe but lacking hard facts about the EU, its institutions and policies. It is a sinister use of British taxpayers' money for the purpose of introducing pro-EU propaganda into the education system.

### **David Green**

We find ourselves in a similar situation to that of 18<sup>th</sup> Century France prior to the revolution, only now it is EU officials that perceive themselves as the elite, champions of moral principle and distrusting of the judgement of the ignorant masses, too prejudiced to appreciate their efforts to further the progression of the human condition. This elite claims to represent reason and yet defends its position with emotive arguments and false contrasts, such as peace and war, goodwill to all as opposed to nationalist aggression, unity versus division.

The *Civitas EU Education Project* is not rivalling the good work of many other EU-sceptical organisations, but rather complimenting their efforts in the specifically focused area of Sixth Form education, through four activities:

The **EU-sceptical talks** provided in schools by our network of high-profile speakers (including politicians, journalists and business people), offer an opportunity for students to hear the counter arguments to the regular EU content of their studies, allowing them to develop better-informed opinions on the subject. Because teachers are frequently uncomfortable with sceptical speakers addressing their students, the talks therefore focus on factual introductions of the institutions and policies before speakers detail their own political opinions, introducing them as such.

Teachers are ever-mindful of examination demands and, in order to gain greater uptake for the talks, Civitas highlights the talks' relevance to specific examination content within the A-level subjects of Government & Politics, Economics and Business Studies. In addition many talks are held as curriculum enrichment events for whole Sixth Form year groups, with less detailed analysis of the EU provided by the speakers, who focus instead on current issues gaining media prominence.

This programme is supplemented by the provision of speakers for **Debates** in schools, in collaboration with *Europe Direct*. These events have proven less educationally sensitive to arrange, allowing for both sides of the argument to be presented at once and providing students the opportunity to witness firsthand the intensity of debate between the two sides. The sceptical movement has nothing to fear from sharing a platform with representatives of such organisations, as debates invariably conclude favourably, proving conclusively that more knowledge results in more scepticism.

An annual Sixth Form **Conference** on the EU held by Civitas in Westminster, provides an opportunity to hear higher profile speakers lecturing on and debating current developments within the EU relating to their studies. Last year's conference witnessed the emotive arguments employed by many pro-EU advocates, in this case Kenneth Clarke QC MP, who assumed the initiative in his debate by once again contrasting those in favour of peace through the EU as being opposed to all others being in favour of war and suggesting that we all need to eat and therefore must need the Common Agricultural Policy. Events such as the conference offer a good platform on which to debunk such fallacies.

Civitas is also concerned about the lack of balanced materials provided for teachers to use when educating students about the EU. In response to this situation an interactive educational resource has been created called **EU Facts**. This is a compilation of over seventy cross-linked factsheets on various aspects of the EU, its institutions and their policies and available free online. The factsheets are designed for both teachers and students, to act as either handouts or summary sheets and are regularly updated online to ensure that the information they contain is both accurate and current. Crucially, they have been refereed for accuracy by experts from *both* sides of the EU argument, so that they present information that is even-handed and without a political agenda. *EU Facts* can be found at [www.eufacts.org.uk](http://www.eufacts.org.uk)

In total the Civitas EU Education Project is reaching, at a conservative estimate, 20% of secondary schools. However we still face a massive task, attempting to fight back in a reasoned and balanced way against an educational behemoth that is anything but reasoned and balanced, functioning as nothing more than a propaganda machine fuelled by tax payers' money.

### Points raised during the Q&A and discussion period

It is incredibly difficult to get accurate figures as to how much such projects as *Captain Euro* actually cost because the Commission either funds them via another organisation, such as the European Movement in this case (which in turn has offices in all member states and can therefore pass on funding through a number of channels, further denying accountability), or claims to have persuaded private companies to financially support them. In any case the Commission does all it can to avoid answering parliamentary questions, or obscure it answers when it does. A good example of this is an organisation called 'Prom Europe', established to promote the euro. Both they and the Commission were asked if they received funding from the Commission. Prom Europe responded that they did not receive any, while the Commission said they receive EUR 150,000 a year.

The presence of a '*European Dimension*' (since a Council of the European Community resolution in 1988) in all aspects of education from Y10 upwards, is indicative of the accepted approach to teaching of the EU: providing simplistic materials focusing on 'how Europe is good for me' with the purpose of promoting positive thinking about the EU.

A good example of how the European Dimension is deployed comes from Staffordshire LEA whose guidelines state a need for the European Dimension as 'a counter-balance to misinformed, excessively nationalistic and anti-foreigner rhetoric which is sometimes influential in our society', yet makes no mention of questioning the advantages of EU membership (another example of the false contrasts; you are either for further European integration or you 'anti-foreigner'). The site can be found at: [www.sln.org.uk/mfl/eurodimpolicy.htm](http://www.sln.org.uk/mfl/eurodimpolicy.htm)

For further information on anything discussed during the seminar, or on the *Civitas EU Education Project* please contact either:

[Pete.quentin@civitas.org.uk](mailto:Pete.quentin@civitas.org.uk)

Civitas  
77 Great Peter Street  
London  
SW1P 2EZ

020 7799 6677

[sara@global-vision.net](mailto:sara@global-vision.net)

Global Vision  
57 Tufton Street  
London  
SW1P 3QL

020 7233 3121