

The political-institutional declarations are reinforced by the voice of that part of the scientific community that has devoted itself to the detailed analysis of the Information Society; the proof of this is the huge amount of scientific literature which has been written until now about the topic. Castells in particular, in his trilogy *The information age: economy, society and culture*, insists on the assumption that we live in a post industrial society, where our well-being is generated essentially through the creation and use of *knowledge*, which is transmitted in the form of *information*<sup>6</sup>.

However, these and other influential voices still find little response in national educational policies in Europe where the extent of technology and the emphasis on contents are surely regarded more urgent compared to the development of competences and skills able to take effective advantage of the contents which today ICTs can easily convey.

This can be rightfully called *the era of competence* and no longer exclusively the era of knowledge<sup>7</sup>. The birth and the quick diffusion, in the past twenty years, of the so-called "transversal" technologies, such as electronics, computer science, telecommunications, and nanotechnologies, require diversified skills which do not belong to a single sector: therefore they should be learned through an adequate *education to information* in order to strengthen the push towards interdisciplinarity.

Innovation, technology transfer, competitiveness: these are the key terms that bring the concept of change into professions of the next generations, who will have the duty to move advanced societies towards quality standards which will be continuously changing, and towards knowledge that is becoming more and more interdisciplinary; the overall aim is to meet the scientific and entrepreneurial needs, which are clearly oriented towards a supranational and specifically European setting.

Therefore, no more strict cognitive divisions concerning disciplines which are rigidly sectional. On the contrary, what Europe needs today is a methodological approach, and a systematic education to scientific information, regarded as one of the pillars for the development of cognitive interdisciplinary universes.

<sup>6</sup> Castells, Manuel, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers (three volumes): Vol. 1: *The Rise of the Network Society*. 1996; Vol. 2: *The Power of Identity*. 1997; Vol. 3: *End of Millennium*. 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Trattoli, Luca (2007), Oltre la conoscenza, l'era della competenza. *Area Magazine*, 36 (March 2007), p. 2-5.