

ESHA Newsletter



European School Heads Association

www.esha.org

November/December 2005

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !



Homestays

First exchanges in Homestays project.

In the ESHA international Homestays program the first exchanges have been realised. The past few month's candidates from various countries applied for participation in this program. Now the first matches could be made. Peter Iaboni, vice principal on a composite secondary school in Toronto, Canada, will have an exchange with Roberto Pesce, headmaster on a upper secondary school in Verona, Italy. The second match is in secondary education between two female schoolleaders : Maryse Rousset David from France and Sandy Ford from Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

The Homestays program was launched during the ESHA GB meeting in Kiev last May. All ESHA members participate, but also school leader organisations from Canada, United States and Australia. In the program couples of two schoolleaders from different countries visit each other for approximately one week. During this week they stay with their colleague at home and participate in his/her school (shadowing). The result is a very intense exchange and feedback on a relatively low cost base.

The program is run by ESHA-member AVS. Participants can apply on the website www.avs.nl (click English AVS pages). K.d.O

General Board meeting in Helsinki

Two and a half days of intensive and creative work ! The normal business and elections took place at the beginning : new elected as Treasurer, Nelly Guet from France and as annual Member, Chris Harrison from UK (NAHT), Jorma Lempinen from Finland was re-elected as General Secretary. We thanked Alan Stockley - the former Treasurer for his work and are happy that he will stay in contact for our future activity. We wish him all the power to rebuild his school in the next years. Working groups followed. The main topic was about Autonomy and the results were interesting and a good base to develop out of this a draft for a position paper in Potsdam. Another topic was the book project : the German Page will be sent to all our members and so we expect to get all pages in Potsdam and to print the book for the Convention in Rome. The working group for a ESHA Magazine, the survey of the working conditions of Principals and the thoughts about sponsoring were presented to the Board and the groups will continue their work till Potsdam (24-26th March 2006). It will be difficult to reach the Finnish standard of organisation and hospitality, but Germany will try hard. The visit of the outstanding National Opera, the Science Center Heureka visit and the theatre presentation of Vaskivuori School were big events! A special thank to Jorma Lempinen and Sure Fire and especially to Ms. Eira Kasper and Mr. Peter Johnson. Burkhard Mielke

European School Leadership Network

URGENT! John West Burnham did a remarkable work, and presented it in Brussels on 16th December. This module "The Leadership of Change" is an absolute need for every schoolleader to be fit for the future. We have to motivate and support at least one member of each organization- for the module that will run in 2006. The participants will first meet in Fuiggi near Rome on 16-18th March and then work on-line. The results will be presented in November in Rome during the Conference. Please help ESHA disseminate this excellent project! Participants can apply by sending an e-mail to : anne.gillaran@eun.org or : nellyguet@yahoo.com

Educatec



ESHA France organized in Paris, last November 24th, a very interesting panel on school Autonomy, hosted by Educatec, a French exhibition about *Education*. Around the table, school heads coming from many different countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Russia, Ukraine. By chance, this event took place just a few days after the General Board held in Helsinki, where the same issue had been deeply debated for two days (*see aside*). And almost everyone at this table had also attended the previous meeting. This gave the audience a unique opportunity to get in touch what the "state of the art" about this matter throughout Europe.

What came out from the discussion was not unexpected: while everyone prizes autonomy in theory, each school system gives it a different meaning in practice. And it was no surprise to learn that school authorities from the countries with a very centralized model remain very dubious towards more autonomy for schools. On the other hand, it was also interesting to see that the school heads - the *men on the field*, so to say - are all convinced that, without autonomy, there is no chance for promoting quality in education and real equality of opportunities for every pupil. Even though this concept was expressed in different ways, all the speakers agreed with it.

For those who had the chance of attending, the two hours spent there were certainly worth the visit to the Salon. We all expect that similar events can take place more frequently in the future. A big thank to ESHA France for having made it possible.
Antonino Petrolino

AXIA Barcelona - The Iberian difference



AXIA, the association of school heads and former school heads of Catalunya, held its fourth annual conference on November 4th-5th in Barcelona, Spain. The mixed membership of the association well reveals what is known as the Iberian difference: school heads are not professionals, permanently appointed for leading the schools. They are teachers, elected by their colleagues just for a term: at the end, they may, or may not, be re-elected.

AXIA, since its origin, has been struggling for changing this situation. And one of the ways they adopted for this has been to invite, in their annual conference, some colleagues from different European countries, asking them to speak about their professional status and the influence that a good leadership may have on the quality of education.

This year, guest speakers came from Ireland (Michael McCann), France (Nelly Guet) and Finland (Jorma Lempinen). Three different countries and three very diverse models: in each of them the school head is a professional, specifically trained and permanently appointed. The prevailing opinion in Europe is indeed that school leadership is a full time job, that requires skills of its own, not to be confused with those needed for just teaching.

ESHA has since always shared this view and wants to support its Spanish colleagues in their efforts towards the recognition of a professional status corresponding to the European standard. A.P.