

Bulgaria



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Born in 1955 Mr. ATANASSOV holds a Master of Arts from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and a Ph.D. in Methodology and Learning Practice from the Faculty of Slavonic Studies, Sofia University. From 1980 to 1986 he was Bulgarian Language and Literature Teacher of a Secondary School in Sofia. He was Member of the Governing Board of the Union of Bulgarian philologists (1998-2000). He has published more than 40 articles and essays, and a number of compilations in his field of competence. He is Co-author of Manuals in Bulgarian Language and Literature for different grades, of the Concept for Education in Literature (1993) and of the Project to State Educational Standards for Bulgarian Language and Literature (2000). Since 2000 he has been Editor in Chief of the Journal "The Bulgarian Language and Literature". In July 2001 he was appointed Minister of Education and Science.

The art of living together

I welcome the choice of topic of the Forty-sixth session of the International conference on Education "Education for All for learning to live together: Contents and learning strategies – problems and solutions" and believe that it is a challenge for XXI century. During the coming years we would all face the necessity of building up the new citizen back up by the common efforts of international community. This new citizen will be educated in the spirit of antiracism, tolerance, anti-xenophobia, and respect to the other and his rights. I would take the liberty to slightly change the title of the topic because my team and myself in the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science would not only follow the principle of "Education for all" but would rather pursue the idea of an education which reaches everybody and is everybody's responsibility not only on national but on international level too.

One of major priorities is the working out of manuals which objectively present and acquaint young people with the history, culture and customs of our neighbors as our main goal is to provide our pupils and students with profound knowledge about their neighbors in order to overcome the negatives stereotypes in accepting the other. For our country which is situated in one of the troubled European sub-region that of South-East Europe, it is of paramount importance to educate our young people in the spirit of confidence and understanding. Therefore, we consider that regional cooperation should focus mainly on manuals, on setting up working international networks for exchange of ideas on teachers training and on active participation of pupils in the international dialogue. Bulgaria has a lot of examples of "good practices" to share.

It is my understanding that the UNESCO efforts should be directed to sub-regional and regional cooperation as its results are more effective and concrete and meet the actual needs and tasks of the respective communities. It contribute to better knowledge about nearby and more distant neighbors and through exchange of experience and ideas it leads to building up of a climate of tolerance and mutual respect. If one would like to do away with the negative stereotypes there is nothing better than direct contacts and joint work of peoples, teachers, scientists, educational decision-makers, Trade union and NGO representatives. Our experience of international festivals and summer schools convinced us that this the right direction.

It is necessary to make a better use of the new information and communication technologies in international cooperation. It would be useful if UNESCO introduced in its WEB-site a module of good practices from countries. The creation of Regional Virtual University for teacher training and life-long learning would accumulate the different experiences that could be shared by the international educational community.

I would like to point out that UNESCO is an international organization par excellence, which we highly appreciate for achievements in the field of education and science as it stimulate and incubate new innovative ideas. We hope that in the future its specific role in working out common international strategies will further increase. The Organization will find the most adequate and active international, especially regional structures to respond to the challenges of the new century so we all could learn to live together which is the supreme Art of Live. ✍