

THE « UIGSE » TODAY

Introduction :

Since the end of 1989, with the symbolic fall of the Berlin wall, leading to a quite important modification of the political regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the situation enabled us to plan some actions towards these countries in order to help them discover or rediscover true scouting.

At the same time, a lot of work was still to be done towards Western countries: driven away by a society of wild consumption, they were putting more and more in perspective the bases of natural morals.

Obviously, the UIGSE could not observe this evolution as a spectator but as an enthusiastic actor of the educational proposal offered by our method, as a complement to family.

Situation:

Three axes of setting-up:

Mainly, we may say that three axes of setting-up were established in the early 90ies: one towards Lithuania, another one towards Hungary and the last one towards Rumania. The French, Italian and German associations involved in this development in a significant way and, with heights and bottoms, the associations created in these countries are still there. But the hopes that we put on these settlements to irradiate our scouting on their neighbour countries faded away. Each of these new associations is now in a period of consolidation or restructuring. A lot of work has still to be done for them to reach a sufficient level in order to be quite autonomous.

Thanks to God, other signs came to comfort us in our will to offer European scouting to other countries. Among others, it is the case of the Polish association but also, after a preparatory work of ten years, the quite significant development of relationships with the Russian Orthodox association (ORIOUR) which was admitted recently as an aspirant association within the UIGSE.

Anchor points :

Today, we observe that the situation of the associations of the UIGSE is quite contrasted. Independently from their date of creation, some associations are knowing difficulties, others are going on in spite of the bustles of our society; others have a particularly developed "spirit of mission", hence a strong investment to help creating new associations.

Without giving "prizes", we may observe through some associations that the UIGSE is deeply rooted and thus irradiates. This is the case of Poland, which helped creating scout units in Ukraine and Byelorussia. It is the case of Italy which invests in the help to Hungary and which has done a lot towards Rumania. It is also the case of Belgium which has sustained an embryo of Guides and Scouts of Europe in Albania. And it is also the case of France which invested a lot in the training of leaders throughout Europe, and of Germany (KPE) which worked deeply with Ukrainian Greco-Catholics. To all this, we must add a work of creation and redaction of pedagogical documents which are particularly rich, concise, concrete, and helpful for each chief in his mission of educator.

Contrast:

The size of the associations varies a lot, as we may observe. Within the twenty emerging or recognised associations of the UIGSE, some associations are composed several thousands of members, other have a few hundreds. This can be explained by several factors linked to the tradition of each country and to the date of settlement and development of our method. As a matter of fact, some countries have no scout tradition most often because political events have organised youth movements to serve their ideology during the first part of last century. In other countries, the proposal of the UIGSE arrived just at the right moment to cope with a very strong need and the associations developed in a significant way. This is obvious for France and Italy.

Perspectives:

To consolidate what exists:

As it has just been mentioned, the situation of the associations is not homogeneous. Some associations have their "rhythm of cruise" and grow regularly in quantity and quality. We can only encourage them. Some associations have realised that they had an urgent mission to perform towards the young people of their country and they are taking the relevant means to do so. It seems that the settlement of free patrols copes with this need of developing the movement in some countries. Some associations have great difficulties; with our help, they must find coherent answers to fulfil their commitments towards the UIGSE.

The Federal Commissioner's team is at the disposal of the associations which need it. But of course the first actors of an association are its members. An external help, however rich it may be, will never replace the proper will of each association. Nevertheless, we remain ready to do all we can to help the persons of good will, so that the quality of our scouting may be explicit and irradiating.

To create new associations:

Today, although we are settled in most parts of the continent, there is still a lot to be done. A particular effort must be realised to offer our method to our Orthodox and Protestant brothers. Of course, it is not easy but the experience that we have with the Russian association invites us to invest in this direction, which is the source of a great richness. Spiritual unity is a strong answer to the various disorders that invade our societies. Concrete Europe has been done by Christendom. We still wonder at its solid bases, through an impressive patrimony, be it in the fields of architecture, music, literature, painting, etc. The UIGSE has its role to play in the construction of a real and just Europe. So we must study carefully all possibilities of creation in order to find the possible actions according to the requests that are done to us.

Conclusion:

The talks that we regularly have with the Pontifical Council for the Laity comfort us and encourage us to go on working at the service of families and youth, not in a "new wave" scouting but on the contrary by releasing nothing of what is the heart of our proposal. The values which are at the centre of our method cannot be changed. Technology, philosophy, fashion, habits or other things have no grip on what we want to be, because our values are anchored on natural morals, which is at the basis of any education. We can observe it during the last forty years: every time an association has put in perspective the scout law, it has been gradually deleted. These examples should help us not to fall into the trap of fashions or momentary mistakes but on the contrary to do our best to make as many boys and girls as possible discover the scout joy and share it around them.

It is a long work to raise the current drifts; it may take several generations. But even if we cannot see the results during our life on earth, we must settle the foundations of this reconstruction, like those who started building cathedrals, knowing that they would only see the first rows of stones and that their grand-grand children would finish the work.