



REPORT OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9-10 OCTOBER 2008

BUCHAREST

ROMANIA

INTRODUCTION

A General Assembly (GA) of SICI was held on 9 and 10 October 2008 in Bucharest, Romania. Following the founding meeting in Dillingen, Bavaria (1995) previous General Assemblies have taken place in Belfast, Northern Ireland (1997), Poitiers, France (1999), Utrecht, The Netherlands (2001), Vienna, Austria (2003), Sezimbra, Portugal (2004), Russelheim, Germany (2005), Stockholm, Sweden (2006) and Bruges, Belgium (2007).

Ferry de Rijcke, President of SICI chaired the meeting which was attended by representatives from the following member countries/organisations:

Austria	Franz Kappelmüller (EC) Kung Johannes
Belgium – Flemish Community	Paul Schatteman (SG) Yvan Verbauwhede (EC) Peter Michielsen Veerle Verhaegen, Curriculum
Belgium – German Speaking Community	Marliese Breuer Isabelle Müllender
Czech Republic	Olga Hofmanová Jaroslav Mullner Petr Drábek (EC)
Denmark	Bo Kjems
France	Roger-François Gauthier (EC)
Germany Hessen	Rolf Heckerath Heinz Kipp (excused)
Germany North Rhine-Westphalia	Wolf Homeier
Germany Rhineland Palatinate	Astrid Becker
Germany Saxony	Erik Koch
Ireland	Deirdre Mathews
Netherlands	Ferry de Rijcke (President) Gonnie van Amelsfoort Annette Roeters

Portugal	Helder Lopo Guerreiro Joaquim Pacheco
Romania	Serban Iosifescu Constanta-Valentina Mihailă
Slovak Republic	Maria Mihalakova Anna Korduliakova Zuzanna Lukackova
Spain	José Angel Onega Onega
Sweden	Marie-Helène Ahnborg Annika Lage Vianna
United Kingdom, England	Christine Gilbert (excused) Tim Key (excused) Jane Homphey
United Kingdom, Northern Ireland	Paul McAlister Stanley Goudie
United Kingdom, Scotland	Graham HC Donaldson Annette Bruton Vivien Watt
United Kingdom, Wales	Bill Maxwell
Croatia	Sanja Urek Sanja Milovic

Special guests, Romania: Gabriela Păștor, Secretary of State, Megdonia Păunescu, Director Ministry of Education, Stelian Fedorca, Chief Inspector Bucharest School Inspectorate, Alexandru Popovici, Vice Chairman Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

All delegates were invited to visit the Parliament Palace and to make a sightseeing tour from Bucharest by bus on Wednesday afternoon 8th October 2008. All delegates participated at a show offered by children at the Children's Palace and the conference diner.

Thursday, October 9th, 2008.

1. Welcome and Official opening of the General Assembly:

Serban Iosifescu welcomed all SICI delegates and expressed his thanks to the EC of SICI that Romania could host the 9th GA of SICI in Bucharest.

The GA was officially opened by **Gabriela Pásztor**, Secretary of State:

Gabriela Pásztor indicated that Romania has made a national priority for making education better by improving the quality of the education system. Four years of government has improved the working conditions for schools a lot. Investments in schools during this period have been higher than the 50 years before that period. Professional training of teachers has become a key issue for RAQAPE (The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education).

FdR considered that Romania has been very active to improve their education system, also in Higher Education. Improvement of the Quality of education through Inspection is a key strategy for SICI. The SICI International Academy (SIA) will become a powerful instrument to support SICI members in this endeavour. Risk analysis as basis for Inspection, including the Access and Use of Data is becoming the next objective for the near future. This objective will be put in practice by organising workshops in smaller workgroups to increase the external impact. The new SICI Review which has been published for the first time will allow SICI to introduce his organisation to European Institutes and other organisations and individuals which are not directly involved with the Inspectorates of Education and training in Europe.

Megdonia Păunescu, Director of the Ministry of Education congratulated SICI for his role in Europe to help to improve the quality of Education. The exchange of experiences and good practices between SICI members has been very helpful for Aracip. Inspectors become now better supporters for the schools. In the past they used to be external elements, which looked only for the negative aspects. This mentality is changing and they look more to give positive feedback to help schools to go forward. With the help of SICI we will continue to give more and better trainings to our inspectors. Reflections between SICI members will help to find new ideas for immediate application.

Stelian Fedorca, Chief Inspector Bucharest School Inspectorate said that he could not add more to this and agreed with the statements of Păunescu. He wished all participants a fruitful meeting.

2. The Education System in Romania:

Presentation by Megdonia Păunescu, Director of the Ministry of Education (**Att 1**)

3. School inspection and external evaluation in Romania:

Presentation, "For a better School" by Constantin-Serban Iosifescu, Chairman RAQAPE. (The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education). (Att 2)

4. "Equilibrium between internal and external evaluation from a European perspective"

Presentation by Veerle Verhaegen, Flemish Ministry of Education, Curricula dept. (Att 3)

5. Press declaration from Ferry de Rijcke, Chairman of SICI and Serban Iosifescu, Chairman of RAQAPE.

Ferry de Rijcke and Serban Iosifescu made a short press declaration to the Romanian press and TV about the mission and objectives of SICI and RAQAPE.

6. Remarks by Roger-François Gauthier on Romanian system:

- RAQAPE is following 2 main roads
- Can the old logic survive if other systems show up?
- The Romanian system is comparable with the French system at the end of the 80's
- The French system was introduced in several former Eastern European countries without changing anything to the existing old system
- Is there a **Romanian law** on education activity? Law was published in July 2005 and stipulates that quality of education must be guaranteed by the government. More information can be found on the RAQAPE website.

7. Plenary discussion

- What is the benefit of the **MacBeath cube**? Is it the best model to build up an education system? The strength of the model is that it makes it easier to compare various systems. The balance is situated in the middle and depends on the cultural identity of the regions.

- Is this a real intention? Do we really want to be in the middle? In **Sweden** f.i. the methodologies used in education are a responsibility of the schools. In Sweden focus on the education system is not a government issue. There is a trend to a minimum of regulation.

- In the **Flemish system** schools are free to organise their own system. The free subsidised schools can define their own education projects. Official schools are a minority. Free in this instance means that there is respect for the different educational projects.

- Prior to the quality of education there should be an understanding of the purpose of education in the different countries. **(GD)** There are significant changes in education in the different countries. One can ask the question why an education system should be in the middle of the cube. The objective should be not to be in the middle, as this will create too much external pressure.

- In **Sweden** education is a key tool of ownership of a quality project. Inspection in this regard will not bring substantial improvement. We need a common frame work for education and inspection. As a common language doesn't exist this doesn't imply that there is a deterministic approach.

- In **Ofsted** data is used to detect perceived risks. They use the same criteria for inspection as Sweden. The same language was developed for education and inspection. So schools are ready for debate and have a clear idea of the national standards. There is however a difference with Sweden as inspection in England makes snapshots and in Sweden inspection is a continuous process using a model with standards.

7. Report GA Bruges, Income-, Expenditure Account and Balance sheet 2007, Budget 2008.

- PS presented and commented all the above topics.
- All these reports have been sent by e-mail to all the members before the meeting.
- The accounts and balance sheet 2007 and the 2008 budget were approved.

8. Status memberships.

PS

The statutory rules on ending the membership will be applied strictly. This means that PS will send a message to Macedonia that their membership ends.

PS will get in touch with the French speaking community of Belgium and YV will do the same with its German speaking community.

RFG will pursue his contacts with regional inspectorates in Italy to sound out possible memberships. PS will get in touch with Poland.

More in general, PS will continue sending information to potential new members and use opportunities (such as the launching of the new website) to direct attention to SICI.

9. Blue Book:

PS

The chairman and the SG made an end to the contract with the University of Antwerp. Johan van Bruggen will complete the preparations of the inspectorates' profiles for publication on the SICI website. The Blue Book needs an editor who permanently ensures updating and development. Johan van Bruggen will be invited to fulfil this role. **HK** will remain the editor of the **SICI Review**.

The profiles that are completed will provisionally be published as PDF on the website as it is now, in order to avoid further delay.

The name "Blue Book" will be replaced by a more inviting one. Inspiration is to be taken from the Scottish example "Journey to excellence".

10. (Re) –election of EC members/ New President

FdR/PS

The EC received 3 candidacies for EC-membership. Hille Vooremae's candidacy can not be accepted as Hille Vooremae could not participate to this GA to present herself.

Gonnie van Amersfoort has sent in an impressive CV with a letter of recommendation of the Chief inspector of the Dutch Inspectorate. FdR proposed to elect Graham as EC-member.

PS proposed to nominate Gonnie as EC member for the Netherlands due to her extensive international experience by hand clapping. She was accepted by all GA members and nominated for 2 years.

FdR repeated his proposal to nominate Graham as EC member. His nomination was also accepted by all GA members. The EC appoints **Graham Donaldson**, HM Senior Chief Inspector, HMIE, as the new President of SICI.

11. SICI's Virtual Inspectorates' Academy (SIA)

GvA, YV, WH

A presentation was made by GvA (Intro + Pool of Expertise), WH (The School) and YV (Virtual Tools). **(Att.4)**

The main goal of the SICI Inspection Academy (SIA) is the Professionalisation of Inspectorates.

12. "Strategies of Inspectorates"

RFG

Att. 5 After the presentation of RFG the delegates were split in smaller working groups to discuss four topics in 4 workshops.

13. Workshops strategies of Inspectorates:

Workshop A: “The position of inspectorates in education systems: degree of autonomy, functions”: Peter Michielsen (Leader), Petr Drabek (Reporter).

Workshop B: “Relations between inspection and educational research by other actors”: Bill Maxwell (Leader), Gonnie van Amelsfoort (Reporter).

Workshop C: “Quality assurance of inspectorates’ work”: Wulf Homeier (Leader), Franz Kappelmüller (Reporter).

Workshop D: “Competencies and skills of inspectors”: Stanley Goudie (Leader), Yvan Verbrauwheide (Reporter).

14. Plenary: presentations of the results of the working groups

Workshop A: Petr Drabek

Workshop B: Gonnie van Amersfoort

Workshop C: Franz Kappelmüller

Workshop D: Stanley Goudie

The first day ended with a Gala Diner at the Hotel Restaurant ‘Bohemia’.

Friday, October 10th, 2008.

15. Farewell to Ferry:

All the EC members present gave a special book to Ferry and held a small speech to thank him for the good co-operation and the progress SICI made during the years of his presidency.

Also the Romanian Chairman of RAQAPE, Serban Iosifescu, thanked Ferry for his presidency and wished him all the best with his new job.

16. Presentation by Graham Donaldson, HM Senior Chief Inspector, HMIE, "Developments in Educational Governance in Schools"

Att. 8 PPT

17. Remarks on governments developments:

- **Rhineland-Palatinate- Astrid Becker: att. 9**
- **Sweden- Marie-Hélène Ahnborg: att.10**
- **Flanders- Peter Michielsen: att. 11**
- **Romania- Constanta-Valentina Mihăilă: att. 12**
- **Netherlands- Annette Roeters: att. 13**
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18. Plenary discussion: Conclusions and recommendations

- **PM** :The Romanian inspection is pushing self-evaluation
- Schools should be more stimulated to implement self-evaluation
- They should acquire insight in their own weaknesses
- School reports should be published and not be evaluated only on internal evaluations
- Self-evaluations need to be better regulated

- **GvA**: proportionated inspection systems can provide better self-evaluation
- Which approach should be followed if a school evaluation is done in 2 days?

- **GD**: a school evaluation should be done in 5 days with 2 to 3 inspectors
- Day 1: pm :school discussion: strengths of school, self-evaluation; if robust evidence only 2 days of inspection; if not inspection goes on
- Day 2: monitoring to satisfy ourselves
- Day 3: discuss 5 key areas and make report: what lies behind evaluation itself?
- Day 4: Build incentive for a good self-evaluation in order to obtain the best possible inspection process

- Day 5 :conclusions and recommendations
- **BM:** different models of proportionate inspections should be used, including risk models
- if no different models are used one obtains a narrow view with only data
- risk based models with evidence “on sight” give a better insight
- **GD:** what to do if risk models don’t perform well?
- the highest risk is complacency
- **PD:** the Swedish system is a great system and one of the better systems
- **MHA:** to answer this statement would result in a long discussion as this has actually become an election issue
- it has become a political issue as well as an issue of independency
- **RFG:** it has become clear that that recommendations depend a lot of the school system and especially of the regulations regarding the functioning of the inspection system for QA and external evaluations

19. GA 2009:

Deirdre Mathews made an announcement on behalf of Eamon Stack and Harold Hislop that the Irish Inspectorate will host the GA 2009 of SICI in Dublin.

20. Outlook SICI workshops 2009:

PS

PS showed the SICI calendar for 2009 with all the SICI activities including EC meetings and the different workshops and the GA in Dublin.

21. Official closing of the General Assembly

GD

The General Assembly was closed by Graham Donaldson at 12h15 and followed by a lunch at the restaurant of the hotel.