



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

ERC/NAC/ME/5-10/008

Paris 05 May 2010

Original: English

Meeting of the Task Force of National Commissions

for UNESCO for Euro-arab dialogue

27 - 28 January 2010,

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Room VI (Fontenoy).

CONTENT

Page

Agenda	3
List of Participants	5
Summary Report	10

Meeting of the Task Force of National Commissions for UNESCO for Euro-Arab Dialogue

UNESCO Headquarters, 27-28 January 2010, Room VI

Agenda

Wednesday, 27 January 2010

10:00 Opening of the meeting

Chaired by Mr Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation

Opening remarks by:

Mrs Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO,

Mr Abdullatif Al-Baijan, Secretary-General of Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO and Co-ordinator for the Arab Region,

Mr Roland Bernecker, Secretary-General of German Commission for UNESCO and acting Co-ordinator for the Europe Region.

Nomination of the chairperson and rapporteurs

Adoption of the Agenda

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Reports on the activities of the Euro-Arab dialogue since 2001

For the Arab region:

- Ms Fatma Tarhouni, Secretary-General of the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture

For the Europe Region:

- Ms Manuela Galhardo, Secretary-General of the Portuguese National Commission for UNESCO
- Ms Janine d'Artois, Officer in charge of Public Information and Intersectorial Projects at the French National Commission for UNESCO

12:15 Presentations by the UNESCO Secretariat on the possible interface of the Euro-Arab Dialogue with other on-going international initiatives.

Alliance of Civilizations (AoC)
Dialogue among Civilizations (UN/UNESCO)

Culture of Peace
International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures (2010)
Presentations by ADG/CLT and ADG/BSP

13:00 Lunch break

15:00 Setting up a four-year Work Plan for 2010-2013

Project proposals:

- Finalizing the Comparative Study of School Text Books project
- Twinning Projects between Arab and European ASPnet Schools and Universities

17:30 End of the session

Thursday, 28 January 2010

9:30 Setting up a four-year Work Plan for 2010-2013 (cont'd)

Project proposals

11:00 Coffee Break

11:15 Task Force – terms of reference and working methods

- Format, mandate and organization of the Task Force
- Co-operation with other IGO's (Council of Europe, ALECSO, ISESCO)
- Private partnerships

13:00 Lunch break

15:00 Adoption of the Meeting Report and the Work Plan for 2010-2013

- Planning of projects and activities
- Time schedule
- Funding
- Partners
- Follow-up action
- Implementation
- Monitoring and reporting

17:00 Closure

List of participants/ Liste des participants

Meeting of the Euro-Arab Dialogue Task Force, UNESCO Headquarters, 27-28 January 2010/
Réunion de l'Equipe spéciale sur le Dialogue Euro-Arabe, 27-28 Janvier 2010, Siège de l'UNESCO

National Commissions/Commissions nationales

	Country/Pays	Name/Nom	Title/titre
1	Albanie	Ms Eni Jucja	Secretary-General
2	Allemagne	Mr Roland Bernecker	Secretary-General
3	Egypte	Mr Mohammed Safwat Salem	Secretary-General
4	Emirats Arabes Unis	Ms Khawla Ibrahim Al Mualla	Acting Secretary-General
5		Mr Awad Ali Saleh	Former Coordinator Euro-Arab Dialogue
6	Espagne	Mr Luis Ramallo	President
7	Finlande	Ms Zabrina Holmström	Secretary-General
8		Mr Tuomo Melasuo	Professeur, Directeur de Recherche
9	France	Mr Jean-Pierre Régnier	Acting Secretary-General
10		Ms Janine d'Artois	Officer in Charge of public Information and Intersectoral Projects
11	Koweït	Mr Abdullatif Al Baijan	Secretary-General
12		Ms Nouf Alfalah	Programme Specialist
13	Liban	Ms Salwa Saniora Baasiri	Secretary-General

14	Maroc	Ms Mina El Mghari	Secretary-General
15	Oman	Ms Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani	Secretary-General
16	Pays-Bas	Ms Els Jacobs	Secretary-General
17	Pologne	Mr Slawomir Ratajski	Secretary-General
18		Ms Llona Morzol	Natcom
19	Portugal	Ms Manuela Galhardo	Secretary-General
20	Qatar	S.Exc Mr Ali Zainal	Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Qatar to UNESCO
21	Slovénie	Ms Liza Japelj-Corone	Attachée, Permanente Delegation of Slovenia to UNESCO
22	Tunisie	Ms Fatma Tarhouni	Secretary-General
23	Yemen	Mr Ahmed Ali Hasan Al-Maamari	Secretary-General

Observers/Observateurs

	Organization/Organisation	Name/Nom	Title/Titre
1	ALECSO	Ms Saïda Charfeddine	Représentante de l'ALECSO auprès de l'UNESCO
2	Council of Europe	Mr Jean-Pierre Titz	Head of the History Education Division
3	ISESCO	Dr Abdelilah Benarafa,	Expert in Directorate of Culture
4	MBI Al Jaber Fondation	Ms Carolyn Perry	Director
5		Mr Asghar Husain	Advisor, European Affairs
6	Centre UNESCO de Catalunya	Mr Miquel Àngel Essomba	Director
7		Mr Onno Seroo	Programme Coordinator
8	League of Arab States	Ms Amal Aaziz	

UNESCO

	Name/Nom	Title/Titre
1	Mr Ahmed Sayyad	Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation (ADG/ERC)
2	Ms Françoise Rivière	Assistant Director-General for Culture (ADG/CLT)
3	Mr Hans d'Orville	Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning (ADG/BSP)
4	Mr Jacques Rao	Director, Division of Relations with Member States and National Commissions (ERC/RSC)
5	Mr Xiaolin Cheng	Chief, National Commissions Section (ERC/RSC/NAC)
6	Ms Naima Sedrati	Chief, Arab States Section (ERC/RSC/ARB)
7	Mr Stoyan Bantchev	Chief Executive Office (ERC/EO)
8	Mme Katérina Stenou	Director, Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue
9	Ms Ann-Belinda Preis	Senior Planning Officer, Division of Programme Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (BSP/PMR) Head of Intersectorial Platform on Culture of Peace Programme and Dialogue Civilization

10	Mr Bobir Tukhtabayev	Programme Specialist (ERC/RSC/NAC)
11	Ms Vida Habash	Programme Specialist (ERC/RSC/NAC)
12	Ms Youssef Mrad	Assistant Executive Officer (ERC/EO)
13	Ms Joyce Poan	Liaison Officer, Section for Liaison with Institutes, Field Offices and External Partners (ED/EO/IFE)
14	Ms Amina Hamshari	Assistant Programme Specialist, Associated Schools Project Network Unit (ED/BAS/ASP)



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Meeting of the Task Force of National Commissions for UNESCO for Euro-Arab Dialogue

UNESCO Headquarters, 27-28 January 2010, Room VI

Summary Report

1. The Task Force of National Commissions for the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project met at UNESCO HQs on 27-28 January 2010, in order to assess the progress achieved since the launch of the Project in 2001 and to define a new plan of action for the years to come. 18 National Commissions equally representing both regions took part in the meeting. The representatives of Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, partner organizations and foundations as well as the members of the UNESCO Secretariat attended as Observers. The meeting was chaired by **Ms Salwa Saniora-Baasiri**, Secretary General of the Lebanon National Commission for UNESCO. **Ms Madiha Al Shabani**, Secretary-General of Oman National Commission and **Mr Slawomir Ratajski**, Secretary-General of Polish National Commission, were elected as Rapporteurs (Annex I and II: Agenda of the Meeting and List of Participants).

27 January 2010

1. In the opening session, **Mr Ahmed Sayyad**, ADG/ERC, welcomed the participants and wished them a fruitful and successful meeting, stressing on its high relevance to UNESCO's core mission.

The meeting was inaugurated by **Ms Irina Bokova**, UNESCO Director-General, who underlined the importance of the dialogue of cultures and religions for the promotion of intellectual solidarity. Referring to UNESCO's involvement in this process, she also elaborated on the key role of National Commissions. Ms Bokova recalled her recent meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, stating that the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures offers an excellent opportunity to open a new chapter of cultural cooperation between the Arab and European regions, helping to build the bridges of trust (Annex III: Copy of Mrs Bokova's speech).

Mr Abdullatif Al Baijan, Secretary General of the Kuwait National Commission (Coordinator for the Arab region) and **Mr Roland Bernecker**, Secretary General of the German UNESCO Commission, (acting Coordinator for Europe region on behalf of Ms Marjutka Hafner, Secretary-General of the Slovenian National Commission), addressed the participants. They focused on the ten years lasting cooperation of the Arab and European regions, highlighting major achievements of the partnership and their relevance to UNESCO mission. Mr Abdullatif Al Baijan underlined the need to strengthen the cooperation between the Arab and European UNESCO Commissions in order to promote mutual respect and values of tolerance to which the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), the International Year of Youth (2010) and

the International Decade for the Culture of Peace (2001-2010) make an excellent ground. Mr Roland Bernecker stressed that ignorance of other cultures had led to many conflicts in history and the major challenge now is to learn to live together in diversity. As the most innovative UN agency and the one with the most participatory model of working, UNESCO should involve more young people and should also consider more effective ways of working and achieving results in future.

2. **The morning session** was devoted to an overview of the past activities and achievements of the Euro-Arab Dialogue initiative.

Ms Fatma Tarhouni, Secretary-General of the Tunisian National Commission, made a presentation on the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project development since its inception (2001), starting with the International Conference on Education in Geneva and the presentation of Jacques Delors Commission report, through the meetings that followed in Abu Dhabi, Strasbourg, Rabat, Tripoli, Cairo, Tunis, Paris, Geneva and Kuwait. She underlined the importance of the cooperation with UNESCO, ALECSO, ISESCO and the Council of Europe and acknowledged their financial support. As for future development of the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project, Ms Tarhouni pointed to the necessity of developing the educational partnership, especially through projects such as the ASPnet schools (the Twinning of ASP schools project) and the comparative study of History Textbooks.

Ms Manuela Galhardo, Secretary-General of Portuguese National Commission, stated that most of what was said in the Tunisian presentation covers many of the activities by European NatComs since dialogue involves two sides. Yet, a specific meeting in Bled (Slovenia) in 2006 should be mentioned with a view to establishing a network of teachers training institutions. Ms Galhardo mentioned several examples of successful projects implemented by France, Germany, Poland and Slovenia. She stressed the importance of building and sustaining partnerships, using as best instruments the ASP net and Clubs, as well as inscribing the EA Dialogue within other UNESCO agendas (Conventions, Cultural diversity and the World Heritage). She mentioned the need to involve parliamentarians and UNESCO Chairs in supporting the initiative and underlined the important role of National Commissions as “Network of Networks”. Ms Galhardo mentioned activities developed by Portugal in several fields (elaboration of Dictionary of Portuguese words of Arabic origin, cooperation between national Archives from both regions, the Sharjah Prize 2008, etc.). She also proposed to use the Euro-Arab Dialogue Label in various events to give it more visibility.

Ms Janine d’Artois from the French National Commission spoke about the importance of “Learning to work Together” and to capitalize on what has been achieved: **for example the seminar in Rabat - 2003 - where 27 countries adopted recommendations for concrete actions within the framework of the EA Dialogue.**

She referred to the project of the comparative studies of textbooks **organised by Morocco and French National Commissions** launched in 2005 in Lyon to be discussed and summarized at a meeting planned for March 2010 in Strasbourg. She also stressed the importance of close cooperation among NatComs as well as of building sustainable partnerships with NGOs.

Ms Françoise Riviere, ADG/CLT, referred to UNESCO's ongoing cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations and the importance of using the intersectorial platforms to promote mutual understanding and dialogue. She invited the participants to link the Euro-Arab Dialogue activities with the "International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures" and the "Decade of Education for Peace". She recalled the studies and publications made by UNESCO on the history of different regions of the world, which were now completed. She also suggested to concentrate on two or three relevant projects and give priority to young people and women and to convey to the media content that will reflect Cultural Dialogue. She underlined the importance of involving in intercultural dialogue the young people who do not go to schools. She encouraged the Task Force to inscribe its activities in the UNESCO Database especially created for the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

Ms Katerina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, called 2010 as "A Year of intercultural projects", as there are 400 of them already announced in UNESCO's website. There was also a plan of action adopted including the initiation of intersectorial platform for intercultural dialogue. There will be a Mediterranean strategy elaborated at the meeting in Alexandria in 2010 to coordinate all the activities and events to be undertaken in the Mediterranean region in future. Ms Stenou said there had been a series of activities planned in 2010 to recover the ground that UNESCO has lost in the field of intercultural dialogue: the "International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures", a Mediterranean Film Festival and numerous publications. She also underlined the importance of ensuring the relevant media coverage of the actions and initiatives undertaken by initiating a TV or radio programme devoted to the dialogue of cultures issue.

Ms Ann Belinda-Preis from the Bureau of the Strategic Planning informed the participants that UNESCO was preparing a comprehensive report on the International Decade for the Culture of Peace, reflecting the action taken within the entire UN system. She stated that BSP Website contained solid information on UNESCO's action in the field of intercultural dialogue. She said that the Rabat Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives (Morocco, 14 - 16 June 2005), has resulted in the Copenhagen Conference on Education for Intercultural Understanding and Dialogue (Denmark, 21-22 October 2008). With regard to the Euro-Arab Dialogue, she invited the participants to elaborate projects with well defined objectives, expected results as well as measurable indicators.

Ms Saida Charfeddine, representative of ALECSO, underlined the vital role of National Commissions as links to promote dialogue. She said that ALECSO was always supportive of the Euro-Arab Dialogue. She elaborated on a lead role played by ALECSO in the Euro-Arab Dialogue development and on her Organization's involvement in the Comparative Study of History Textbooks. She said that the cooperation should be built on the basis of the existing frameworks. She proclaimed the dialogue among cultures the future mission of ALECSO and declared further support for the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project.

Mr Mohammed Safwat Salem, Secretary-General of the Egypt National Commission thanked UNESCO Secretariat for its support to the Euro-Arab Dialogue. He said that keeping the idea of the Dialogue alive and sustained was already an achievement. He referred to several past activities carried out by his Commission in cooperation with the European National Commissions (e.g. Spain). He insisted that more coordinated action needs to be undertaken now within a concrete Plan of Action, the focus of which could be made on curriculum or textbooks. He said that youth should be primary target for their activities.

Mrs Mina El Mghari, Secretary-General of the Moroccan National Commission, proposed to put together all the relevant documents reflecting the evolution of the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project, so that to have a clear picture of what has been achieved since 2001. She recalled that the Euro-Arab Dialogue was not a new initiative and in that context, she mentioned joint activities undertaken with the French National Commission. She also insisted that priority attention should be given to youth and called to implement through youth future-oriented activities.

3. In the discussion which followed, the key points were underlined:

- The need to document the history of the Euro-Arab Dialogue
- The necessity to capitalize on what has been achieved and to give credibility to dialogue
- The importance of identity as a fundamental element of dialogue
- The importance of concentrating on a few, well defined projects
- The need to strengthen ties between National Commissions in building synergies amongst them
- The necessity of targeting young people and involving them in cultural dialogue
- The crucial role of the media
- The importance of assessing progress, using indicators / measures
- The need to adopt intersectoral approach
- The idea of promoting interreligious dialogue as a part of cultural dialogue
- The importance of linking the project with international decades and years
- The need to develop common framework for dialogue
- The necessity of improving the teaching of history
- The necessity of broader cooperation between the European and Arab regions, not limited to the Euro-Arab Dialogue, but in other domains like the World Heritage or Climate Change
- The importance of making a step forward – from developing ideas to implementing projects in practice
- The need to train teachers in attaining the quality of intercultural education
- The ownership of this project by the National Commissions themselves

4. In the afternoon session, Mr Abdullatif Al Baijan, Secretary-General of the Kuwait National Commission, presented two projects topics, which were suggested by the Arab National Commissions as possible areas for the Task Force's future action, namely:

- a. Encouraging twinning among ASPnet Schools, UNESCO Clubs and Chairs of the two Regions
- b. Finalizing the ongoing project on Comparative Studies of History Textbooks

The participants were then divided into two working groups to elaborate more specific proposals for the Task Force's joint action. It was agreed that the two above-mentioned proposals put forward by the Arab region could be used as starting points to facilitate Working Groups' discussions, but it was made clear that the Working Groups were free to either accept or amend these proposals or adopt other new projects in addition to them.

28 January 2010

5. The discussions in two Working Groups and the subsequent debate in the Plenary have resulted in the following projects:

- I. **To produce an educational kit inspired by 'World Heritage in Young Hands' and devoted to Identity**

The suggested mechanism to implement this project was as follows:

- To organize a meeting of experts to work out the content: what should be included
- To have professionals to turn the idea into a practical framework
- To test the draft kit in the ASP schools
- To disseminate it to National Commissions and have it translated into national languages
- To provide teacher training workshops.

Proposed Timeframe: to have the kit ready by the end of 2013.

Taking into account the Euro- Mediterranean process, including the fact that Barcelona has been recently designated as seat of the Mediterranean Union, the President of the Spanish National Commission, Mr Luis Ramallo, proposed to host the expert meeting on the educational kit on identity in Barcelona in cooperation with the Center of UNESCO in Catalonia before the end of 2010, with their own resources.

- II. **To finalize the ongoing project on Comparative Study of History Textbooks by March 2010 at the upcoming meeting in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe Headquarters.**
- III. **To engage Universities students and teachers in the Euro-Arab dialogue.**
- IV. **To encourage twinning among ASP net Schools, UNESCO Clubs, Chairs of the two Regions**

6. **Mr Hans d'Orville**, ADG for Strategic Planning, who joined the Task Force at the afternoon session, expressed his support for the Euro-Arab Project, reminding that the

issues of culture and development have been also of prior significance to the United Nations. He suggested that although no special funds have been allocated to the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project in the current biennium, much can be achieved through linking the initiative to the mainstream activities like the “International Year of Youth” or the “International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures”, and also through the private partnership, as it was successfully done in the case of Mondialogo. Some support can also be gained through the Participation Programme to which the applications have to be submitted by the end of February 2010.

7. **Mr Jean-Pierre Titz**, Head of the History Education Division Council of Europe, raised the importance of high quality education, didactic and supporting materials, as well as methodology and teacher training as vital for the process of shaping the school system open to issues of dialogue, human rights and to teaching how to “live together in equal dignity”. He elaborated on the long lasting involvement of the Council of Europe in the process of reviewing history schoolbooks and on the collaboration with ALECSO, ISESCO in carrying out projects concerning the cultural diversity in the Mediterranean region. He reiterated the Council of Europe’s moral support to the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

8. **Dr Abdelilah Benarafa**, Expert in Directorate of Culture at ISESCO, noticed that the main challenge is to bring societies closer to each other and not to allow ourselves to become hostages to the media. He underlined the importance of joining efforts to fight against wrong stereotypes. He mentioned ISESCO’s extensive work to counteract the growing Islamophobia in the media and pointed to the lack of appropriate teaching materials. He recalled common projects run by ISESCO in cooperation with the Council of Europe and NGOs, and also publications prepared by ISESCO regarding the presence of Islam in Europe and its contribution to the European civilization. He pledged his Organization’s full support to the continuation of the Euro-Arab Dialogue project.

9. **Mr Asghar Husain**, Advisor, European Affairs at MBI Al Jaber Fondation on behalf of Sheik Al Jabber and the MBI International Foundation underscored the special role of National Commissions to promote the Euro-Arab Dialogue through UNESCO’s fields of competence. The MBI foundation was fully committed to this Dialogue by implementing its own activities such as support to skills and leadership trainings, student exchange programmes, capacity development in high education institutions and the dissemination of education programmes for democracy, human rights and civic responsibilities. The Sheik has committed himself as UNESCO’s special envoy in the Arab region to support the work of the National Commissions from the two regions. He looks forward to the consolidation of the proposals of the Task Force for a focused programme and its endorsement by all concerned National Commissions. He is available to assist in the mobilization of the resources required for implementing such a programme. In order to broaden the partnerships, visibility and outreach of this joint initiative, MBI suggests including among the observers of the joint Task Force and at the proposed meeting of all the NatComs from the two regions, the participation of the Council of Europe North-South Center based in Lisbon and the European Wergeland

Center (EWC) based in OSLO. The EWC particularly has a broad network of teacher trainings institutions and is following up on programmes for preparing teaching kits for youth at the school level. The MBI also is ready to publicize the joint programme through the Arab newspapers implementing its “Kitab fi Jarida” initiative, based in Beirut.

10. Conclusions:

All the four projects listed in Paragraph 5 submitted by the two Working Groups were accepted and recommended by all members of the Task Force. They also gained support from all partners (UNESCO, ALECSO, ISESCO, Council of Europe and Al-Jaber Foundation).

It was decided that Slovenia and Kuwait will remain the Task Force Coordinators and the subsequent meetings will be held in participating countries subject to further arrangements.

As for the future organization of the Task Force work, Ms Salwa Saniora-Baasiri, the Chair of this meeting, underlined the importance of involving, besides National Commissions, other partners, such as NGOs and the Private Sector.

Defining the sources of financing and increasing the Euro-Arab Dialogue Project’s visibility (by setting up a dedicated website or creating a special logo) were considered by the Task Force members important issues in the future development of the project.