

# The Aims of the Comenius Project Intercultural Driving Licence

## Abstract

Becoming more and more important for everybody's daily life, *Globalisation* demands the insemination of real intercultural competences – as early as possible: at school. Designed to be part of a student's individual school performance and qualification, intercultural competences need to be certificated and therefore described in detail. We – the students and teachers of the 8 participating schools – work together in the framework of [the international school magazine \*trait d'union\*](#) in order to find out by our own project experience (best practice examples and common problem solutions) the crucial rules of communication and cooperation within international school projects. The *trait d'union* Editorial Office serves as platform to check out the best kinds of international communication and teamwork. We want also establish contacts with external partners in order to get more information about the problems and needs in intercultural contexts. Serving as a pool of criteria to describe each participating student's project activities and obtained intercultural competences, the above-mentioned catalogue of intercultural communication and cooperation rules will be the base for the Certificate "Intercultural Driving Licence".

## The need of intercultural learning already at school

We are sincerely convinced that *Globalisation*, the increasing international integration both at a cultural, social, economic and a personal level, demands the insemination of real intercultural competences – as early as possible.

- Integration is not only the task of the immigrants but a challenge for *everybody* in our changing societies.
- Professional life becomes more and more international. Being able to co-operate within interculturally composed teams has become a key competency of our time.

That is why we want to establish intercultural learning already at school. Intercultural education is a question of no less than future peace and welfare.

## Our definition of intercultural competences

"Real intercultural competences" does not only mean to be friendly with people from other countries and to appreciate some parts of their traditions. We define them as

- the skills needed to organise international teamwork and to participate in it successfully
- the faculty to understand (in a wide sense) intercultural differences and their possible effects on international communication and teamwork

- the capacity to communicate well with people from other cultures – in general as well as related to a common project
- the ability to co-operate with people from other countries

### **Our aim: Description and certification of intercultural competences at school**

As with other school subjects, also intercultural competences need to be described in detail before being eventually certified as a part of a student's individual school performance and qualification. To this end we don't want to use the first principles that come along. As we defined intercultural competences as the skills needed to communicate and to cooperate in an international context, we, the students and teachers, want to find out these needs by our own experience and reflection: in an international school project, compiling rules of intercultural communication and teamwork, based on problem solutions and best practice examples. Of course this has to be complemented by relevant information of experts/partners.

### **The structure of our international school project**

... is the consequence of its aim:

- The members (editors) of – at present – [8 schools situated in 7 European countries](#) create an issue of the international school magazine *trait d'union* with the (project-related) topic “Do You Understand Me?”, using different genres and media.
- Teamwork on the *trait d'union* Editorial Office
- Common evaluation of the editorial practices
- Compilation of intercultural communication and teamwork rules

### **Editorial Office teamwork**

... allows different kinds of communication and productions:

- individual or
- school team contributions: the both being possible bases for comments, discussions and modifications as well as for extensions, bilateral and IET projects (see below!)
- bilateral productions related to a project exchange of students (preparation, further processing) and within it
- [International Editorial Team \(IET\)](#) projects: multilateral teamwork with a well-defined topic and members of at least 3 schools. An IET can be temporary or permanent. The ideal IET topic requires mutual help of the partners for its realisation. Each IET is based on a detailed project proposal/agreement and a timetable.
- Editing posts using the personal blogs
- Communication by establishing and using group wires (for the project coordination, school teams, exchange productions, IETs) and personal wires

It is quite clear, that individual or school team products without the possibility to be at least commented and which don't provide any kind of international cooperation don't sustain the project aim.

### **Elements of certification**

- The Certificate "Intercultural Driving Licence" presupposes a full-blown performance description of the participating students and examining boards which obviously cannot already exist during the stadium of development of the 'intercultural rules'.
- So the students who participate in the *present* Comenius Project can obtain a special certificate, the "International Driving Licence Development Certificate": On the one hand the criteria pool to describe each member's performance and obtained intercultural competences might contain not *all* the aspects as the catalogue resulting at the end of this Comenius Project. On the other hand however in the "International Driving Licence Development Certificate" each member's efforts to contribute to the compilation of intercultural rules can be described as well.

### **The project partners**

We invite educational, social and (inter)cultural institutions, international enterprises and organizations as well as media to become our partners: We would like to get more information about the problems and needs in intercultural contexts, especially the international working environment. We would like as well use these contacts to disseminate the results of our project work.