



Dr. Burkhard Mielke
ESHA President

Opening speech for the Conference

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ESHA 10th Conference

Cari colleghi,
come presidente dell'ESHA è per me un grande piacere
darvi il benvenuto a Roma. Io sono certo che la
Conferenza di Roma costituirà per ciascuno di voi
un'occasione unica, da vivere insieme con colleghi ed
esperti di ogni parte d'Europa ed ospiti provenienti dal
mondo intero.

Honourable Minister of Education Giuseppe Fioroni
Honourable President of the hosting organisation ANP,
Mr. Giorgio Rembado
My dear friend Antonino Petrolino
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues, dear friends from all over Europe and
the World.

It is a great honour and pleasure for ESHA – the
European School Heads Organisation - and for me as
President of ESHA, to welcome you all, to welcome so
many educators from Europe, from East to West, from
the distant North to the far South and to welcome our
partners and friends from Asia, Africa, America and
Australia . You came to Rome from

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Cyprus,
Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary,
Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenia, Luxemburg,
Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa,
Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom,
United States of America, Uzbekistan.

It is, since now, the biggest attendance ESHA ever had in its Conferences, both for the total number (520 participants) and for the number of countries (30) and continents(5) represented.

Not to mention the fact that speakers and workshop animators come from 13 different countries: a wealth of professional experience and of good practices that is hard to find at the same time in a unique event.

For ESHA, this Conference is also an anniversary, After Maastricht in 1988, Bath, Bonn, Antwerp, Cork, Maastricht again in 1998, Malmö, Tallin and Stavanger we meet in Rome for the 10th time. Rome is also the City “where it all began”, the City of the Treaty of Rome that created the European Union.

It is also a great pleasure and a great honour to me to welcome our invited guests, Presidents or representatives from our partner organisations: Petros Pashardis from CCEAM (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management), Blair Hilts (OPC - Ontario Principals Council), David Wylde (ICP- International Confederation of Principals), Rick Matzer (AEDE - Association Européenne des Enseignants) and Martine Meheut (AEDE France) .

Greetings came from our American partner organisations NASSP and NAESP, the US National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals.

And a particular word of welcome to members of ESHA General Board, the Presidents and National Coordinators, who represent their organisations and their countries.

You are in Rome for the 10 th Biennial Conference of ESHA: in Rome, the city

where it all began 49 years ago. Next year in 2007, we will celebrate the 50 th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the Treaty establishing the European Community and the beginning of the European Union.

Future with an ancient heart – the motto of the conference describes where we are coming from and what our common ground is, the basis of our European culture, and from where we have to build our future. From the beginnings in Greece and Rome, interrupted by a long, dark period in medieval times, we have finally found our way back to our roots which are everywhere present in architecture, literature, languages, theatre, and science. The future is built on the shoulders of the past - this is our European tradition.

The themes of the conference however sound very modern: Autonomy, Achievement, Accountability, but they are also part of our tradition even if our ancestors used another vocabulary.

We come together here in Rome to discuss theses topics, to be informed about developments in different

countries and to exchange ideas how we can create equal conditions for our schools in Europe.

This is not only useful; it is an absolute necessity to be part of the discussion among politicians and researchers to implement the needs of schools.

Autonomous or semi-autonomous schools are different from centralized and top down models.

- It is good to have autonomy but schools have at the same time to accept the responsibility for the results of their work
- It is good to set objectives but schools have to accept evaluation to see if they achieved in reaching these goals.
- It is good to have a budget if schools know that accountability can not be neglected.

I think we all agree that this is common sense. It is also common sense that in some respects we could and should learn some techniques from the management models of industry.

But we have always to be aware that economic principles are different to the ideals of education. And we have to be aware of the fact that most governments and politicians did not want to give up or lose influence, power and control over their schools: they grant more

autonomy to their schools normally only in difficult times with political and financial problems.

The transfer of responsibility to schools is accompanied by a new system which guarantees to keep control over the schools through inspection, standards and testing.

There is a broad spectrum between Finland and England or Germany and France and the study of the different systems shows that we have a huge variety in Europe and completely different understanding about the same terms such as autonomy and inspection. The anglosaxon models of OFSTED and 'No child left behind' are examples which have to be discussed in our workshops and confronted with another kind of understanding of schools.

As the leash lengthens, the collar narrows – so a school head from England described their inspection system. Is this what we understand of autonomy? Or is the Finnish model of trust the right way?

These are the questions we will hear about through our key note speakers and in the parallel sessions

It is a honour for me to welcome our keynote speakers:

Domenico Lenarduzzi, Roberto Polli, Pasi Sahlberg, Roberto Ruffino, Roger-François Gauthier, Armin Lohmann, Antonio Giunta La Spada, Luisa Ribolzi, John West-Burnham.

And the speakers of our 20 parallel sessions:

Bo Andersson, Tim Andrew, Linda Austin, Claire Ballantyne, Herman Bosman, Stefan Brauckmann, Lorenzo Caselli, Grazia Fassorra, Jean-Michel Fouquet, Rosanna Ghiaroni, Anne Gilleran, Kate Griffin, Nelly Guet, Henk Janssen, Peter Johnson, Rolf Koerber, Irina Kozina, Jaap Molenaar, Petros Pashiardis, Jaume Prat, Ivan Renesto, Margret Rössler, Frans Schmitz, Sue Swaffield, Maria Szabó, Marilyn C. Terranova, Ingrid Tijo, Rinnie Van der Horst, Erna Van Hest, John West-Burnham, Bert Zweers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Lifelong learning, key competences, mobility, equity and efficiency are the communications of the European Council and Parliament following the Lisbon Protocol.

To approach the aim of equity and efficiency in European Education, lifelong learning is an absolutely must.

The key competences for lifelong learning, as recommended by the European Parliament and the Commission, are a significant foundation which we as School Heads in Europe accept and support. We will disseminate them in our organization ESHA and integrate them in our work.

As school heads and principals we have to stress the following points

1. Language competences (mother tongue and foreign languages) are for us the essential and fundamental condition to share in learning processes and to meet the need for social and regional mobility in Europe. Therefore we need in addition to other tools for learning more exchange programs for students and adults including teachers and school heads.
2. We have to set priorities and the best investment in the future is to start education as early as possible and to bring additional resources to pre- primary and primary education
3. For further education we have to find new ways against inequity because today only those who leave school with a qualification are able to continue their education. The drop-out experience has disastrous consequences as you all know. We cannot accept this because we need them all as qualified members of our society to have a chance in competition with Asia and other economies.
4. In all phases of education we have to reflect the European dimension to reach our common goal of a prospering and democratic European Community.
5. We have at all ages to learn to become a European. School heads in Europe – wherever they work – have to understand that they are connected with their community, their region, their country and with Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues

To win the future as Europeans we need fundamental changes in our former thinking and policies.

We need Truth, Trust, Tradition and Time.

Truth

We have to understand that schools are not businesses or companies and that there is a difference between leading schools and managing enterprises.

We have to limit the influence of the new testing industry because their work will not lead to better results for our schools.

Learning to the test, for the test, learning to survive the tests reduces schools and their internal curricula to training institutes for a very narrow part of education. During the last NASSP Conference in Reno, we heard from our colleagues about the side effects of such educational choices: schools only teaching the tested subjects, sending kids home to avoid failing and school ranking influencing the real estate market. In the end, the program NCLB is now seriously criticized in its country of origin as it eventually left more children behind than ever before.

Schools that are working under the conditions of Autonomy, Accountability and Achievement – the topics of our Biennial Conference – do not need continuous testing and inspection. Instead they should be based on self evaluation, a good learning atmosphere

in healthy schools, respect and self responsibility. We have to discuss and develop together with the ministries and politicians the national and European standards which our schools have to reach at the end. But the way to do this has to be decided by individual schools. There are many roads which lead to Rome.

Trust

We need trust to our students, teachers, school heads and principals instead of discrimination and public humiliation of principals and teachers. Without trust there is no respect and education needs mutual respect. Or with the words of Petros Pashiardis from Cyprus Open University : “one of the key functions of policy is to build trust, the trust between the teachers, the trust between the school principal and the teachers, the trust between the school and the parents, and the school and the government authorities. That makes the difference and creates a lasting impact. Because it is only with the building of trust at these levels that we are really going to see a change in how education systems work. The alternative is control and we know that control cultures eventually produce, what Daniel Goleman called a toxic organization and a poisonous culture.” So far Pashiardis.

Tradition

”A classical inheritance is all around us and in us, recognized or unrecognised” writes Simon Goldhill in

his newest book: Love, Sex & Tragedy – How the ancient world shapes our lives. And he continues:

“Yet there has been no period since the Renaissance which is as intent on forgetting the classical past as today... What for centuries was the foundation of Western Culture, a shared resource of the imagination, has been systematically uprooted in modern educational systems across the West with inevitable consequences for public culture. Modernity has come to mean amnesia – amnesia about the past, about cultural tradition, about the passions and interests of our own history.”

Ladies and gentlemen

In these times schools have to be the custodians and guardians of our culture and we have to teach and be aware of our European culture where all new developments are based upon.

Time

We need time, to change from teaching to learning, time for deep, creative and broad learning.

We need time for our students and for us to read and sing and play and move, time to write and paint and to explore the world together with others.

What we need are teachers and school heads leading the change in a better future towards a democratic and unified European Community.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues

Reading the titles of our parallel sessions you will notice that several workshops deal with ESLN, the European School Leadership Network. This program was developed over three years from a European consortium together with ESHA. You will find in your conference bag a CD with the results of this project.

It is a great honour for us that the author of the modules Prof. John West-Burnham is with us here in the Rome Conference. Welcome John.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues.

In the following, I will give a summary of the modules written by John West-Burnham and discussed and developed within the team consortium.

The project tried to develop a program that helps our school heads and principals to lead schools vis à vis the above mentioned challenges and to add or to create linkages between the different national training programs for school leaders and the European Dimension.

Three guidelines are important to become and to be a European

School Head:

1. The Moral Dimensions of Educational Leadership

We work from the premise that leadership is, fundamentally, a moral activity and that school

leadership in Europe has specific moral dimensions. In most educational systems the ethical dimension is 'taken-for granted', it reflects a national hegemony. The course seeks to promote a debate to test what moral systems are appropriate to education in Europe in the 21st Century.

Education is about values - to educate a person is to seek to develop their full human potential. As well as academic success, all schools seek to develop social (and so moral) understanding and behaviour.

For many years ethical principles could be assumed, today, morality in society is often a contested topic, there is no clear consensus.

Therefore, there are issues for educational leaders in understanding that their leadership will have a significant impact on the moral dimension of schooling; not just in what they 'preach' but also in what they practice.

The module is written on the assumption that education is primarily a moral activity and therefore, educational leadership has a moral dimension.

2. Professional Development from a European Perspective

If we agree that education is primarily based on moral criteria and that educational leadership has a moral dimension than the second module provides the participants of the course with basic information about

professional learning and development. Having experienced this, we can state with assurance and fact: in Europe the professional development of teachers and school leaders varies enormously across the educational systems of Europe. It is one of the areas where there is the greatest level of distinctiveness and variation.

3. The Leadership of Change in an Emerging Europe

When we accept the moral dimension of Educational leadership and understand professional learning and development, it is implicit that we need change in many fields to develop leadership in education for a new European society.

We have to accept the necessity of change and to understand change as a process which assumes school heads as leaders of change.

Change is fundamental to all life (Everything flows, nothing stays said *Heraklitus*) Even the hardest rock is subject to erosion. The history of our planet is a history of change and we all have changed during our lifetime and we all know it is impossible not to change.

Organizational change will normally be in response to a wide range of forces and challenges. The pressure for change in education is to recognize the changes in the society such as social and economic changes and the change in the world order.

Therefore school leaders have to create a culture that welcomes change and to recognise that we have to move from managing change to leading change. Fundamentally we have to recognise that organizations don't change – people do.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing I will thank those who prepared this conference during the last two years in endless meetings and uncounted hours for making this conference reality and as we hope success. I will come back to this point in my closing speech. For today and not to risk to forget someone I thank the ANP (l'Associazione italiana dei dirigenti e delle alte professionalità) and the Conference Organisation team with Rosanna Barone and Antonino Petrolino.

And please be aware that conferences are organised not only to work. We are together for some days from countries all over the world and we shall use this opportunity to meet and communicate also privately to build new partnerships and friendships which will outlive the days in Rome. And try to see, feel and smell this City of Rome, the Modern City with an ancient heart.

Thank you