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## Education of seniors and their participation in European project activities

Education of older people as another educational activity needs its reflections, and the theme of conference “New Methods in the Continuing Education of Older People for Strengthening of European Civil Society“ is one of the opportunities. The implication of these reflections is developing of mutual communication of various institutions for interest in the very education (self-organized learning) of seniors.

Education in Europe is the education in atmosphere of literate and basically cultured populations. The word “*literacy*“ has other, new connotations in its educational theories: E.g., *the cultural literacy*, i.e. the scope of education borrowing from sources of not at all formal education, but above all from informal influence of given regional cultures, is investigated. Education, including the education of seniors, behaves as a source of mobilization of human potential, as a source arising in civic society. Trends, themes (education and teaching, communication technology, organization of education), and challenges (ageing of population, quality of life, crises of human values), which Europe works on these days, are clear and they can be expressed in few characteristic words as an intergenerational, educational and formative medium, activity, mobilization.

European dimension of education (as a pedagogical category) gives the education a wider perspective and opens horizons of global thought and intercultural understanding. Contacts, reciprocity, meetings and mutual perspective are foundations of a broad spectrum of activities realized in educational programmes of Socrates and Leonardo of the European Union. These belong to particular types of education, and learning individuals, and groups in the bounds of lifelong learning.

Programmes of lifelong learning in the Czech Republic, including the universities of the third age, strengthen approaches and components of European dimension. The participation of the University of the Third Age at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice in the European project SoLiLL (Socrates – Grundtvig, 2000–2001), and in the current programme PHARE (in the project “Living actively with friends on the other side of the frontier“) offers the subsequent summary.

Realization of European dimension offers a broad scale of forms and open tables of contents. Its introduction is linked to using cooperative and interactive methods. Team projects support cooperation and solidarity, they enable everybody to accept the team role and motivate them for quality performances. Participants of European projects effectively acquire and extend key competence (esp. communication, problem solving, etc.) in a specialized area of the content requiring interdisciplinary work. They learn to work together.

Realization of European projects requires extending of themes and discussions where the opinions and attitudes of participants confront, and the consensual answer is found.

Experiences from immediate meetings, settlement of views and approaches, and the possibility to work with various sources of information, texts and documents with support of the Internet are enriching. Potential, provided by information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, enables the seniors to fulfill and express themselves, even “to transform themselves“, to retrieve a new identity, a new self.