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***INVESTMENT IN KNOWLEDGE ?  
Towards the Knowledge and Skills required for  
Harmonizing  
the Personal and Social Spheres<sup>1</sup>***

This presentation, adopting a critical perspective, aims at:

- analyzing the dialectic relationship between the personal and social spheres (micro – macro level),
- re-visiting gender equality taking into consideration
  - the multiplicity of roles which we perform in cultural contexts
  - the issue of communication as performance
  - the multiculturalism of the person
- remembering important priorities of the Lisbon Summit in the light of our ‘new era’,
- explaining basic reasons for the recognition of the role of “human capital”,
- highlighting the knowledge and skills required in our “brave new world”,
- suggesting the new role of educators and leaders for a successful ‘investment in people and knowledge’,
- emphasizing the value of the person *per se* who must not be used as a *means to an end* but recognized as an end in itself.

The presentation will be oral using Power Point as an audio-visual stimulus. One short video of a-two-minute duration is included in the Power Point presentation.

**Outline**

In the context of the Lisbon Summit Some important priorities selected were decided. Two of these were:

- **Stability and Security,**
- **Sustainability and mutual solidarity,** through, for example:
  - *Horizontal dialogue,*
  - *Investment in human resources,*
  - *Continuing development,*
  - *Combating violence and conflicts,*
  - *Active citizenship*
  - *Networking and mutual synergies.*

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<sup>1</sup>Περίληψη εισήγησης στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο ύστερα από πρόσκληση της Κοσμίδου-Hardy ως Εμπειρογνώμονα, από την Επιτροπή των Δικαιωμάτων των Γυναικών και της Ισότητας των Φύλων του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου. Η εισήγηση παρουσιάστηκε με πλούσιο υλικό (βιντεοπαρουσίαση) σε Διεθνές Συνέδριο που διοργάνωσε η Επιτροπή με θέμα: «Συνέχιση της στρατηγικής της Λισσαβόνας: συμβιβασμός της επαγγελματικής, της οικογενειακής και της ιδιωτικής ζωής». Το Συνέδριο πραγματοποιήθηκε στις Βρυξέλλες, στις 25 – 01- 2006 στην αίθουσα AIG-E του κτιρίου Altiero Spinelli.

This presentation intends to invite the audience to view the reasons why the value of these priorities has been recognized. To achieve this aim, the basic characteristics of our *New Era* will be presented, which are:

- Information,
- Knowledge,
- Change and acceleration,
- Anxiety,
- Uncertainty,
- Risk.

Another point the presentation draws attention to is the relationship between the *personal and the social spheres*. The author suggests that if we really want to promote aims such as *active citizenship and investment in human resources or human capital*, we need to see the factors influencing the formation of identity, or the personal world, and thus we need to take into consideration sociopolitical, cultural, historical, economic, biological factors, the role of the Media and globalization. On the other hand, we also need to take into consideration the fact that the person is not a passive entity or a *tabula rasa* which is molded by what is external but, under certain conditions, the person can exercise her or his power for the formation of external factors. As Antonio Gramsci argued in the past, ‘history is of our own make’. What is suggested here then is that there is a dialectic relationship between what is external and internal, personal and social, or between the *micro and macro level*.

Therefore, in a discussion concerning the issue of, for example, reconciling the private, family and professional spheres in our life, we need to consider the way in which we construe the person, or the ‘actor’, who is the protagonist in these contexts and the roles he or she plays or *performs* in these and other contexts. This means that performance is also an important point to be analysed.

According to the field of *communication and cultural studies* performance is an important issue. Performance refers to daily life *rituals and practices* used by a community in order to:

- Initiate its members into a specific cultural framework through roles they learn to play,
- Coordinate their behaviour,
- Influence the way of construing identity and
- Promote a homogeneous way of understanding the self and the world.

This implies that, through living in particular communities where the patriarchal ideology is dominant and influenced by particular rituals, we learn to perform roles consistent with this ideology in routine practices and events which take place at home, at work and in other contexts. Therefore, public and private life rituals need to be critically revisited and analysed and we need to see how the person may –to an extent- be *the product of communication*.

In a discussion concerning ‘investment in knowledge’ we also need to analyse the kind of knowledge required today. This presentation, based on a holistic –or synthetic- model suggests that what is needed, particularly in the context of our *new era*, is critical **Self and Social Awareness**, whose relationship is dialectic. Self awareness implies, *inter alia*:

- A positive self concept and a high self esteem,
- Lifelong and holistic development,
- Professional flexibility and dynamic adaptation to new realities
- Distancing from a concept of the ‘one dimensional’ person.

In this presentation it is argued is that the person itself is ‘a multicultural world’ consisted of *subpersonalities* usually being ‘at war’ with each other: for example, my female part or qualities may be in conflict with my male ones. In a process of self awareness and personal development realizing my ‘multiculturality’, observing my ‘subpersonalities’, accepting them and working with them is a necessary step for synthesizing them so that synergy is achieved among them: for example, between my male and female part so that I have the feeling of a balance when I look at them as an ‘androgyny’. Internal reconciliation of parts, harmony and peace between them is important for reconciling external roles.

However, a question posed is if working at a personal level in order to improve the self, finding internal harmony and promoting personal development is an easy enterprise in our ‘brave new world’ often characterized by ‘turbulence’ of different sorts. As a reminder of what is going on at this level a short video (of less than two minutes) is played, presenting some historic ‘moments’ or events.

What is emphasized following the video presentation is that a person who is critically self aware needs also to be critically socially aware. Awareness and personal development, viewed from a critical perspective, does not in any way imply a narcissistic self but a person who wishes to contribute to the social becoming, to social development, through informed action, through undertaking the role of an active citizen of a community and of the world. Thus, the *personal is really political*; the promotion of self awareness has a political dimension, since, after all, the person who is not isolated from the social *milieu* is a political being. This means that changing the self is related to:

- ***changing attitudes***
- ***changing institutions through active citizenship***
- ***changing the world***

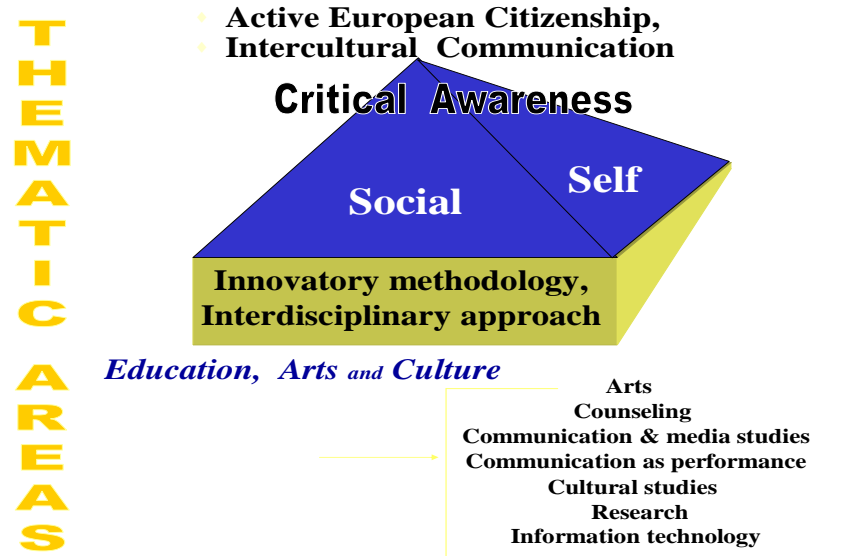
With regard to attitudes, some basic attitudes which are important for the promotion of the Lisbon Summit priorities such as those referred to in this presentation, are:

- **Acceptance of self & other / Other**
- **Acceptance of changes and transitions**
- **Flexibility & critical / dynamic adaptation**
- **Understanding of multiple realities and ‘truths’**
- **Negotiation of own needs with those of others**

With regard to the issue of changing institutions, two important institutions in the context of which changes are needed are *Education and the World of Work*.

In the limited time of this presentation some points related to a *model of critical education* the author has developed will be made. These will mainly have to do with the role of educators today and the knowledge and skills they need to have in order to promote self and social awareness. An example concerning the application of this model will be used. This is a three-year European Transnational Project the writer coordinated entitled:

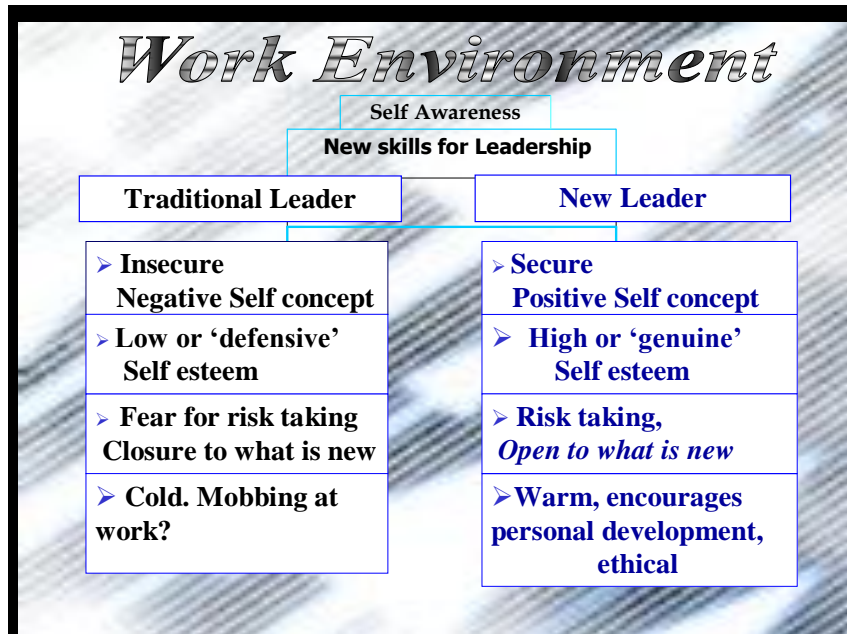
**SY.N.TH.E.SI**, acronym for: **SY**nergetic **N**ew **T**Hesis for **E**uropean education **S**Imera<sup>2</sup>  
 Some main points of the project can be seen on the transparency presented on the next page.



With regard to the world of work the presentation will refer to the important role of a leader today. Basic qualities on the part of the leader will be mentioned. These are the following:

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<sup>2</sup> Simera' is the Greek word for the word 'today'.



What will be emphasized is the issue of Collaboration as shown in the transparency which follows.



Instead of an epilogue and with regard to the issue of 'investment in people', what is suggested in the presentation is that the recognition of this is indeed a 'historic moment':

Investment in people is a debt owed to the person for years on the part of economy. It seems that a universal *conspiracy* is directing us towards the paying of this 'debt'. It also seems to direct us to an orientation towards the recognition of the value of the person as a being necessary for the development of the whole social network.