

## **Education towards a 'Culture of Love'**

From the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2010 in a sunny Rom, the eternal city, EUFRES held his biennial conference. The conference of this CoGREE organization was bilingual (Italian and German) and there were around 35 participants from all over Europe. As CoGREE secretary I had the opportunity to visit this meeting.

The first thing that strikes a guest is the hospitality and the friendly atmosphere during the conference. The hotel and meeting rooms in Rom, in 'Casa Bonus Pastor', were close to the Vatican with the Dutch flowers still on the stairs of St. Peter so shortly after Eastern.

The topic of the conference was chosen because of the economic and financial crisis and the presumed deeper crisis of ethical values behind it. The question of the consequences for education in general and religious education in particular was examined from different points of view by several speakers and then discussed in plenum and in groups in a more than interesting program. Several observations were made by your representative during the conference like:

- the struggle with the question 'are we able to translate the language within the church to today's reality and what does that mean for RE?',
- secularisation is everywhere, but not everywhere in the same stage and not everywhere dealt with in the same way,
- there are quite some country specific experiences and it is not easy to find a way to fertilize this during an international meeting,
- in spite of the differences in religious experience between Catholics from the South, the West and the East of Europe, they find each other in a deep conviction. This showed e.g. during a moment of prayer and commemorate with the Polish colleagues when news of the crash of the Polish airplane near Smolensk in Russia came through.

The organized visit to the Vatican Museum and tour through Rom was an unexpected appreciated extra.

The next EUFRES conference will be in Madrid from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2012.