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The Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE)

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The decision to form the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) was initiated by 60 participants in a 1961 conference organised by the University of London Institute of Education (Cowen 1980, p.98). Draft Statutes were prepared by Joseph Katz on the model of the Comparative Education Society (CES) in the United States, and were subsequently revised at a meeting of 'provisional officers of the society'. The Statutes were formally adopted at the first CESE conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in June 1963 in accordance with Belgian law. The founding members included distinguished scholars such as Joseph Lauwerys who had convened the London conference, Nicholas Hans, James H. Higginson and Edmund King (England), Philip Idenburg (Netherlands), Friedrich Schneider (Germany), Franz Hilker (Germany), Edemée Hatinguais (France), Lamberto Borghi (Italy), Robert Plancke (Belgium), and Bogdan Suchodolski (Poland). The participation of Pedro Rosselló and Leo Fernig from the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, Switzerland, and Saul Robinsohn from the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg, Germany, assured additional institutional support (García Garrido 1986; Mitter 1986; Kallen 2006).

This chapter focuses on CESE itself, and is not an analysis of the history of comparative education in Europe. However, the foundation of the society may be taken as an indicator that CESE began its activity as the representation of the scientific community of comparative educationists in Europe. This quality has been retained over the decades, notwithstanding problems which have had to be solved. Moreover, CESE's openness to comparative educationists in the rest of the world has turned out to be a lasting legacy from the founding group, which included scholars from the USA, Canada and Japan.

The Statutes consist of 10 articles. They determine the international and non-profit-making character of the society, its ordinary and honorary membership, the composition of its Executive Committee (consisting of the President, the Immediate Past President, two Vice-Presidents and two other members), the appointment and function of the Secretary-Treasurer, the membership dues, and the formation of ad hoc committees for matters of scientific or professional interest. The Statutes also define the purposes of the society (Article 3), namely:

- a) promoting and improving the teaching of comparative education in institutions of higher learning;
- b) stimulating research;
- c) facilitating the publication and distribution of comparative studies in education;
- d) interesting professors and teachers of other disciplines in the comparative and international dimension of their work;
- e) encouraging visits by educators to study educational institutions and systems throughout the world;
- f) cooperating with those who in other disciplines attempt to interpret educational developments in a cultural context;
- g) organising conferences and meetings; and
- h) collaborating with other comparative education societies in order to further international action in the field.

CESE and its European Competitors

CESE was constituted as a society of individual membership, open to comparative educationists from all parts of Europe and beyond. This principle reflected the views of the founding members, who had considered the diversity of comparative education in European universities and independent research institutes. Further, the arrangement permitted the incorporation of constituted national or other groups with equivalent purposes. Consequently, in the late 1960s, organisations of British and German comparative educationists were formed as sections of CESE, and the Italians followed during the 1980s. In 1973, French-speaking comparative educationists founded an association of their own, the Association francophone d'éducation comparée, examined elsewhere in this book, whose constitutive criterion was the use of the French language rather than a geographical dimension. The German (later German-speaking) section constituted a parallel membership as a Kommission in the national Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft (German Society of Educational Sciences), and under this status joined the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). In contrast, the British section performed a total constitutional change in 1979 by defining itself as the independent British Comparative Education Society (BCES). The development of smaller groups continued in the 1980s and 1990s throughout Western, Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, CESE and many national, regional and language-based societies existed beside each other as members of the WCCES.

For CESE, this parallelism has had both advantages and disadvantages. It has enriched European diversity in regard to scientific organisation and content. This is demonstrated by the considerable number of comparative education conferences, each attracting participants not only from their catchment areas but also from neighbouring countries and beyond. Such diversity promotes the exchange of ideas, methods and experiences. However, problems arise from parallelism and duplication of conferences and other activities. Such parallelism

causes budgetary problems, since few comparative educationists in Europe are ready to engage in double membership, and most seem to make their choices in favour of their 'nearest' society in regard to distance and language. In periods of austerity, financial troubles are aggravated by significant decreases in sponsorship, whether by universities, governments, municipalities or foundations which are hesitant to include transnational societies in their sponsoring programmes. The European Union, the Council of Europe and other European institutions do not feel able to fill the gap, unlike in the 1960s and 1970s. The traditional restraint exercised by potential private sponsors in most European countries towards supporting educational initiatives hardly opens the door to compensatory action.

In spite of these factors, the common commitment of comparative educationists in Europe to their field of research and teaching has always been a stimulus for cooperation between CESE and its 'competitors' in the region. This commitment has had visible demonstration in the joint organisation of several CESE conferences. In this context, it is worth quoting the words of Brian Holmes in a letter to José Luis García Garrido (see García Garrido 1986, pp.45-46):

When we set up the Society we hoped it would survive, but few of us could have visualised how in the hands of scholars from all over Western Europe the Society would have gone on, as it has, from strength to strength, and in the process, without animosity, stimulated the establishment of so many national societies. I am proud, as I am sure you are, to have been associated with such a society.

Geographical Distribution of Membership and Expertise

CESE's position as a 'roof above a house with no well-established rooms' partly explains its relatively small membership which has never exceeded 300. Beside the aforementioned organisational parallelism, the geographic distribution of its membership should be noted (Table 10.1). The data lead to the following remarks:

- a) 'Top' positions have consistently been held by the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany, followed by France. This relative stability can be traced back to the national origin of the founding members and the state of the field of comparative education in these three countries.
- b) Spain and Italy joined the top in the 1970s and 1980s. This move can partly be interpreted as the outcome of successful CESE conferences in Valencia, Spain (1979) and Garda, Italy (1985).
- c) Membership from Central and Eastern Europe has been low. Before the revolutionary events of 1989, the Communist regimes did not allow their comparative educationists to join the 'Western-dominated' CESE, though Poland played an exceptional role with the membership of Bogdan Suchodolski, Mięczyński Pęczerski and others (see Mitter & Swift 1983, pp.713-719). The Czechoslovak case is worth mentioning because the

engagement began with great enthusiasm in 1968, reached its culmination with the 1969 fourth CESE conference, and ceased immediately afterwards with the return of the oppressive regime. It was anticipated that the collapse of the Iron Curtain after the 1988 13th CESE conference, would cause an increase in numbers. However, the membership increased only slightly, a result which may be partly explained by the constitution of national societies in many countries in that region.

Table 10.1: Geographic Distribution of CESE Membership

	1971	1996	2004
Denmark	*	*	10
France	9	24	22
Germany	23 **	41	30
Greece	*	13	19
Italy	2	31	16
Netherlands	9	13	*
Norway	*	7	10
Spain	6	44	29
United Kingdom	28	26	31
Other Western Europe***	22	28	22
Central & Eastern Europe	12	8	17
<i>Total Europe</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>206</i>
United States of America	16	11	9
Canada	6	7	11
Latin America	1	3	11
Middle East	2	5	5
Asia	2	3	10
Africa	2	9	6
Australia	4	7	4
<i>Total Non-Europe</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>56</i>

* Not specified, but included in Other Western Europe

** Applies only to West Germany

*** Countries from which membership did not reach 10 in any of the reference years.

Source: Luzón (2005) and personal communication.

On the whole, the membership data indicate the extension of CESE throughout Europe, supplemented by a more or less stable presence of non-European scholars. The decreasing proportion of the USA may deserve attention, but it has never affected the cooperation between European and North American comparative educationists.

A correlation between the geographic distribution of membership and the list of CESE Presidents is reinforced by the status and rank of comparative education in the respective countries. Table 10.2 shows that Presidents have come from the UK (Joseph Lauwerys, Brian Holmes, Robert Cowen), Germany (Saul Robinsohn, Wolfgang Mitter, Jürgen Schriewer), Netherlands (Philip Idenburg), France (Denis Kallen, previously in the Netherlands), Spain (José Luis García Garrido), Denmark (Thyge Winther-Jensen), and Italy (Donatella Palomba).

Taken as a whole, the list illustrates CESE's regional focus on Western Europe. The composition of the Executive Committees modifies this general picture only slightly with members from the Central and Southeast European regions: Czechoslovakia before 1992 (František Singule, 1969-73), Hungary (Magda Illés, 1988-92), and Croatia (Zlata Godler, 1994-2002).

Table 10.2: Presidents and Secretaries-Treasurer of CESE

<i>Term of Office</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Secretary-Treasurer</i>	<i>Institution</i>
1961-67	Joseph Lauwerys	University of London	Brian Holmes	University of London
1967-71	Philip Idenburg	University of Amsterdam	Brian Holmes	University of London
1971-72	Saul Robinsohn	Max Planck Institute, Berlin	Brian Holmes	University of London
1972-73 Interim Presidents	Sixten Marklund; Robert Plancke	University of Stockholm; University of Ghent	Brian Holmes	University of London
1973-77	Brian Holmes	University of London	Denis Kallen	University of Amsterdam
1977-81	Denis Kallen	University of Paris VIII	Henk Van daele	University of Ghent
1981-85	Wolfgang Mitter	German Institute for International Education Research, Frankfurt	Henk Van daele	University of Ghent
1985-88	José Luis Garcia Garrido	University of Distance Education, Madrid	Henk Van daele	University of Ghent
1988-92	Henk Van daele	University of Ghent	Marc Vansteenkiste	University of Antwerp
1992-96	Jürgen Schriewer	Humboldt University, Berlin	Miguel Pereyra	University of Granada
1996-00	Thyge Winther-Jensen	University of Copenhagen	Miguel Pereyra	University of Granada
2000-04	Donatella Palomba	University of Rome Tor-Vegata	Miguel Pereyra	University of Granada
2004-	Robert Cowen	University of London	Hans-Georg Kotthoff	Freiburg College of Education

In most cases, the election of the Presidents and Executive Committee members has followed the proposals submitted by the Nomination Committee, convened by the President at the beginning of the biennial General Meeting. The Nomination Committee has consisted of Past Presidents and/or other senior CESE

members, and has often included officers of the IBE and other international organisations. The Nomination Committee forms its recommendations on the basis of written inputs from CESE members. The main function of the Nomination Committee is to channel the votes by giving comments on the candidates' personal and academic qualities and, at the same time, by paying particular attention to balanced regional representation. This procedure has proved to be legitimate and opportune, taking into consideration the pluri-national and pluri-cultural structure of the society with its potential for conflict. The value of the procedure became manifest in an exemplary way when in 1973, after Saul Robinsohn's early and unexpected death, the interim succession with Robert Plancke and Sixten Marklund as Acting Presidents (1972-73) was smoothly resolved. Moreover, the acceptance of patterns by the General Meetings has been demonstrated by the fact that the two-year terms of office for the President were regularly confirmed by second two-year terms, as permitted by the Statutes.

The Statutes deal with the language issue only in an indirect way insofar as they mention, beside the English name, the French and German versions (*Association d'éducation comparée en Europe*; *Gesellschaft für Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft in Europa*), while the acronym CESE is used in all languages (Article 1). During CESE conferences and General Meetings, the medium of communication is more complicated. English as the dominant medium is often complemented by French and the local/national language of the venue and sometimes by German, according to the demand by participants, and availability of language competencies and ad hoc translators. Simultaneous translation (usually limited to plenary sessions) commonly plays a significant part. Since CESE is unable to make adequate budget available for translation, the solution depends on support from governmental or non-governmental institutions, mostly in favour of the local/national languages. It seems that the potential danger that Cowen (1980, p.102) observed with regard to language conflicts has decreased during the past decades. This trend may have been caused by the increasing diversity of members' linguistic descent and commitment. One can argue that CESE has settled this rather delicate issue to a remarkable degree by pursuing a strategy which modifies the monopoly of English which is found in many scientific associations.

Conferences

Since the beginning, the CESE conferences have proved to be manifestations of vitality. In spite of recurring financial and organisational emergencies, the biennial rhythm has never been interrupted with the positive exception of the special conference held in Garda (Italy) in 1986 to celebrate the society's 25th anniversary (Table 10.3). Distinctive characteristics come forth in the local and regional ambience of the venues, in the presence of eminent scholars, and in the

Table 10.3: CESE Conferences, 1963-2006

No.	Year	Place	Theme
1	1963	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Comparative education research and the determinants of educational policy
2	1965	Berlin, Germany	General education in a changing world
3	1967	Ghent, Belgium	The university within the education system
4	1969	Prague, Czechoslovakia	Curriculum development at the second level
5	1971	Stockholm, Sweden	Teacher education
6	1973	Frascati, Italy	Recurrent education: Concepts and policies for lifelong learning
7	1975	Sèvres, France	School and community
8	1977	London, UK	Diversity and unity in education
9	1979	Valencia, Spain	The influence of international educational research on national educational policies
10	1981	Geneva, Switzerland	The future of educational sciences: Theoretical and institutional issues
11	1983	Würzburg, Germany	Education and the diversity of cultures: The contribution of comparative education
12	1985	Antwerp, Belgium	The impact of technology on society and education: a comparative perspective
	1986	Garda, Italy	Comparative education today (special conference for 25 th anniversary)
13	1988	Budapest, Hungary	Aims of education and development of education
14	1990	Madrid, Spain	Educational reforms and innovations facing the 21 st century: a comparative approach
15	1992	Dijon, France	Evaluation of education and training: Comparative approaches
16	1994	Copenhagen, Denmark	Challenges to European education: Cultural values, national identities, and global responsibilities
17	1996	Athens, Greece	Education and the structuring of the European space: North-South, centre-periphery, identity-otherness
18	1998	Groningen, Netherlands	Education contested: Changing relations between state, market, and civil society in modern European education
19	2000	Bologna, Italy	The emergence of the 'knowledge society': From clerici vagantes to internet
20	2002	London, UK	Towards the end of educational systems? Europe in a world perspective
21	2004	Copenhagen, Denmark	Multiple identities, education and citizenship: The world in Europe, Europe in the world
22	2006	Granada, Spain	Changing knowledge and education: Communities, information societies and mobilities

participation – fortunately growing – of young educationists. They demonstrate, moreover, how progress and change in comparative education as an academic field is mirrored in plenary and workshop presentations and discussions. Many conferences have helped to consolidate comparative education in the host countries (see García Garrido 1987). In this respect, the conferences in Valencia (Spain) and Athens (Greece) were especially memorable.

Berlin, the venue of the second conference in 1965, was distinguished by the presence of many venerable representatives of the pioneer generation, including Joseph Lauwerys, Nicholas Hans, Friedrich Schneider, Franz Hilker, Philip Idenburg, Edemée Hatinguais, Pedro Rosselló and Leo Fernig. In this presentation, CESE's start "as a gathering of senior persons within the field" (Cowen 1980, p.99) was demonstrated for the last time in that completeness which needs to be mentioned with special reference to their outstanding academic or political reputations and also their interdisciplinary competencies. This comment should be underlined by reference to the key lecture given by Ernst Simon (Jerusalem), one of Martin Buber's most prominent disciples.

The fourth conference was held in Prague in the 'interim year' of 1969, between the suppression of the 'Prague Spring' which had given the decisive impulse for the choice of this venue and the return of the communist hardliners into power. The conference itself was not overtly affected by the impending political and scientific climate, but from talks during the pauses between the sessions, the foreign guests could detect predictions of what was coming. Immediately after the conference, František Singule, the organiser of the event who had been elected into the Executive Committee, was prevented by the Czechoslovak authorities from exercising his committee function and thus disappeared from the international scene for many years.

The 13th conference was held in Budapest in 1988, i.e. in Central Europe for the second time, shortly before the collapse of the Communist regime in the whole region. The somewhat expectant atmosphere was made manifest by the presence of speakers and participants from Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, in particular the prominent Russian educationist Zoya Malkova.

Two years later, at the 14th conference in Madrid (1990), this atmosphere was enhanced into a state of euphoria. This atmosphere was mirrored in some of the political speeches, although some papers were dampened by warnings of intolerant nationalism which turned out to be substantial in face of the violent events in Southeast Europe and, though in non-violent forms, in other parts of the region. Aside from such controversial dimensions, the Madrid conference signalled CESE's immediate response to the transformations in Central and Eastern Europe with their impacts on comparative educational research.

The 16th conference in Copenhagen (1994) opened CESE's explicit interest in the 'European dimension' of its scientific and political commitment which was continued in the conferences in Athens (1996), Groningen (1998), Bologna (2000), London (2002), and Copenhagen (2004). This commitment can be considered as an approach to identifying CESE as a *Europe-centred* association and, at the same time, as a concomitant of the moves on the political and academic scene at the

threshold of the 21st century.

While the focus of these remarks is primarily on the political component of the venues, their whole history bears witness to the theoretical and thematic component of CESE. It indicates the readiness of comparative educationists to respond to the challenges of essential trends in the social sciences as well as in the humanities including their inherent shifts of paradigm. This comment can be exemplified by the following thematic approaches:

- recurrent education in the framework of lifelong learning (Frascati 1973);
- the discovery and revival of the intercultural component of comparative education as a response to cross-national relevance of the forthcoming migrant issue (see Mitter & Swift 1983), at a moment when that topic as a research field in Europe was growing significantly (Würzburg 1983);
- an explicit start into the empirical research domain in comparative education without abandoning its traditional domain of historical and hermeneutic studies (Dijon 1992);
- a response to the shift of paradigms in social theory, in particular systems theory and world systems theory (from Copenhagen 1994 onwards) and their impacts on comparative education (see Winther-Jensen 1996 and Kazamias & Spillane 1998).

CESE conferences also embrace workshops (until 1990 called commissions) which are related to focal themes on comparative educational trends including their contextual references. This principle is reinforced by explicit interest in middle-range research issues and their discussions in the transnational dimension. It indicates a significant difference from the way conferences of the US-based Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) are structured. This difference was especially relevant in the early history of both societies. However, CESE events have been increasingly opened to what the organisers of the 2006 Granada conference called ‘free working groups, panels, symposia, poster displays, [and] workshops’.

Additional information on the conferences with their thematic and organisational components has been offered by the CESE Newsletters which were launched in 1978 and which went far beyond anticipatory and retrospective news on the conferences. The newsletters also contained reports on other events in Europe and beyond, publications, book reviews, and obituaries (see Luzón 2005).

The conference programmes are usually enriched by two special forms of presentations:

- the Joseph Lauwerys Lectures initiated in memory of one of CESE’s prominent founding members and intended for outstanding European and non-European speakers in comparative education and its neighbouring fields;
- the Young Researchers’ Group, which owes its existence to an initiative started by José Luis García Garrido in the early 1990s.

Mention should also be made of the CESE Women’s Network founded on

Margaret Sutherland's initiative in the late 1980s. Self-organised and formally acknowledged by the Executive Committee, it helped to consolidate the position of female members in the society, and made special contributions to the agendas of the General Meetings.

Conclusions

CESE has found ways to deal with the tensions between continuity and change, and it seems legitimate to call its first four decades of history a success. In the first period the society had to occupy and assure its place among its elder neighbouring associations in the domains of pedagogics, social sciences and humanities. The second challenge was caused by the foundation of national, regional and linguistic comparative education societies, competing with CESE in attracting members and organising their own meetings. This trend posed a question about CESE's survival, after the model of sections under CESE's umbrella failed. This challenge was reinforced by the third challenge – that all these 'competing' societies joined the WCCES, thus placing CESE *beside* them as constituent members of the world body.

The success which determines the current state of the field can be essentially explained by how CESE has managed to cope with the following three problem areas that are interconnected. First, Denis Kallen's description (1981, p.3) of CESE as "a large club, but still a small society" is worth recalling. Kallen continued:

It is no more 'a gathering of senior persons in the field', but a mixed group of 'senior persons' represented by the few professors and lecturers in comparative education in European universities, many junior staff members from universities, staff members of research institutes, of international organisations and of educational administrations.

Twenty five years later that comment had not lost its applicability. It is true that the CESE conferences attract young researchers; but compared to CIES, the 'senior persons' have held influential positions to an exceptional degree. This has been manifest in the themes of the main workshops at the conferences and also in the election of the CESE officers, exemplified by the list of Presidents. In this sense the 'club' character has not disappeared, although it has been restricted by the fact that the attendance of young researchers at the conferences goes considerably beyond their membership in CESE because they prefer to join their national associations as the organisations within their working areas.

Second, policy-oriented and practice-oriented themes have increasingly entered the conference programmes, though they have remained the domain of the 'free' working groups leaving continuing dominance of theory-based themes in the main workshops that have thus retained the feature of CESE conferences. Concerning the theoretical orientation, Cowen's analytical comment (1980, p.108) is relevant:

The intellectual definition of European comparative education is sharply different from that of American comparative education. The major founding

fathers of European comparative education from the mid-twenties were working on themes which are comprehensible in terms of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx. The search for new methodological approaches in the United States and the confidence that American comparative educationists have had in positivist techniques drawn from other social sciences has meant that a field of study with a common name has diverged sharply.

Here again, the response should be ambivalent. On the one hand, in the 21st century the 'sharp' difference is no longer evident: empirical methodology has long gained access to comparative education theory and research in European universities and research institutes, while social theories have exerted their impact on comparative education in the USA. On the other hand, the aforementioned strong position of theory-based themes at the CESE conferences, including their representatives' dedication to European authorities of philosophical dignity, may allow the argument that the 'sharpness' of the differences mentioned by Cowen has been abandoned, while differences *per se* continue to be identified. However, some of the 'authorities' have changed in the ranking lists. Karl Marx, for example, has been replaced by Niklas Luhmann and Jürgen Habermas.

Third, the CESE conferences have increasingly demonstrated a 'European dimension' with regard to education and educational policies (see e.g. Winther-Jensen 1996). Unlike Europe-oriented debates several decades previously, the interest seemed to undergo a shift of paradigm from the more idealistic and historical considerations to the comparative re-analysis of political documents and empirical inquiries. The outcomes and effects of the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as trends in the field of intercultural education, can be adduced as significant cases. This pattern of Europeanisation may be interpreted as a corollary of the actions and debates within the bodies of the European Union. In the process, it could give CESE a unique feature in relation to both non-European and European partner associations. Moreover, it may assure CESE's distinctive place within the WCCES.

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