

## Bulletin # 2 of the Regional South Caucasus coalition " Women for Peace"

### WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR PEACE

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ARMENIYA

### Participation in the "European Youth Studies" Conference

Since 1986, students and teachers from more than 20 countries have been involved in the European Studies Programme. The aim of this Programme is to familiarize young people with links between various cultures, national customs as well as other European countries, giving them the opportunity to realize the importance of joint work, develop their communication skills including through the use of information technologies. The first phase of Programme implementation includes annual conferences for schoolteachers working in junior and higher grades enabling them to meet and discuss the results of the preceding year and develop plans for joint work in the following school year.

The regular conference for teachers of European junior schools (students aged 11 to 15) was held in Newksel of Northern Ireland, from 5-7 March this year. The Junior Programme is curriculum-based. It offers units of study in the areas of the English language, geography and history and uses English as the language of communication.

Over 80 participants of the Conference were from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Finland and other European countries. Armenia is the first country of the former Soviet Union that became member of the European Studies Programme.

Armenia stirred the interest of many participants of the Conference both as a country having recently declared its independence and with a specific socio-political situation and as a country with ancient history and culture.

It has been almost a year that the organization "Women for Development" has created in this school a World Learning Center through support from the German EED and Dutch ICCO organizations. The Center provides theoretical training sessions on peaceful conflict resolution as well as practical and role playing classes where the students discuss, analyze and offer peaceful solutions to conflicts in their classrooms, school, families and the community. The Project was new also for many of the participants from Northern Ireland since it is not taught in the schools of Northern Ireland either as a compulsory or optional subject.

At the Conference, Armenia was represented by Vahan Tekeyan School #2 of Gyumri which became a member of the European School Education Programme with its "Teaching Peace" Project.

During the Conference, the participants formed working groups to discuss future joint plans and endorse projects. The representatives of School #2 were in a group

comprising also 3 schools of Northern Ireland and 1 school from the Republic of Ireland.

The group developed a Plan of Action according to which the students had to exchange their electronic mail addresses, tell one another about their interests, favorite heroes, their families, customs, traditions and the culture of their respective countries. It is expected that the students will congratulate one another on their birthdays, exchange class/school photos. The students from Gyumri will tell their peers about the knowledge and skills learned at the World Learning Center share their experience in the peaceful resolution of school and community conflicts, and exchange ideas about the importance of establishing peace.

The student participants of the Project will be informed about the history of founding the European Studies Programme, its aims and objectives. As well, they will receive information about the members and candidates for membership of the Programme, their rights and responsibilities and European values. You can learn about the work with all the participating schools and organized events through visiting the following site: [www.european-studies.org](http://www.european-studies.org). The most important result of this Conference is that Armenia was the first in the region to be provided with the opportunity to participate in the European Studies Programme and that more than 2,000 students from 4 schools of Europe will be provided with the opportunity to get to know our country, its past and present culture.

We hope that this small step will promote Armenia's membership to the EU.

*Armine Mikayeljan, Chairperson Gohar Markosyan, Deputy Chairperson "Women for Development" Gyumri*