

# SCHOOL BRIDGE EUROPE

## National or European Identity – where's the alternative ?

**National Europe or European Nation-States ?**

**A Win-Win situation for both Europe and the Nation-States ?**

**Does the law of communicating tubes apply to them ?**

**Did times of dominance of the nation-state and of Europe take turns in history ?**

**What do the nation-state and Europe still mean in the context of globalisation ?**

These are the kind of questions that stood at the beginning of considerations to launch the Schulbrücke Europa (=School Bridge Europe) late in 2006. Two top-of-the-hill German foundations, i.e. the **Deutsche Nationalstiftung from Hamburg and the Robert Bosch-Stiftung from Stuttgart** then signalled their strong interest in more and better European youth education centering on the relationship between nation-states and Europe. As part of their mission, both foundations are committed not just to promoting good understanding between the people of United Germany and of Europe at large, but also to supporting a constructive role of Germany within the European unification process. From that interest aroused their willingness to sponsor the 'Schulbrücke Europa', which represents a prestigious international youth encounter of 16-18 year old students from colleges and gymnasium-level secondary schools.

Together with the seminar directors, Dr. Frithjof Reinhardt and Marc de Jong, both of them employed at the 'Europäische Jugendbildungsstätte Weimar' (see [www.ejbweimar.de](http://www.ejbweimar.de)), a concept of learning goals, essential topics and questions, as well as of working methods was developed and agreed upon as a next step.

These project partners decided to invite and involve students from the following 5 EU-countries into the '**Schulbrücke Europa**': **West- and East-Germany, Great-Britain, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia**. From each of these countries, a total number of **8 students**, at best visiting one partner school, can be selected to join the programme, together with their teacher accompanying them. West-and East-Germany, home-country to the foundations, will bring a total of 16 students.

As it stands now, the project will be run from 2007 through to 2009. Starting with 2 school bridges this year, their number will double the subsequent two years, making up a total of 10. **The working language of all school bridges will be German. All participants will therefore need a good command of it, both active (speaking) and passive (reading).**

**The next School Bridge Europe will take place from 13-20 May 2007 in the Nell-Breuning-Haus (Adult and Youth Education Centre) in Herzogenrath nearby Aachen.** It consists of a 7 days programme offering:

- Lectures, interpretation and discussion workshops on parallel or counter-developments of nation-states and Europe from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Century, based on a 'Work-in-Progress-Reader' drawn up by both the seminar directors and the partner schools
- Thorough insights and understanding of European and national influences on 4 major policy fields highly relevant to youth and crucial for future prospects: Education & Culture, Constitution & Human Rights, Economy, War & Peace
- Regular, cross-border work on filling in a huge time bar showing national and European milestones, processes and conflicts, finishing with a public presentation
- A mini-simulation of the European Youth Parliament, guided and led by experienced German speaking EYP-board members, who send reading materials to participants on current European issues related to the 4 policy fields

- An investigative discovery of national and European traces of the City of Aachen based on various mixed-group tasks, with an exhibition of results and findings.
- Talks and discussions about the current national content of the European Union and its political future with renowned guests such as former German president Richard von Weizsäcker
- An exhibition of pin-walls showing the individual and/or national groups' understanding of the German word 'Heimat' (=Home) with intercultural learning
- Awareness-raising exercises about national stereotypes concerning one's own and other nations, followed by preparing and performing theatre-caricatures, and evaluating them properly in nationally mixed groups
- Get-to-know-each-other games, a sports tournament, cultural leisure activities and a farewell-evening

Together with this week's programme, participants will enjoy the wonderful hospitality of **full board and lodging in the Nell-Breuning-Education Centre**. Thanks to generous sponsorship from both foundations mentioned before, **participation** in this unique programme will only **cost** the symbolic fee of **40 € plus travel expenses** (and of course private expenses). In case schools have shown not to be able to cover travel expenses themselves, the Deutsche Nationalstiftung will take over (parts of) this cost upon request. Since the working language will be German, I recommend to read two German documents for further information, which you'll find enclosed: a draft-programme and preliminary overview of what we expect from partner schools during our School-Bridge cooperation. Each national group of students is expected to be accompanied by one school teacher, at best from either one or more of these subjects: German, History, Social Science/Citizenship, Economics.

On behalf of the Executive Director of the Deutsche Nationalstiftung, Dr. Wachs, and my colleague Frithjof Reinhardt, I kindly invite target-group colleges and schools from the United Kingdom to apply for becoming the official partner in the May 2007 School Bridge Europe. We look forward to receiving a list of 8 qualified, German-speaking students from the UK with a strong motivation to learn more about nation-states and Europe in an interdisciplinary way, and to work and exchange with fellow-students from other EU-member states in a non-formal setting. **Applications** are kindly asked to be submitted **before 09.03.2007** to:

Europäische Jugendbildungsstätte Weimar (EJBW)  
z.Hd. Herrn Marc A. de Jong MA  
Jenaer Strasse 2-4  
D-99425 Weimar.

For any questions, expressions of interest or other remarks, you can also reach me on:  
Phone: 0049-(0)3643-862315  
Fax: 0049-(0)3643-862326  
Mail: [dejong@ejbweimar.de](mailto:dejong@ejbweimar.de)

We aim to establish continuous partnerships with all schools involved in this project. That means that we guarantee a partner school to profit from participation and sponsorship at least once per year, but in return also expect from it to commit itself to the School Bridge Europe beyond May 2007. In particular, we wish the school directorate and responsible teacher to comply with expectations as stated in the document enclosed, including taking good care of selection of qualified candidates, of fulfilling distributed working tasks before the start of the week's programme, and of dissemination of results to the school environment at large.