

## Award of the “Pro Merito” medal of the Council of Europe to Ms Bärbel Bauer

Ms Bärbel Bauer has been awarded the Council of Europe Pro Merito medal for her commitment to the Organisation’s values and work.

The Director General of Democracy, Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, presented the medal during the award ceremony on 24 May 2012 at the Palais de l’Europe where she honoured Ms Bauer’s commitment to the work of the Council of Europe, in particular to the Pestalozzi Programme (the Council of Europe training programme for education professionals)



in which she has been actively involved for the past 25 years. The ceremony was attended by a delegation from the Ministry of Education of the Land Baden-Württemberg and from the Academy of Bad Wildbad where regular training seminars in cooperation with the

Pestalozzi Programme are taking place.

Ms Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Mr Sjur Bergan, Head of the Education Department as well as the staff of the Pestalozzi Programme were present for this ceremony.

Earlier that day the delegation had the opportunity to meet with the Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Ms Ólöf Ólafsdóttir and her colleagues, Mr Sjur Bergan, Head of the Education Department and Mr Josef Huber, Head of the Pestalozzi Programme to look back over the years of fruitful cooperation. But also to discuss changes that have happened over the years, and more specifically in the recent past. Changes in society influence the context of our work – in particular the work of all teachers and teacher trainers. The recent changes within the Council of Europe itself also have implications for the future. At the meeting,



the participants looked ahead and explored how the important work on teacher education can be continued in the most effective and efficient ways in this changed context. Working for education and in particular education for democracy is still as important as ever. Perhaps even more so today than a couple of decades ago.

Who would have thought, in 1978, when the cooperation with Baden-Württemberg began that today, almost 35 years later, over one hundred training activities have been organised and run together. Several thousand teachers, school heads, teacher trainers and other education professionals have discovered the Council of Europe, the values and principles which it stands for. They have become familiar with our projects in the field of education: policy guidelines and tools for the practitioners. They have not only discovered what guidance and support they can draw from these outcomes, but also experienced a real European dimension to their work.

Getting to know each other, finding out that the main challenges are similar for all of us wherever we may find ourselves on this continent. They have learned that understanding each other and working together is as important as the key issues which



were dealt with: democratic citizenship, multiperspectivity in history teaching and learning, languages and intercultural communication, media literacy, prevention of discrimination, of violence and of crimes against humanity; these are just some of the major themes the training seminars have dealt with. And the focus on a pedagogy and a methodology which is appropriate and effective with regard to these objectives.

Ms Bauer has been the pedagogical advisor at the Academy of In-Service Training and Capacity building for Schools of the Land Baden-Württemberg responsible for the Council of Europe training seminars organised in cooperation with Baden-Württemberg for almost 25 years (since 1988) - first in Donaueschingen and then in Bad Wildbad.

Throughout the years, Ms Bauer has demonstrated a deep personal commitment to the principles and values of the Council of Europe in education such as democracy, human rights and human dignity, mutual

understanding, and equality in difference. She has devoted her efforts to the practice of education and also paid special attention to the needs of trainers and trainees, not only as professionals, but also as people, as individuals. For several thousand European education professionals from across the continent who have attended these training seminars her name will always remain linked to the Council of Europe.