

CEEC Seminar with European School Bishops, Bensberg, 16-17 June 2003

- Summary of the debates -

Are present : H. E. Christoph Card. SCHÖNBORN (A), Mgr Dr. E. J. DE JONG (NL), Mgr Manuel PELINO DOMINGUES (P), Mgr Aloys JOUSTEN (B-fr), Mgr Vincent NICHOLS (England & Wales), Mgr Donal MCKEOWN (Northern Ireland), Mgr Aurel PERCA (RO), Mgr Frantisek LOBKOWICZ (CZ), Mgr Engelbert SIEBLER (D), Mgr. Vincenzo ZANI (Congregatio Educ. Catho. Roma) – Members of the CEEC Executive Board : Canon André DE WOLF, President, Mr Bartho JANSSEN (NL), Vice-president, Mr Paul MALARTRE (F), Treasurer, Mrs Anna KOPECKA (CZ), Mr Nikolaus KIRCHER (D), R. F. Manuel de CASTRO BARCO (E), Mr Etienne VERHACK, Secretary General – Members of the preparatory commissions and Advisers : Dr Christine MANN (A), Dr Rainer ILGNER (D), R. F. Angel MIRANDA (E), R. Sr. Lourdes GROSSO (E), Mgr. James CASSIN (IRL), Mrs Oona STANNARD (England & Wales), Rev. Timothy MENEZES (England & Wales) – Lecturers : Prof. Manfred BALDUS (D) and Prof. Ignace VERHACK (B)

Monday June 16th 2003

Introduction by Canon DE WOLF, President

The idea of the seminar was born at the OIEC World Congress in Brasilia, April 2002.

We remark everywhere a lot of parents who trust Catholic education. One of the main reasons is the quality of education. Religious orders and founders play an important role in this. Catholic education is firstly a service to young people, to the child. The right to education is one of the human rights that must not be granted by a legislator; it concerns the right of each child. Catholic education is also a service to parents. It is finally also a service to society.

It should be interesting to examine the relation between the State, the Churches and the Catholic schools. A modern interpretation insists on the quality of the care, welcome and service. Catholic education is based on a philosophy of life, carrier and source of values, norms and sense giving. It's a dynamics of the school, centre of faith. People have to live their faith in the school. According to the present context we also have to educate to positive tolerance.

One often blames Catholic education for being a ghetto education. What means this thesis? First of all, a serious ignorance of the reality and the reproach that someone who opts for a religion automatically becomes withdrawn into himself and intolerant.

The school is also a place where one learns living together. The Catholic school is open to all and is a service to all. The question is to educate pupils to show solidarity and to act in this way.

Presentation of the situation of Catholic education in the different countries represented

Germany – Mgr SIEBLER underlines that Catholic schools are taken as an example. No doubt that the intense cooperation between pupils, parents and teachers constitutes the success of the Catholic school. He deplores the fact that the State doesn't take on its financial obligations.

Belgium (Flanders) – The Flemish government (without Christians Democrats) spares no attack against Catholic education, questioning it on identity: when being open to all, what can still be the difference between a Catholic school and a State school? Religion is more and more considered as a private matter. In State schools some parents refuse the choice between the class of religion and the class of moral philosophy.

Spain – One discuss about a new subject which would be an alternative to religious education. This subject would link society, culture and religion and would be denominational or not. One works on the identity of lay people and school heads, the mission of the school and its values. Problems: immigration gives society a pluricultural and plurireligious character; secularisation and the poor development of European dimension in the Catholic schools.

Ireland – The country is in a process of definition of “what is a Catholic school”. Religious congregations are asking themselves how to transfer their charisma, taking into account the decrease in the number of religious vocations. Another concern: the training of school heads.

Northern Ireland – The main question of Catholic education is to know how to remain Catholic schools and contribute to the process of reconciliation.

France – Parents often move their children from the State school to the Catholic school and vice versa. More and more important arrival of Muslim children in Catholic schools: “one hopes this school will speak about God”. How to speak about God to Muslim children in a school under contract with the State? How not to answer only to this plurireligious through a teaching of religions? Finally, a various teaching of religion could replace the catechesis. According to Mr MALARTRE, in the tension between the mission of the Church and the service to society, there are for Catholic schools three possible drifts: (1) the drift of privatisation, where parents are only perceived as clients; (2) the drift of identity withdrawal; to reduce the number of pupils to the sole Catholic ones; (3) the drift of undifferentiation.

Netherlands – Although the financial situation of Catholic schools is good, there is a problem of secularisation. Important challenge: the re-discovery of the Catholic identity.

Portugal – The bishops have given priority to the catechesis, to the confirmation. The government has removed the teaching of religion from nursery schools. A big problem for Catholic schools is the lack of subvention.

Romania – We must rebuild the triangle Church–school–family which the communism had destroyed. We must educate to values, to democratic citizenship. The principle of freedom of education is not always accepted. There is a lack of State support.

United Kingdom (England & Wales) – The partnership between the State and Catholic schools is not based on the relation between the Church and the State, but on the right of parents to educate their children according to their own convictions. The Catholic schools closely collaborate with parishes.

Czech Republic – Parents opt for Catholic schools because of the added dimension they offer through the forming of personality and the spiritual dimension. Catholic schools are in demand and sought a lot, and many times a multiple number of applicants than could be admitted request to study there. Problems of the Catholic school: first of all, the legal status of these schools is not defined adequately. Secondly, sufficient pedagogical potential – including a material base – is not available. Catholic schools offer the Church enormous possibilities for the practical pastoral care of young people.

Congregation of Catholic Education, Rome – Mgr ZANI gives the greetings from Mgr PITTAU, Secretary of the Congregation. The Catholic school is a tool for evangelisation, a place for human formation and a means for affirming institutional and cultural citizenship. The Catholic school is a unique way to give testimony of the Gospel. The Congregation is preparing a new document on the collaboration between the consecrated persons and lay people in the schools faced with the problem of the decrease in the number of vocations. One will insist on the presence of the charisma. As a conclusion, the Congregation thinks Europe can be an example for the rest of the world. What can do Catholic people through the schools, the universities, facing the secularisation, the multicultural and multireligious situation? Anyway the question is to live fully ones identity and to live in dialogue.

French speaking Belgium and Austria – Arrival of the participants in the evening: no presentation.

Welcome address by His Em. Card. SCHÖNBORN

The Cardinal welcomes the participants in this first meeting of the European school bishops. He thanks the CEEC President, Canon DE WOLF, and Secretary General, Mr Etienne VERHACK, for the organisation of this seminar.

We remark an extraordinary plurality in the pupils of our schools in the different countries. This plurality is ambivalent at several levels. We also remark that relations between State and Church are very different.

1. We can thus say that the transmission of faith happens through many different ways. But anyway, it goes hand in hand with a break in the tradition, a loss of tradition.
2. Secularisation is very different in our countries. We remark in the same time a re-spiritualization.
3. Pluralism in our countries has developed in different ways and leads to uncertainty and anguish.

What is it about today? The question is to perceive the chances which are hidden in today's reality. God speaks to us and embraces us – *“Gott umarmt uns durch diese Wirklichkeit”*.

The common profile is force.

1. Before and above everything, there is the common identity. The Catholic school is a school which puts some stress and counter-stress. A good school provokes with visions.
2. The Catholic school lives through the dialogue with culture. It is situated in a national situation; it is present in the school culture and introduces into this culture its own vision.
3. The Catholic school has a clear mission, which must be meditated.

In conclusion: in the school of life, Jesus is our master and our teacher (Rabbi) – μαθηθεῖν: to make pupils. « *Make all men be my disciples.* » The Catholic school is in dialogue with culture:

1. a community mission.
2. to develop the own personality of the pupils.
3. to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation.

Lecture by Prof. Ignace VERHACK

“The mission of the Catholic school: place for evangelisation. The place of religion teaching”

Debate

Mgr JOUSTEN

We are very sensitive to the anguish and to the therapeutic contribution of Christian faith. Let's think to the success of A. GRÜN. On reading these books we remark they affect a human wound. Christ comes to redress man. Christian faith takes man in its dynamism. Yves LEDUR insists on freedom: to give man all his freedom.

Prof. I. VERHACK

We aren't psychologists. The question is to rebuild a basic confidence through prayer and faith.

Mgr DE JONG

Don't you have a too positive view of young people? They are good. But they are simply indifferent, unconcerned, under influence from all sides. There is a religious tendency. But they never recognise in themselves the deep values; they are superficial. You speak about today's culture. Do we still have a culture? The difficulty is: how can we touch young people at a deeper level?

Prof. I. VERHACK

I admit my view is positive. There is a group of young people in search. But, there is also a certain experience: even if we speak about simple things, a moral or religious word is impossible. We must go very slowly.

Mgr DE JONG

The identity of children coming from abroad is stronger than the identity of Catholics. Even our teachers don't have a strong identity. How can we strengthen the Catholic identity in the dialogue with other religions? How to reinforce the teachers through their development in a personal identity? Preaching and dialogue are not in contradiction, but in tension. How can we respect men in their own identity?

Prof. I. VERHACK

The "*eschaton*" is indescribable. In such a dialogue we leave open something that doesn't belong to us. The Lord Jesus Christ is in the future. In the political philosophy one develops another attitude: on reading Max WEBER, "*La guerre des Dieux*", we remark that in the multiplicity of culture, there is no rationality. It is always in confrontation with the other. Our teachers don't feel quite at ease; don't we leave a way to opening? But that doesn't mean that we reduce our own identity to another.

Card. SCHÖNBORN

If we look at our European position and the Catholic identity, it's time for us to affirm this Catholic identity of Christian faith, of Christology, of conception of freedom. All this has an extraordinary force. It's high time for us to remind our mission statement. Our mission comes from Christ: a mission of freedom, liberation, construction of man and society, and which corresponds to the depths of man. We must free ourselves from this post-modern relativism according to which we say: "*rendezvous to the eschaton*". There is a double tension: (1) the challenges of our time and (2) the challenge of secularity (*laïcité*). That was perceptible in the fight for the European Convention, where we were confronted with a lay missionary spirit that wishes to introduce euthanasia into European law. It should be catastrophic if Catholics didn't take this fight seriously. Not only the challenges urge us to be more offensive, more missionary, but also the mission of the Father: make all the nations be my disciples, and this in the conception of family, of man, of child. "*We know whom we have believed in*" said Saint Paul. The Magister of the century-old Church is clear, very strong. Europe absolutely needs this teaching. We must try to articulate our mission statement very clearly: what is our own educational intention?

Mgr NICHOLS

1. Traditional cultures have disappeared. Christian culture is totally absent from the world of young people. New realities are appearing, among others the wish for community. But young people don't let themselves perturb by authority; they are attentive but in a critical way.
2. In England, the impact of September 11th 2001 was very important. These events led to a tendency to say: prohibit religion, make it private. There is an increasing voice asking to insert religion into the public forum. For instance: in the schools, our philosophy is to invite the imam to present to young Muslims the coherence of their faith. Islam doesn't know any catechesis tradition. It's a real challenge to introduce Islam into an educational context. That's good for both Islam and English society. That places the imams at a secularised level. That's also an appeal to the State in order to make clear the fact that schools may not be neutral.

Mgr SIEBLER

I am very happy with this first meeting. It takes place at the moment of the drafting of the European constitution. Is there a place for God in this constitution? Is the draft of constitution based on a Christian conception of man? I am asking myself: how can it be possible that the majority of the Christian nations present a constitution which is not Christian? In this new context, the Catholic schools are faced with a serious challenge. They must profile themselves in a totally secularised world. Are the Catholic schools able to propose an alternative? To position themselves against the basic ideas of this European unification?

Mgr McKEOWN

We are looking for both theological and philosophical comprehension of our schools. Many things we said have to deal with catechesis, with the tension between preaching and dialogue. In Ireland we wonder how to be able to have a dialogue. There is a tension between the content and the context.

R.F. Angel MIRANDA

We, Church and priests, we reflect on the need of God, but we are always behind young people. They are interested in motorbike, in their future work, in success. In Spain, young people have 30 school hours, but they are watching television about 28 hours a week. During their compulsory schooling, they have about 18,000 hours watching television, 12,000 hours being at school, 840 hours attending the religion class. As far as dialogue is concerned, the official programme of religion is very strict and doesn't offer a great deal of flexibility. A dialogue between faith and culture is not easy. Prof. I. VERHACK spoke about the experiences of young people. But I ask the question: what about the experiences of teachers? How far are they in their personal reflection? The school must be prophetic: how to realise this challenge? To risk! To face young people, before history. And I would insist firstly on vocational education.

R. Sr. Lourdés GROSSO

Young people ask questions in accordance with their age. But, as Mgr DE JONG said, they are very superficial. We have to arouse the fundamental questions. "*Let the children come to me!*" We must always keep evangelisation through pedagogy; train Catholic teachers. Christ said: "*I am the way, the truth and the life*". In the truth of each subject there is, for the Catholic, a cosmovision.

Mgr LOBKOWICZ

1. Even if we complain about young people, I think they wish an authority: that's illustrated through the meetings of young people with the Pope. Young people are enthusiastic about the clear message of the Pope. Our preaching of the Gospel should be clearer and simpler. We must train the teachers for this purpose.
2. We speak about Muslims, about the interreligious and intercultural dialogue. In the Czech Republic, a school that takes care of gipsy children has 90% Rom children. The triangle school-family-parish doesn't work because Rom parents defend their children everywhere and in everything (for instance: great absenteeism). Their faith is based on anguish. Their standard of living is also very miserable. A great deal of the Rom people immigrated into Great-Britain are now returning in the Czech Republic.
3. Our Catholic school: a tool for evangelisation. Through the school young people experience the image of the Church. Moreover, mass media put a bad light on the Church in the eyes of society. The important is now responsibility and veracity. The teachers build the image of the Church: their personal life must testify to respect in order to win children's trust (for instance: a divorced headmaster had a relationship with a woman from the administrative staff. He was dismissed).

Mrs Oona STANNARD

In the dialogue between the Pope and young people the enthusiasm isn't caused by authority but by respect. I am convinced that the sign we give as testimony is as much important as what we teach. What can we say about the symbols around our schools? Are they great acts of worship? Collaboration with the parishes, service to society and the way in which a school is a Catholic one must be reflected in all what happens in the Catholic schools.

I wish to underline the importance of the teachers: I don't support the deficit model. We must praise them and valorise what they do. They give as example the values of the Church.

I wish to come back to parents. In England and Wales we organise lifelong learning for adults, catechesis for adults, stronger links with the schools.

Finally, we spoke about the media and the attention they pay to the Church. We must present a very strong profile and aim at a larger agenda. I am worried but very optimistic.

Rev. J. CASSIN

A recent survey conducted in Ireland showed that faith and spirituality are living among young people. In Ireland we need a new confidence in the Gospel. Most of all, the accusations of sexual abuse have reduced the confidence in the Gospel. It's easier to say what we wish to represent than to do it. The philosophy of Prof. I. VERHACK is an excellent start.

For the theological aspect, the documents of the Congregation of Rome are excellent. The questions I am asking are the following: how to form the teachers? Have we to learn from Europe?

Mgr PERCA

If we wish the school to be a place for evangelisation, that supposes to have teachers with good moral quality, who go to church regularly; otherwise the school would become a school of ideologies. During the communist period in Romania, the communist ideology was imposed. That confronts us with the question of religion as an ideology. Another problem to be added is the fact that there are a lot of Orthodox pupils in our schools. Finally, in Romania, we renew every year the *mission canonica*.

Mgr JOUSTEN

According to statistical data, 47% of the French-speaking Belgian pupils go to a Catholic school. On hearing you I become very modest. What is the situation of Catholic schools in Belgium? All our nice speeches about a Catholic teacher, going regularly to church... is that still possible? Pluralism exists among parents, among pupils and among teachers; and that leads to a difficult situation.

I have been working as a headmaster for ten years in a rather privileged region, but there also, pluralism was present. We must be in agreement on the significance of our assertions. The situation is very different from a country to another. I heard a divorced headmaster was dismissed? In Belgium, this is impossible because of the legislation of the labour ministry. We don't have any right to intervene. What do we try to do? The suppression of Catholic schools would be a grave mistake. Even if we don't succeed in imposing faith plainly, I defend Catholic education. We try to say three things:

- (1) We put emphasis on the contribution of Christian faith to education. One becomes more human when becoming Christian: we must make that understood by young people in the religion class but also through all the other taught subjects. But here we have a strong problem: the pluralism of our teachers. We must work with the men we have.
- (2) The Catholic religion class (2 hours a week) is an important pillar.
- (3) In the secondary level we try to make some faith proposals, faith celebrations, which are not compulsory.

Mgr PELINO DOMINGUES

In Portugal, there are 135 Catholic schools. The further schools mentioned in the statistics are nursery ones. We are presently confronted with the problem of the choice between the class of religion and the class of moral philosophy. Young people who don't opt for religion have one hour free: there is no alternative. Furthermore there is the problem of materialism among the parents and the children: they buy all what they want to have. They don't ask to themselves a lot of questions. We strongly feel that a catechesis for adults is necessary. Children are not well educated by their parents. Another question: the link between family and parish. What about catechesis in the parishes?

Dr. C. MANN

I would like to express two assertions:

- (1) The Catholic school has a profile. The school must much more clarify this profile, and so must the Church.
- (2) Our Catholic teachers do a good job. They can improve it; so can we.

Two questions:

- (1) Don't we often leave our teachers alone in the development of their faith, in their spirituality, in the link to be done between *ratio* and *fides*? How to testify? We can testify, for instance, through the way in which we treat the teachers when they are broken in their life. How do the teachers experience the Catholic school as a space?
- (2) The teaching of religion has a special function: to show what is Catholic and what is not; what is acceptable and what is not.

Anyway, in Austria, we wish the best teachers teaching in our Catholic schools, and not anywhere else.

Mgr NICHOLS

I would like to come back to the question of the Convention. We remark an increasing secularisation. From an English point of view, the Convention leads to a more aggressive attitude towards Catholic schools. Present time comprises chances but also dangers. The secularised ideology is aggressive towards religion. Discrimination problems show it (religious, sexual discrimination). There is also the problem of vocational education. In any case, we must speak about these dangers with the COMECE.

Mgr DE JONG

Should it not be good to organise a global day of Catholic education, promoting meetings and lectures?

E. VERHACK

Before ending this debate I would like to underline a dimension we didn't spoke about: the role of the headteacher as responsible for school pastoral work. According to the Canon Law, he is responsible before his bishop. Taking into account the increasing number of lay people who are headteachers today, I appeal to you, bishops, to reflect urgently on the way in which you organise the training of lay people for such a mission.

Conclusion by Prof. I. VERHACK

As a conclusion to our morning debate I would like to say the following. God embraces reality with two arms: the first one is identity. In difficult situations this is perhaps the weakest side of our Catholic schools. We have lost clearness, not because we are weak but because we have fully entered a difficult and aggressive environment. The second arm: *omne quod recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipiendi*. We have lost, in Belgium, the tradition, even the possibilities of speaking. Environment is aggressive, in the governments, in freemasonry. Christians are no longer the majority. Furthermore, subventions are an ambiguous question. But the aggressive environment is not the sole explanation. There is also the pedagogical reality. Having 75% of the pupils doesn't mean having 75% of the believers. The proportion is about 5 per 78 teachers who are believers. Teachers express their own profile and the Catholic school may not dismiss them. Jesus Christ didn't have any weapon, any force. He had a forgiveness message. The question is: how to be prophet in a situation in which we lost all our weapons? I don't think we have to withdraw into ourselves, outside society. We would be doomed to be an elitist sect. On the contrary, I think we must remain present in culture.

Tuesday June 17th 2003 - Afternoon

Lecture by Prof. Dr. Manfred BALDUS

“The freedom of education and the status of Catholic schools, which have a Church mission while being a (semi)public service”

Debate

Mr Bartho JANSSEN

In the Netherlands, there is a political trend to plead for more social coherence and therefore oblige the Catholic schools to admit all the pupils, Catholics or not. Furthermore, some people accept the existence of private schools but say they are against the teaching of religion in the schools because it would be a threat for social cohesion. What can we expect in this matter from the European law?

Prof. BALDUS

We are here reaching a frontier. The State may not make its subvention to Catholic schools depend on such conditions.

Mgr JOUSTEN

In Flanders a group of freethinker politicians wish the school governing bodies to be composed in a pluralist way.

Prof. BALDUS

As far as the European law is concerned, it doesn't give any fundament to the existence of a subvention for Catholic schools. At the very most we can find mention of an equal distribution among State schools and private schools concerning the current costs, but not the investment costs.

Speaking about the equality of the subvention, when the State gives a subvention, it must do it in an equal way. Inequality is justified as the case may be.

Mr Paul MALARTRE

In relation with the debate of this afternoon and the lecture of this morning, I would like to mention a question we are asking to ourselves in France. Our Catholic schools have an association contract with the State, such as the Jewish and the Protestant schools. The question is the following: if we are under contract with the State, are we strictly speaking a denominational school? That doesn't mean that the Catholic school doesn't affirm its Christian specificity, that it doesn't link its commitment to a Christian anthropology, based on a sense of the person enlightened by the Gospel; even more when speaking about the recruitment of Catholic teachers. Any teacher whose behaviour would be, during his career, in contradiction to this Christian anthropology cannot be dismissed.

Prof. BALDUS

Of course the curriculum of the State must be followed. But the Catholic school must have some space of freedom in order to insert elements from its own teaching.

Mr Paul MALARTRE

The State doesn't impose the teachers on us. The curriculum of the Catholic schools is the same as the one of State schools. The own character of the Catholic school is to be found in the way of teaching rather than in the curriculum. The own character is present in the whole school life. If one asks me if such a situation is liveable, I answer yes, on condition that Catholic education would be considered as a place of Church where one develops the link and coherence among the act of teaching, of educating, and the proposal of a Christian and human sense. We spoke about divorce this morning. In France, justice will always pronounce itself in favour of the teacher. That's not the case for paedophilia and violence. It's often useful to have a look at the labour law in France.

Prof. BALDUS

Can we not say that a teacher who remarries after a divorce does no longer carry on the "trend" of the school?

Mr Paul MALARTRE

We only can wish that the person would be coherent.

Prof. BALDUS

The question of credibility doesn't play any role?

Mr Paul MALARTRE

The teacher is under contract with the State.

Dr R. ILGNER

Now that the European Constitution is coming, I wonder what the future will bring to us. In Germany, for instance, the base of the "*Kirchensteuer*" – i.e. the tax levied by the State and reserved to the different religious institutions – could disappear.

As far as education law is concerned, we can be happy with the fact that Europe rather meddles with the four freedoms: money, people, services and traffic, and not so much with education. As far as the curriculum of the State is concerned: in France, this curriculum is compulsory. In Germany, we also follow it, but silently.

I have a question about article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty concerning discrimination: the question of the personnel. This anti-discriminatory article must be integrated into the labour law of each country. We are very nervous about the significance of this law with regard to the recruitment of teachers in Germany. The European labour law is very delicate and obliges us to remain vigilant. We must activate our own governments, the COMECE, etc.

Prof. BALDUS

The individual remained standing. Discrimination leads to a supra-constitution. We must inform our politicians on this danger. We must work for an institutionalised dialogue with the Churches. We must create a space for such a commission.

Dr C. MANN

Article 51, point 1, mentions the Churches, the religious communities. Point 2 speaks about philosophy and non denominational organisations: “Churches and Organisations”. The advantage of this text is that the Churches are not assimilated to NGOs. Moreover, they have the same status as the Church of Scientology. We must not forget that a lot of groups are lobbying: the COMECE in Belgium, the Evangelical Church in Germany.

Dr R. ILGNER

We must examine the genesis of the article. The Northern European countries, Germany and Austria were allied. Finally, Germany and Spain forced the solution.

Card. SCHÖNBORN

The lecture of Prof. BALDUS shows how it’s important for school problems also to have efficient and effective representation in the European forum. I think the existence of the CEEC is very meritorious. It isn’t easy to represent all the individualistic tendencies in one structure, in a common political camp. The question I ask to the present assembly is the following: how can this representation be more efficient at political and legal level? The COMECE has a legal commission. Should it not be useful for the CEEC also to have its own legal commission, which could collaborate with the COMECE?

E. VERHACK

I totally agree the suggestion of the Cardinal. An efficient work at European level cannot be done without legal support. The CEEC had a legal commission at the beginning of the 1980s, but it didn’t manage to keep it for want of money.

With regard to the intervention of Dr ILGNER, I share his concern about the anti-discriminatory law, but I am more anxious than he is about the method the European Commission will adopt towards education. As far as education is concerned, the Commission doesn’t try to interpret the Treaties but adopts the “open coordination method”, a step by step coordination method, prepared by a commission of ministers’ representatives, and which slowly “gnaws the trunk of the tree”.

Can. DE WOLF

Such a method neglects the principle of subsidiarity. The ministers implement what the representatives have decided.

Card. SCHÖNBORN

I suggest organising a meeting with the legal commission of the COMECE. Couldn’t this legal commission assume the agendas of the CEEC?

Dr R. ILGNER

This proposal must be realisable, but I think it needs an intervention of the Cardinal and the bishops. And with the enlargement of the Europe of the 15, should it not be useful to contact also the CCEE in St. Gallen?

Card. SCHÖNBORN

The CCEE will hold its next General Assembly in Vilnius, from 2nd to 5th October 2003. We could put on the agenda a group of school bishops for all the European countries. The CEEC could deal with the main contents and the COMECE with the political questions.

Dr C. MANN

We should create a network of lawyers specialised in school law.

Conclusion

Mr E. VERHACK is delighted to see the seminar ending with concrete proposals. The CEEC will see to it that these proposals can be realised in cooperation with all the participants, taking the suggestions concerning the COMECE and the CCEE into account. The CEEC has already regular contacts with the COMECE.

The CEEC will draft a summary of the debates and send it with the texts of the lectures to all the participants.

Mr E. VERHACK thanks sincerely His Em. Card. SCHÖNBORN for the support he gave since the very beginning to this initiative, for his active presence during almost two days, in spite of a very busy agenda, and for the support he will continue to give to the realisation of the proposals made during the present seminar.

Mr E. VERHACK thanks warmly the German Episcopal Conference, in particular Mgr SIEBLER, Dr ILGNER and Mr KIRCHER, for the hospitality offered to all the participants and for the preparation of this seminar here, in Bensberg, among others the press conference (Mrs HÖHNS) and the practical organisation (Mrs BARTELS). He also thanks the lecturers: Prof. Manfred BALDUS and Prof. Ignace VERHACK.

Mr. E. VERHACK thanks all the participants, bishops, members of the Executive Board and the preparatory commissions, for their active presence. He thanks all the CEEC members who attended the seminar and all those who have contributed financially to the organisation. Finally, Mr E.V ERHACK thanks the interpreters and congratulates them for their professionalism.

E. VERHACK, CEEC
Brussels, June 30th 2003