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THE BLACK SEA INITIATIVE ON HISTORY

1999 - 2004

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The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	7
II.	HISTORY OF THE PROJECT (1999-2004)	13
	Prepared by Dr Zofia Halina Archibald, School of Archaeology, Classics, and Egyptology, University of Liverpool	
III.	MAIN STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT	16
	1. Seminar on “History Curricula for Secondary Schools in the Black Sea Countries” Constanța, Romania, 6 – 8 May 1999	16
	2. Meeting of Experts on “The Greeks in the History of the Black Sea”, Thessaloniki, 2 – 4 December 1999	19
	3. Meeting on “The preparation of the teaching pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History, Kiev, 14 – 15 March 2000.....	20
	4. Seminar on “History textbooks and teaching resources for schools in the Black Sea Region”, Odessa, 25 – 27 May 2000.....	22
	5. Meeting of Experts on “The preparation of the teaching pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History”, Tbilisi, Georgia, 16 – 17 November 2000	23
	6. Meeting of Experts on “The Preparation of the Teaching Pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History”, Chisinau, 16 – 17 November 2001.....	24
IV.	REPORT ON THE FINAL CONFERENCE.....	26
	Sochi, Russian Federation, 28 – 29 September 2004	
	1. Introduction.....	26
	2. Presentations of the participating countries	27
	3. Reflections on the publication of the teaching pack.....	31
	4. Analysis of the Round Table: ‘How to teach history in a multi-cultural context’	32
	5. Conclusions and Recommendations	34

APPENDIX I

PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE.....37

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE.....41

I. INTRODUCTION

History teaching has always been an important element of the activities of the Council of Europe as it plays a crucial role in the understanding of democratic values. In 2004 when celebrating 50 years of co-operation under the European Cultural Convention, the importance of education and culture developing and reaffirming basic European values, including that of democratic citizenship, was highlighted. During the period of its existence, the Council of Europe has built on its wide experience in education, including history teaching, gained from activities organised throughout the whole continent.

Though at times ideas changed or were modified, the approach stayed the same: the main question was always how the Council of Europe could face changes and challenges and respond to them, in our case, through the prism of history teaching.

A quick overview of the changes and challenges of the last decade will help to understand better the philosophy behind regional co-operation activities.

On the one hand, we have all eyewitnesses to the collapse of communism and the inclusion of new countries in the sphere of the European democratic values, of the intensification of the economic and political contacts and disappearance of the borders, as well as of the development of globalisation.

On the other hand, during recent years, we could clearly see an increasing number of national and ethnic conflicts, an escalation of violence at all levels, including in secondary schools and family life; a rise in military conflicts and, finally, we came face to face with one of the most threatening phenomenon of all - terrorism.

It is clear that the activities of the Council of Europe in all areas, including education, and in particular, history teaching, should respond to this new situation. The practical question is how? What are the mechanisms through which the Council of Europe could act?

To answer this question from the perspective of history teaching, we should point out two levels: legal and pedagogical.

Legal level: During recent years, the Council of Europe has adopted two Recommendations on history teaching which reflect the changes as well as the specific role which history teaching should play in the educational system. The first Recommendation on history teaching was adopted in 1996 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The main focus of this document is that:

- history teaching should be free of political and ideological influences;
- politicians have their own interpretation of history and history should not be used as an instrument for political manipulation;
- history is one of several ways of gaining knowledge of one's national identity. It is also a gateway to the experiences and richness of the past of other cultures.

This Recommendation reflected the changes in the late 1990s when many European countries were going through a period of transition. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the notion of Europe changed, as it marked the starting point for the creation of so - called Greater Europe. At that time, it became clear that all the countries constituting Europe are different though they share common democratic values. Therefore, it became paramount to make people understand diversity not as a danger, but as an enriching factor. The new Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2001, thus highlight the necessity to:

- understand differences;
- realise the value of diversity;
- respect others;
- develop intercultural dialogue;
- build relations on the basis of mutual understanding and tolerance.

This document not only determines the main guidelines but also proposes answers to such questions as:

Why should we teach history in present-day schools?

How should we teach it so as to achieve the aims indicated above?

As regards the first question, the Recommendation points out that the main aims of teaching history are to:

- understand the present-day situation and help young people find their place in the changing world;
- help the young generation to develop such skills as critical thinking, open-mindedness, ability to express one's point of view and respect for other perspectives;
- develop a respect of all kinds of differences;
- play a vital role in the promotion of fundamental values such as tolerance, mutual understanding and trust between peoples;

- create responsible and active citizens by developing their ability for independent and critical thinking, open-mindedness and resistance to all kinds of political and ideological manipulation.

How to teach history?

In answer to this question, the Recommendation draws attention to the fact that history teaching in the new millennium should:

- unite people rather than divide them;
- reflect the historical picture in its full complexity, but without creating images of an enemy;
- maintain a balance when presenting political, social, economic, cultural and everyday life history;
- maintain a balance in teaching national and world history;
- present facts in their full complexity, including controversial and sensitive issues;
- use multiperspectivity and present different points of view;
- eliminate prejudices and stereotypes;
- encourage pupils to work with historical sources, including archives and museums visits;
- use innovative methods based on dialogue form;
- develop creativity and a positive attitude towards reality.

Pedagogical level

The new challenges – such as the creation of a Greater Europe without dividing lines – provided a new impetus for the activities of the Council of Europe and history education took on even more importance with the renewed interest of the new member States in their national histories. Regional cooperation on history teaching became one of the priorities of the Council of Europe as it gives a rare opportunity to:

- work in teams at an international level;
- develop cooperation on an equal footing;
- know more about neighbours using a multiperspectivity approach;
- express one's point of view and listen to different;
- share good practices and examples in different areas;
- analyse existing problems from different perspectives in their full complexity;
- understand general trends which are typical of a region as well as national peculiarities;
- identify similar problems and try to find a solution by common action;

- finding ways to reach a compromise in areas where consensus cannot be found;
- help in preventing conflicts.

Regional co-operation in history teaching

The interest in regional co-operation was reflected in the documents of the Council of Europe and confirmed at the highest political level at the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government in Strasbourg in 1997 where the importance of regional co-operation in strengthening stability and security in Europe was highlighted.

It is important to stress that, at almost the same time, different countries initiated the development of two long - term regional projects on history teaching under the auspices of the Council of Europe: the Black Sea Initiative on History and the Tbilisi Initiative.

The Black Sea Initiative on History was initiated by the Romanian Authorities in 1999 and involved seven countries, all bordering the Black Sea: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. One of its aims was the preparation of a teaching pack on the history of this region. The Black Sea teaching pack represents supplementary teaching materials for secondary schools and will provide teachers and pupils with more information about the history of the neighbouring countries as well as about the Black Sea region itself.

The Tbilisi Initiative project is connected with the preparation of a textbook on a History of the Caucasus for secondary schools and could be used as a supplementary source in teaching history.

The Black Sea Teaching Pack was published by the Norwegian publishing house Gyldendal in 2004 and the Caucasian textbook will be published in 2005.

Expectations of the countries involved in the Black Sea Initiative on history

The main reasons why many countries almost simultaneously expressed their interest in regional co-operation were:

- a lack of information on the history of neighbouring countries in curricula for secondary and upper-secondary schools;
- the fact that an image of “others”, in particular, neighbours, was mainly presented in “dark” colours through such political topics as wars, military conflicts, revolutions, etc;

- a lack of teaching materials which could help to use new interactive methods in teaching history.

Philosophy of the Black Sea Initiative on History

This project was not only aimed at the preparation of supplementary teaching materials. It was a long-term process which included the organisation of seminars, conferences, meetings of experts on the preparation of new textbooks, curricula and teacher training issues. This provided an opportunity to:

- join efforts of Ministry officials responsible for history education, academics, curricula specialists, teacher trainers, publishers and history teachers;
- agree that present-day history teaching should be aimed at strengthening reconciliation and tolerance, rather than creating dividing lines;
- reach the conclusion that history teaching should be based on mutual respect and not used to create an image of the enemy, in particular when teaching about neighbours;
- agree that present-day history teaching should be taught in its full complexity, including controversial and sensitive issues, on the basis of multiperspectivity;
- agree that history teaching in the 21st Century should help the young generation to become active citizens; it should, therefore, be aimed at the development of such skills as critical thinking, open-mindedness, the ability to reach independent conclusions rather than simply obtaining a certain amount of knowledge;
- learn more about mechanisms of regional co-operation developed within the Council of Europe based on respect and equal footing for all countries involved as well as on the principle of transparency in teamwork.

Innovative features of the teaching pack

The Teaching Pack on the history of the Black Sea developed new approaches in teaching history based on:

- a balance between political, economic, social and cultural history;
- innovative methods in the presentation of controversial and sensitive issues on the basis of multiperspectivity;

- the use of interactive methods in teaching history .

The experiences gained during the Project could be used in their future work by:

- curricula specialists;
- textbook authors;
- teacher trainers;
- history teachers.

One of the aims of the project was not only to prepare and publish teaching materials but also to encourage the process of changing attitudes through education on the basis of democratic values.

When preparing the teaching pack, history specialists evolved came up to the decision that teaching materials on regional history could play a role of a bridge, as they should present information on the topics which are not taught within the courses on national and world history. Five year work on the preparation of the teaching pack showed that regional history could help pupils understand better the development of interactions and positive mutual influences between neighbouring countries.

During the whole period of the development of the project, the Council of Europe was fulfilling its commitments in providing:

- continuity in the work;
- equal footing for all participants involved;
- full transparency in co-operation;
- a wide forum for discussion on the basis of multiperspectivity;
- basis for confidence and trust.

The successful implementation of the activities within the Black Sea Initiative on History showed that education could play an important role in the reconciliation process: political difficulties which still exist in the relations between countries did not prevent educators of all levels to join their efforts and work together realising their high responsibility towards the young generation. The Council of Europe gathered these experiences and is now ready to share them with all partners who may be interested in teaching history without dividing lines so as to achieve mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.

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II. HISTORY OF THE PROJECT (1999-2004)

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Background

Writing about the past of a large region is no easy matter. Most histories confine themselves to nation states. Occasionally, a more ambitious scholar will explore a group of states, in connection with a specific theme, or within a restricted time scale. Larger works, encompassing continents, tend to the encyclopaedic, thus becoming summary in form and sketchy beyond the barest political framework. To provide depth as well as structure, over an extended time scale, requires new strategies. Few individuals are capable of innovation along these lines, and there are few incentives. Readers want basic information, enticingly packaged, or exciting topics that divorce history from the dimly remembered childhood lists of names and dates. Publishers, even the academic sort, want good copy, perhaps even a best-seller.

During recent years and, in particular, before the extension of the European Union, senior politicians, churchmen, and community leaders have re-ignited the discourse about European identity. What does it mean to be European? Is it a cultural or a geographical expression? Although many European Union decisions are grounded in economic issues, few are taken without the intrusion of cultural and historical assumptions. These assumptions ultimately rely on ideas inculcated in childhood, and nurtured over a lifetime. As students, these leaders learned about their identities mainly through the template of the nation state. Views about other nations were formed on the basis of their nation's diplomatic contacts. Yet, however useful the thrust and feint of diplomatic point-scoring may be to politicians, it makes an inadequate foundation for informed judgement. *The Black Sea Initiative on History* is a contribution to the wider European debate about origins and identity. But it goes to the very heart of the most controversial topics, the most intractable cultural issues: to what extent does our past determine our future? What do we value about each other's history? How do Christians, Muslims, and other religious groups, live together?

An educational programme to study the history of the Black Sea region marks an ambitious departure from the inherited categories of historical discourse. Not only is it the study of a region poorly known in international terms, and, therefore, a valuable general addition to the sum of human knowledge. It is also an attempt to do something unusual in methodological terms, since its focus is a maritime coastline, not a continent. The subject involves the exploration of dynamic patterns and relationships, rather than static, formal

entities. This puts *the Black Sea Initiative on History* at the forefront of historical writing at the beginning of the 21st Century.

This Project was initiated by the Romanian Authorities at the seminar on “History Curricula for Secondary Schools in the Black Sea Countries” in Constanța, Romania, in May 1999. This proposal was absolutely innovative as most people involved at a specialist level in the region’s history have few synthetic texts at their disposal. The history of the Black Sea cannot be readily assessed – there are few books, and these do not aim to be comprehensive. There are many different stories to tell. There is an ecological story – the emergence of a defined topography, with its own particular climate, flora and fauna. There is an anthropological story – how human migrants became sedentary communities, at various periods of the region’s history. There is a naval story – the construction of boats and the history of seamanship, the mapping of coastlines and the topological memories of itinerant sailors. There is a commercial story that links long distance overland trade, including not only the silk and spice routes in the far east with the European Continent, but the magnificent abstract animal art of the Eurasian steppe, the skills of horsemanship, herding, and archery. There is an institutional story, which connects the trading agreements of prehistoric merchants, and the laws of ancient communities, with the tenets and values of our own day. There is also a military story, often the best known one, of mobile horsemen attacking farming villages; of huge exotic armies besieging castellated harbour towns; of death, rapine, enslavement. There is a religious and philosophical story, which weaves ancient pagan practice with the advent of Christianity and the rise of Islam. But there are also tales of fantasy, legends of Amazons and Arimasps, Argonauts and dragons, heroes and heroines. Most of the information on the region’s past is buried in abstruse journals, published in a dozen or more different languages. In consequence, the teachers who were embarking on this project were, in some degree, outstripping even the specialists. The experience that these teachers went through, of learning what to do and how to do it, and the actual coming-together of ideas, became active ingredients in the creation of new educational tools.

The Black Sea – recent developments in historical studies

Historians and antiquarians began to take a serious interest in the Black Sea region during the 18th Century, when collecting curiosities began to give way to systematic, scientifically based enquiry - the investigation and description of ancient burial mounds, inscriptions, coins and the like. The sporadic ventures of erudite aristocrats were superseded in the later 19th Century by the first systematic excavation of settlements, most notably of Olbia, near modern Odessa. Archaeological investigation has proceeded apace during the whole of the 20th Century, increasing markedly over the last few decades in the range of techniques applied (with aerial photography and reconnaissance, remote sensing of larger and smaller plots by geophysical methods, intensive survey as

well as traditional excavation). Some of the most sophisticated scientific techniques yet seen have been applied this summer, since the seminar took place, by an international group of scientists, to determine whether the Black Sea came into existence between 10,000 and 6,000 BC. These experts in deep sea geology have postulated that the area currently occupied by the Black Sea was originally a valley, flooded towards the end of this time span as a result of a breach in the wall of rock which would previously have sealed off the Mediterranean Sea.

Such initiatives, which bring together inter-disciplinary teams of specialists from different countries, are now becoming a more regular part of research strategies in the Black Sea region. Fifteen to twenty years ago such initiatives would have been unthinkable. Political and economic changes, scholarly exchange programmes, European and north American grant schemes, have all paved the way for a range of exciting new developments. None of them would have been possible without the active co-operation of a large number of scholars and researchers in the member countries and beyond. Publications on the Black Sea History are all produced in western European languages, which make the material potentially accessible to teachers in all the countries participating in the seminar.

In addition to these specialised research programmes there are international conferences and colloquia whose aim is to make recent research accessible to a wider audience, both within the country of origin and abroad. Among the longest standing international gatherings of this kind specifically concerned with Black Sea studies are the Bulgarian conferences at Sozopol, *Thracia Pontica*, and the Georgian conferences, *Tskhaltubo*. These have, for the last twenty years, provided leading fora for discussion and have gradually become increasingly more international in flavour. To these should now be added an even more ambitious programme, the international Conferences on the Black Sea, the first of which was held in 1997 at Varna, Bulgaria and was followed by the second in Ankara in 2001.

III. MAIN STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

1. Seminar on “History Curricula for Secondary Schools in the Black Sea Countries” Constanța, Romania, 6 – 8 May 1999

Inauguration of the Project

The project itself had a prehistory. The Council of Europe has a special remit to encourage mutual understanding amongst its member states. At a Summit Meeting in Vienna in October 1993, the European Heads of State pledged themselves to strengthen programmes that sought to combat prejudice in history teaching and encourage positive attitudes to mutual religious and cultural differences. New initiatives were soon being planned in a number of regions, but the Black Sea was one that attracted consideration at an early stage. The preliminary discussions started in 1994 between the Council of Europe and the Black Sea University Foundation of Romania. They were focused on the form that a collaborative project might have. The discussions were continued at the In-service training Conference for teachers, at Mangalia, Romania, in 1996.¹ In 1997 the Standing Conference of European Ministers, meeting at Kristiansand, agreed to give history teaching special priority, recognising that an informed historical perspective can help young people develop a better understanding of democratic citizenship. A range of new initiatives sprang up as a result. *The Black Sea Initiative on History* was among them.

The Seminar in Constanța was designed to explore two possibilities – the feasibility of a resource pack, which would explore common themes centring on the Black Sea, for schools within the member countries; and a school links programme, which would enable school students to exchange information about a historical topic from their own region with their peers in one of the other member countries.

From 6 - 8 May 1999, 30 participants, from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine, plus two speakers from Norway and Italy, the observers from Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, who also acted as facilitators, together with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, assembled at the Black Sea resort of Mamaia, near Constanța, former Constantiniana, which preserves the name of the Emperor, Constantine, in whose honour the citizens of the ancient port city of Tomis renamed their city.

The Constanța seminar required serious concentration by the participants. They were being asked to spell out collectively the terms of a project that they had only the haziest notions of at the start. Much therefore depended on their

¹ Ion Stanciu (Professor, Department of History, University of Bucharest), *The Black Sea – A Gateway to Europe*, European Teachers’ Seminar, Mangalia, Romania, 6-12 October 1996, Report, Council for Cultural Co-operation; In-Service Training Programme for Teachers (Strasbourg 1996).

personal experience (pedagogical and international), as well as their willingness to intervene. Discussion took place in small working groups, alternating with plenary sessions. The plenary sessions provided models of how to approach the topic of a common Black Sea heritage, while the working groups were intended to elicit examples of the subjects and themes that the participants would choose to include in a collaborative educational book. The plenary papers included two different examples of educational practice. One was the history of Scandinavia, which provided an example, comparable to the Black Sea, of emerging interconnections, between different territorial states, linked by seaways. The other case was the history of Italy, which is taught in the context of wider Mediterranean relations. External contacts have been at least as important to the evolution of the Italian regions as developments within the peninsula itself.

Several official (Ms Dakmara Georgescu, from the National Education Ministry) and scholarly (Professor Serban Papacostea) Romanian delegates provided an informed introduction to the history of the Black Sea. It is not, in fact, surprising that Romanians should have been pro-active in the Initiative. A number of the 20th Century Romanian historians, starting with Dr Gheorghe Bratianu, made the history of the Black Sea a favoured research topic. At the Constanța seminar, Professor Serban Papacostea handed out leaflets about a new journal, *Il Mar Nero*, founded by him and other Romanian academics. He and his colleague, Professor Alexandru Barnea, fulfilled their role as facilitators in the working parties with urbane benevolence and charm.

One delegate from each member country presented an assessment of how the Black Sea was viewed in the current school curriculum. The results were sobering. Most school students are presented with textbooks that give pride of place to national history. But national themes usually focus on capital cities, critical events, and long-term political trends that rarely overlap with the Black Sea coastline. The past of other nations is secondary – this is no more, nor less, than one might expect in any country. What students learn about other nations relies, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the country concerned, on government guidelines. In the recently democratised countries of south - eastern Europe there was so much to be learned, about national and world history, that neighbouring states around the Black Sea get short shrift. Neighbours also represent potential tensions. Most countries could identify antipathies and prejudices that continue to appear in educational materials, even though historians as well as educationalists were usually keen to play these down. So the aim of finding common ground, of teasing out shared traditions, fell on fertile soil.

The working groups generated quite a lot of enthusiasm for a range of endeavours. The schools link programme could be implemented quickly, and its results could be expected to inform the development of the resource pack. The precise form of the teaching pack would be decided at a future date. For

the present, there was unanimity among participants that it should provide stimulating and accessible material to students aged 14-16 years, and that it should explore events, personalities, and themes connected with the emergence of cities, trade and exchange; population movements; changing lifestyles; the environment.

Some ambitious suggestions were made about teaching methods – the use that could be made by teachers of local histories, oral resources, maps, slides, and videos.

The city of Constanța, with its monuments to the Latin poet Ovid, who was exiled there when it was still called Tomis, the Genoese lighthouse, the Museum packed with numerous signs of incomers and the new practices or symbols they introduced – religious, technological, artistic – was a showcase of the subject matter that the resource pack could include. Staging the first meeting overlooking the sea itself gave everyone a sense of immediacy. But the wider international framework was equally palpable.

The Initiative engendered by the seminar, to launch a collaborative historical project between the schools of member countries, provided a positive way forward which was comparatively easy to set up and introduce into existing curricula. The aim of this programme was to encourage school students to use each others' as well as their own research to produce new project material on the Black Sea, using a common teaching pack. The programme had a number of features attractive to students and teachers; it enabled students to choose what they wanted to find out, to use fax equipment to exchange views and information and to get to know new friends in distant parts. Teachers had the advantage of flexibility and could adapt to circumstances. More importantly, they had an opportunity to explore new teaching methods and to concentrate more directly on the analytical and critical skills which were difficult to incorporate into existing schedules.

The programme had other important methodological advantages. It enabled the participants to introduce material other than textual accounts and documents, whose narratives often conceal biased attitudes and whose complex genesis may not be easy for school students to comprehend. Traditional curricula had concentrated heavily on political issues, which tend to enhance the competitive and combative sides of international relations. There were opportunities here for exploring other types of interaction, whose long term significance had usually been considered of secondary value. By moving the focus of attention away from national and political preoccupations it also became possible to consider other frameworks, based on religious or cultural affiliation, socio-economic networks and exchanges, the role of minority or non-sedentary groups. The programme acted as a modest laboratory for new methods and a new kind of historical enterprise, which could bear fruit in the way future curricula of the region's member states are conceived.

The Constanța seminar laid the foundations of the Initiative. Many of those present became the principal witnesses and contributors to the project as it developed. If any participant had been unconvinced about the value of the Initiative at the start of the seminar, he/she could hardly have failed to be engaged at its end.

2. Meeting of Experts on “The Greeks in the History of the Black Sea”, Thessaloniki, 2 – 4 December 1999

Starting point in the discussions on the content of the teaching pack

The Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs invited each of the member countries within the Initiative to the meeting of experts in Thessaloniki. It took place in a hotel, the Mediterranean Palace hotel, close to the harbour. Since the start of political changes in the former Soviet bloc, there have been numerous articles in newspapers, books, and conferences, exploring the upheavals and survival of Greek communities around the Black Sea. The Greek “Diaspora” from the region formed a backdrop to the meeting in Thessaloniki. Paradoxically, perhaps, the importance of this element among the traditions around the Sea was underplayed on this occasion. Although the Russian-speaking participants were in minority. The city of Thessaloniki represented a home from home in religious terms. Dotted around the sloping chequer board street plan of the modern city are islands of Orthodox tranquillity; the multiple domes and decorated brickwork, rich mosaics and icons heady with incense provided a language common to all the participants of Slav origin.

One of the aims of the hosting committee was to give prominence to the role of Greeks in the history of the Black Sea. Professor Artemis Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou, an expert on modern Greek diasporas in Venice as well as the eastern Mediterranean, provided the thematic keynote address. Discussion in working groups focused on how the Greek presence is reflected in the curricula of schools in the member countries, and on how curricula might be improved to highlight the Black Sea more prominently as a topic.

Although the Greek presence constituted one element of the debate, the focus of discussion in working groups, and in the plenary sessions, was more wide-ranging. Participants were preoccupied by the task of making sense of the international connections around the Black Sea. The difficulty of defining cultural constructs in visual form was presented in an illustrated address, by Professor Evangelos Livieratos, Head of the National Centre for Maps and Cartographic Heritage. He demonstrated how easy it was to misrepresent reality on maps, and how difficult was to show multiple kinds of data. His discussion of the mapping process illuminated the problems that participants had in understanding the confusing pattern of Black Sea history. One ethnic group after another emerged and subsided, adding to the extraordinary

interweaving of things European and Asiatic, nomadic and sedentary, Christian and Muslim, Jewish and pagan, maritime and land based.

During the meeting, while discussing the role of the history of the Black Sea Region in present-day secondary schools, the participants stressed that, after the Seminar in Constanta, certain results have been already achieved. For example, in the curricula on world history in Moldova, a special topic on the Black Sea region has been added.

The participants proposed that controversial and sensitive issues should be dealt with the teaching pack. It was important, as it was stressed, to use a multiperspective approach while dealing with this type of issues bearing in mind the importance of such skills as open-mindedness and respect to each other which pupils should acquire when learning history.

3. Meeting on “The preparation of the teaching pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History, Kyiv, 14 – 15 March 2000

Planning the teaching pack in detail

The first of two sessions were aimed at planning the teaching pack in detail. The Kyiv meeting was more technical in character, with considerable time being allotted to the pack’s structure and design, to the structure of its contents, and to the kinds of active teaching methods that could be incorporated within it, in the form of advice and samples for teachers. This meeting brought together those participants from all seven countries of the region who were responsible for the preparation of the materials.

During the meeting the teaching pack began to acquire a distinct shape, prospective sections and chapter headings emerged with sketches of contents. It was agreed that military conflicts and ideological stereotypes should be avoided in the text, and that teachers should be given ideas and opportunities to use the materials creatively in lessons.

A number of European textbooks and resource packs were circulated as examples for discussion.

During the meeting the participants agreed that the teaching pack should contain supplementary materials and should not replace the national and world history textbooks which are used in schools in the region.

It was agreed that the teaching pack should be centred under different historical periods around to following topics:

- trade and trade routes;
- legends;

- migration and population movements;
- navigation;
- culture and science;
- customs.

These topics should be included in each of the following periods with sub-periods:

- Antiquity (Greek cities on the Black Sea, Scythians, Trans-Caucasians Kingdoms, Persians, Dacias, Romans);
- the World of Eastern Rome (Byzantium);
- (First Christians, Principalities of the Caucasus, Empire of the Steppes, Emergence of the Romanians and the Bulgarians);
- Italian City Republics (13th - 15th Centuries)
(Example of, Empire of Tamara, the Fall of Constantinople, the Golden Horde, the 2nd Empire of the Bulgarians);
- the Ottoman Empire (15th - 18th Centuries)
(Crimean Khanate, Ukrainian Cossacks, Georgian and the Ottomans, Danubian Principalities);
- the Modern Period (19th and 20th Centuries)
(Russian Domination, Ottoman Decadence, the emergence of modern States).

It was also spelled out that the teaching pack should help teachers to:

- awaken the interest of pupils in the history of the region;
- develop new teaching methods;
- use the materials provided creatively;
- find other materials on the history of the Black Sea.

The participants came up to the decision that the spirit in which the teaching pack should be prepared should reflect the good neighbourly relations and help students learn to see their neighbours' history in a more positive light.

To provide common basis for a long-term work, the participants agreed that when preparing the teaching pack it was important for all teams of authors to respect the following guidelines:

- each of the sections of the pack should have a balanced approach and **not** be written in a triumphalist, polemic or even vindictive style. The style should be neutral and realistic and give different points of view where appropriate;

- the pack should be free of political and ideological stereotypes where historical events are used to reinforce the political problems of the present day;
- the pack should contain no information which could be interpreted from a nationalistic or xenophobic point of view;
- each of the sections should include cultural, economic, social and spiritual history. It should not concentrate on military issues, although obviously military history and battles, lost and won, will have to be dealt with;
- the question of "multiperspectivity" should be included in all the sections of the pack, to awaken in the pupils their reasoning skills and their ability to read history critically.
- the photographs should be chosen for valid historical reasons and not be controversial;
- the maps should be agreeable to all the countries involved and not be controversial but acceptable to all.

During the Kiev meeting the general structure of the teaching pack as well as the main approaches were determined.

4. Seminar on “History textbooks and teaching resources for schools in the Black Sea Region”, Odessa, 25 – 27 May 2000

Evaluation of the results of the network of schools, debates on the present-day concepts in the preparation of history textbooks

The participants of the seminar were representatives from educational ministries as well as teachers and history educators. Discussion of the final form of the planned teaching pack took place in the context of a wider debate about textbooks on world history. Mr Andrzej Chrzanowski, a publisher from Poland, presented his ideas on what constitutes a “good” textbook from a publisher’s point of view, and Mr Asle Sveen, a history educator, introduced a teaching pack on the history of Scandinavian countries, explaining how it was organised and used in a classroom. Such publications incorporate newer ideas about active learning, which were still in the process of being adopted in some countries of south eastern Europe. Ms Mette Molland, from the Norwegian publishing house, Gyldendal, announced that her company was proposing to publish the teaching pack.

The results of the Network of Schools project on the Black Sea, which was first planned at Constanța, were presented to the participants of the Odessa seminar. The idea of linking schools in two different countries by means of a common project, whereby children would present information about their own area by fax or email to those of the other participating country, was very popular. Some children chose to write and illustrate a city, others a group of monuments or a particular place. They showed considerable initiative in selecting and documenting their chosen topic. The participants were invited to visit one of the schools located in the city which was involved in the network.

A discussion on school links brought information and evidence on the development of that project. There were not that many schools participating in it yet, but everybody agreed that they would play an important role in creating working and practical schemes for co-operation in the region. Partner schools would also facilitate distributing teaching packs and assessing their school use. It was recommended to enlarge the network and support it.

During the Seminar, the participants discussed the results of the Network of Schools which was organised within the Black Sea Initiative on History. They all agreed that pupils showed great interest in working at the archaeological sites in their countries and this type of co-operation should be continued through the joint work of schools of this region on common themes such as trade routes and migration. Practically all the participants complained of the technical difficulties in establishing contacts with partner schools but they put forward proposals to try to develop co-operation between schools on the bases of internet.

5. Meeting of Experts on “The preparation of the teaching pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History”, Tbilisi, Georgia, 16 – 17 November 2000

The preparation of texts and illustrations, the beginning of discussions on the design of the teaching pack with publishers

At a follow-up meeting in Tbilisi, Ms Mette Molland outlined her proposals for the design and technical requirements of the teaching pack. This was another small group meeting, intended to bring together those who would ultimately be responsible for the draft texts: Dr Mariyka Radeva from Sofia University, Bulgaria; Professor Tedo Dundua, from Ivane Javakhshvili University, Tbilisi, Georgia; Dr Sergeu Moustyatse, from the Pedagogical University, Chisinau, Moldova; Dr Laura Capita, Institute for Educational Sciences, Bucharest, Romania; Professor Mikhail Novikov from Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University, Russian Federation; Professor Murat Hatipoglu, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey; Mr Andriy Osmolovsky, secondary school teacher from Kiev, Ukraine. A timetable was agreed for the completion of manuscripts,

the submission of texts and illustrations, together with a selection of historical sources and tasks for pupils, as well as for editing.

Though the meeting in Tbilisi was mainly concentrated on technical issues there was an important question which emerged from the discussions, namely, how to deal with border differences which exist between modern and ancient times. Lively discussions on this issue resulted with the following conclusion: the historical information that would be provided by countries had to respect present-day borders. However, if authors wished to include facts which took place in another country during the ancient periods, they had to be supplied with the agreement of these countries.

During the meeting Dr Zofia Archibald from the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom, was asked to act as a general editor of the teaching pack and also prepare an introductory text.

6. Meeting of Experts on “The Preparation of the Teaching Pack for the Black Sea Initiative on History”, Chisinau, 16 – 17 November 2001

Continuation of the work on the preparation of texts and illustrations

Meanwhile, texts from the participating countries began to appear. A full year later, the participants who had met in Tbilisi reconvened in Chisinau, Moldova, to consider whether the texts already submitted corresponded with the guidelines agreed, and to discuss an Introduction to the teaching pack, which Dr Zofia Halina Archibald had been asked to produce, together with an edited version of the first two chapters, on Prehistory and Antiquity. The delegates appeared on the whole to be satisfied with the Introduction, but had various comments to make on the two draft chapters. A lively discussion ensued on the subject of the language spoken by the ancient Scythians. Professor Hatipoglu was of the opinion that there was room for interpretation on this topic; Mr Osmolovsky and some other participants were surprised that there could be any question about the Iranian characteristics of Scythian words, as few have actually survived.

Ms Mette Molland from Gyldendal publishing house, had shown some specimen pages, to give an idea of the finished product. Each country's contributors had adopted a different approach to the subject matter. It was the editor's task to ensure that these differences were not diluted in the editing process, and that the originality of each “voice” was maintained. As the year 2002 progressed, all the contributions began to fall into place.

Other activities

Finalisation of the project

During the period of 2001-2003 three meetings to discuss the preparation of the teaching pack with the consultant, Dr Zofia Archibald and the publisher, Ms Mette Molland, took place in London (July 2001), in Strasbourg (September 2002) and in Oslo (June 2003).

In May 2004 the teaching pack was published and the Final Conference to launch it took place in Sochy, the Russian Federation, in September 2004. The teaching pack was introduced to the Permanent representatives to the Council of Europe and to the members of the Education Committee at the reception in the Council of Europe on 11 October 2004.

IV. REPORT ON THE FINAL CONFERENCE

Sochi, Russian Federation
28 – 29 September 2004

1. Introduction

In the penultimate days of September 2004, more than 40 educationalists from six of the seven countries with a coastline on the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine),² together with representatives of the Council of Europe and a range of international cultural organisations, met at the seaside resort in Dagomys Sochy in south Russia to mark the launch of a teaching pack entitled “The Black Sea: a history of interactions”. This publication crowns a project that began in 1999. The avowed aim of the Black Sea Initiative on History was to develop activities that would encourage participating countries to consider common historical perspectives in the light of the Secretary General’s New Initiative,³ the main points of which have since been developed in the Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe adopted by the Committee of Ministers.⁴ The leading issues and guidelines contained in this Recommendation, which are based on pedagogical best practice, were outlined in a keynote address given by Dr Robert Stradling of Edinburgh University in the United Kingdom.

The watchword of Dr Stradling’s address was ‘multiperspectivity’. He reflected on the fact that much of the history that is taught in European schools today is either national history or global history. This can make it difficult for pupils to make connections between what happens within a country’s borders and what happens beyond them. By focusing on a national ‘story’, educators may find themselves excluding a great deal of information relevant to the people and events they wish to study. Frequently, a great deal of what students want and need to learn about involves groups and issues that are not defined in ‘national’ terms. This is where the study of regional or multinational history can provide a richer context for national perspectives. ‘Multiperspectivity’ is not a theory but simply a method of exploring how given situations have affected particular groups and communities. By understanding events from the point of view of different groups, a mosaic of responses can be built up, which reflects lived experiences in a convincing way, and allows students to make connections across space and time.

² Georgian participants invited to the Conference were unable to come because of the visas problem.

³ *The Secretary General’s New Initiative, The reform of history teaching and the preparation of new history textbooks. Consolidated Report*, Dr Robert Stradling, Council of Europe, March 1999 (DECS/EDU/HIST(98)57).

⁴ *Recommendation Rec(2001) 15 on history teaching in twenty-first century Europe*, adopted on 31 October 2001 at the 771st meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies.

Many of those present at the meeting in Sochy had been involved in the project from its origins. Indeed, some were among its chief architects. The meeting was therefore an excellent opportunity to review its progress and results. All were agreed that the project had succeeded in bringing together specialists and government representatives who have not, in the past, had opportunities to work together on the composition of a shared history. The project had, from this point of view, been a positive experience. Moreover, shared dialogue had resulted in a concrete product, namely the teaching pack, which will be disseminated among senior school students within each of the countries around the Black Sea.

The participants of the project were schoolteachers of history, including some who had already written textbooks themselves, history educators as well as ministry officials. They took part in a series of meetings, designed to provide plenty of opportunities for dialogue. The main themes and subjects that emerged would form the structural principles of the teaching pack. In addition to this goal, there was a medium term target, namely the network of schools, which provided a practical exercise in which children would explore a single topic in their locality, and exchange information about it with school children in another participating country.

2. Presentations of the participating countries

Representatives from each of the participating countries were invited to present the considered responses of their own education ministries and specialists to the contents of the teaching pack. All the speakers underscored the special debt that their national teams of specialists owed to colleagues from the Council of Europe, to Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni (Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, in the Council of Europe), who presided at the conference, and particularly to Ms Alison Cardwell and Ms Tatiana Milko, who have together created the project, ensured its practical survival as a complex international initiative, secured funding, and provided continuing support, encouragement, and direction over the five years of its progress. Training seminars, designed to introduce teachers to new methods and approaches; educational resources, in various media; and practical assistance were among the kinds of support singled out by many speakers as the mechanisms that enabled the project's successful completion. Dr Maria Radeva, responding for **Bulgaria**, commended the project for incorporating ideas about civic education, as well as consciously involving students in an exploration of comparative customs and values. She drew attention to the support, material and financial, given by her own Ministry of Education towards the successful completion of the teaching pack. The writing process had also generated a parallel form of new writing, in the shape of new textbooks. (The speaker is the author of one volume, called *Man and Society*, from a new series of school textbooks in Bulgaria). Dr Radeva announced that the teaching pack would be distributed to schools in Bulgaria where lessons are

taken in English. She very much hoped that a translation would be made available to all schools, and assured us that a plan was in place for this to happen. The project showed that, given sufficient political will and a spirit of co-operation, multi-authored projects like this could be carried out.

Ms Galina Gavilița, speaking on behalf of the **Moldovan** delegation, explained that her country is currently engaged on the reform of school curricula, which were last modified in 1990. The prevailing template for history teaching in Moldova has been one that begins with world history and proceeds therefrom to examine national history. Teachers have benefited a great deal from courses and educational literature provided by the Council of Europe. A number of training seminars have been organised, where history teaching using the multiperspectivity advocated by Euroclio and the Council of Europe, and adumbrated by Dr Robert Stradling at this meeting, was adopted and applied. At the present time some 200 schools are involved in a new Moldovan teaching programme that is now in its second year.

In Moldova the teaching pack on the Black Sea potentially has a place even in the core curriculum. It can be used as a primary teaching resource in a course on cultures and traditions. It also features as an optional topic. The main challenge in Moldova is the cost of translating the English text. Significant financial support would be required from the Ministry of Education. Moreover, investment is needed in a training programme for teachers. More training of the kind given at a seminar organised by Euroclio will be required if members of staff are to become familiar with effective methods of active learning.

Dr Mihai Manea of **Romania** quoted the French philosopher and thinker Voltaire to the effect that people from many nations operating together make good work. He explained that history teaching in Romania takes place today in a much more international setting than it did even a few years ago. Practising historians have many more opportunities now to meet their peers from other countries, to exchange views, and to develop joint projects. The meetings organised under the Black Sea Initiative provided a series of encounters that generated a highly stimulating exchange of ideas.

The Schools Link project created a successful partnership between a school in Bucharest and another in Ankara. Inspired by the initiative launched in 2001 and reflected in the Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe, the Romanian Ministry of Education has pledged to support the translation of the teaching pack into Romanian. It will provide a valuable optional resource in schools alongside other themes in recent and contemporary history. Dr Manea endorsed the style and scope of this publication. He praised the source evidence, the range of illustrative material, and the inclusion of so many different currents of opinion.

Professor Mikhail Novikov, speaking on behalf of the **Russian Federation**, agreed with many of the points made by the representatives from other member countries. He wanted to draw attention to the variety of authors who had contributed to the Russian text, including Professor Alexander Kiselev, a former Deputy Minister, and Vladimir Kostinnikov, a teacher in the School for Multi-Cultural Education in Sochy. Indeed, he felt that much valuable material had been assembled during the preparatory stages, which could not be included in the teaching pack. He was minded to suggest that some of this could be included in a Russian language version of the book. But other speakers were firmly of the opinion that there should be a uniform text for all countries.

Professor Novikov explained further that the Black Sea region was considered important in the history of south Russia. But, in terms of federal history teaching, it was competing with other coasts and other regions. The Black Sea area constitutes but one of many regions jostling for attention in the school curriculum, and a relatively marginal one at that. Within the federal structure of history teaching, regional history is taught as an optional component. The English version of the teaching pack, as published, can already be used in those schools that teach it as the principal foreign language. There appear to be no serious obstacles to the creation of a translated version.

Professor Dr Kemal Çiçek, speaking on behalf of the **Turkish** delegation, was appreciative of the clear style and format of the teaching pack. He felt that it would be of considerable benefit to Turkish school students, insofar as it reflected the active role of Turks in the history of the Black Sea, whilst at the same time reflecting the views of neighbouring communities about a shared past. Turkey has many ethnic minorities around its Black Sea coastline and the teaching pack provides a model text of how to approach multiple cultural perspectives.

The teaching pack will also provide a focus for discussion among historians. Turkey's history curricula have been undergoing a reform during the last five years. The Turkish Historical Society is the body that has overseen the writing of new history textbooks. The teaching pack has inspired new features in the curriculum for years 5, 6 and 7 in secondary schools. From 2005 onwards, new textbooks will be introduced in 100 schools, among five separate educational authorities working in collaboration. 600 teachers of history have attended seminars on new teaching methods in history.

In the view of **Ukraine's** representative, Professor Olexandr Udod, it would be hard to overestimate the work that has gone into the preparation of the teaching pack. He drew attention to the enormous value that children can derive from actively participating in the learning process. In Ukraine much energy has been spent on developing new methods of history teaching. These were first promoted in a seminar held at Chernovitsy in 1997. The range and number of publications on the history of Ukraine and the Crimean peninsula has increased

markedly in recent years. Nevertheless, the status of history teachers has dropped since the fall of Communism and the Soviet Union. They have yet to recover their authority as communicators of the past. The teaching pack was used as a model in a pan-Ukrainian symposium held in May 2004 in Crimea, sponsored by Euroclio. One of the themes studied there was the role of migrations as a catalyst of cultural interaction. A group of Ukrainian historians is currently working with Polish counterparts on common themes in their shared histories. The teaching pack will be translated into Ukrainian during the next six months and will be used as supporting material in optional courses on historiography, as well as being an appropriate type of material for use in young people's summer camps. Although there are politicians who oppose policies of integration, teachers and educationalists in Ukraine are very keen to promote the integration of wider European approaches in the study of history.

Unfortunately, the delegation from **Georgia** invited to the Conference was unable to come because of the visas problem. Nevertheless, Dr Tedo Dondua, the principal Georgian contributor prepared the comments in writing in a form of a booklet which was sent to all participants after the Final Conference. Dr Dondua hailed the Teaching Pack as a 'great contribution' to the study of Black Sea affairs. He was keen to express his gratitude to the many individuals and institutions that have provided subject matter, advice, and illustrations. Despite earnest attempts to check the texts at the publishing stage, a few minor errors, mainly connected with the spelling of geographical places and historical names, had been missed to which he wished to draw attention. Though several different individuals provided corrections to the proofs, occasionally handwritten corrections have not been fully comprehended, which is, unfortunately, a common problem at the editing stage.

Comments by the representatives of participating countries were followed by remarks from visitors representing international organisations. Ms Julia Kushnereva, Euroclio representative, Moscow, drew the participants' attention to the fact that, since no changes are currently envisaged for history curricula in the Russian Federation, some advice was needed about how best to incorporate the teaching pack into the current schedules. She reiterated the need for the provision of guidelines to teachers who will be using the teaching pack. (The same point was emphasised by several other speakers). The spirit of this new publication requires a clear and conscious awareness of the pedagogical background for which it was created. Without clear articulation of the principles behind the teaching pack, it cannot be assumed that teachers will use it as it has been intended. In a similar vein, Ms Jean Bernard, UNESCO, emphasised that the teaching pack left plenty of room for further skill-building activities that would need to be devised within the participating countries. She hoped that the book would stimulate analogous initiatives in other parts of the world. Mr Arild Thorbjørnsen, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education and Research, Norway, who attended the very first meeting that launched the

project, expressed his satisfaction with the final product. It was an attractive book, and a good model for adaptation to other contexts.

Dr Ludmila Alexashkina, Head of the Laboratory of History, Russian Academy of Education, recalled a joke in Russian schools, according to which lessons consist of answers to questions that have never been asked. The point of her remark was that pupils receive information in relation to a subjective, sometimes idiosyncratic knowledge base. It is not enough to present them with information to imbibe. How students receive that information is just as important as what they are given. Dr Alexashkina felt that the teaching pack should not be seen simply as an optional educational tool, but rather as a fundamental text against which more traditional books can be viewed. The need to explore our own and others' histories has been well stated. But there is also an urgent need to address the fact that narratives do not happen in an ethical vacuum. The selection and emphasis of topics and issues reflects an ethical point of view on the part of the compiler. Since textbooks are regulated by state control, the method by which the content of textbooks is selected is a matter of particular interest to teachers, whose role it is to educate students in social values, as well as practical and technical skills.

Concluding these reflections on the teaching pack as an educational tool, Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni said how impressed she was with the hard work and determination of so many individuals involved in the process. She announced that a reception would take place on 11 October 2004, in Strasbourg, at which the teaching pack would be formally presented to the official representatives of all member states of the Council of Europe, as well as to the members of the Education Committee. She very much hoped that, at the next Meeting of Heads of State which will take place in May 2005 in Poland, a proposal would be submitted for the creation of a dedicated centre for the training of teachers in inter-cultural learning methods. This would ensure the continuity of all the valuable work that was currently being done to promote tolerance and understanding between the member countries of the Council of Europe.

3. Reflections on the publication of the teaching pack

Ms Mette Molland, editor of the teaching pack at Gyldendal, the distinguished Scandinavian publishing house, outlined to participants in Sochy how much this project differed from most of her work on textbooks. In general, she said, her job as a textbook editor involves specifying the concept of the finished work in accordance with educational imperatives, and the needs of pupils. She must find suitable authors and bring together all the different components. In the case of the teaching pack, her task was more complex, insofar as the text and illustrations were being produced by the teams in the participating countries. The coordination of all those involved was thus abnormally complex. The editorial task was simplified by the decision to have a single general editor,

with experience of current practices in the book publishing business, as well as familiarity with the Black Sea area, its history and geography. In addition, the book's designer, Ms Marianne Thrap, had visualised the product most imaginatively, and had succeeded in realising this concept using the manuscript and photographs submitted.

4. Analysis of the Round Table: “How to teach history in a multi-cultural context”

The discussion was chaired by Ms Larisa Efremova, Head of the section on additional and ethno-cultural education in the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. Participants were invited to consider the issues involved in the teaching of history in a regional and multi-national context; to explore the difficulties and challenges facing teachers in this context; and how to overcome such difficulties and to strengthen reconciliation and mutual understanding among peoples. Ms Svetlana Belkyna, a history teacher from secondary school No 1 of Sochy, outlined the way in which the teaching pack has been useful in studying the early modern period (15th – 18th centuries). Sections prepared by the Russian Federation, Bulgaria, and Georgia had been the most used. The style and illustrations in this new teaching aid have been appreciated within her school, by teachers and pupils alike, while the comparative approach enables pupils to think about different perspectives within the same community. Ms Irina Gordeichuk, a history teacher from secondary school No 4 of Sochy, who is responsible for optional courses and local studies, said that the chapter on Antiquity had proved especially useful to the curriculum in her school, and had provided the starting point for a renewed exploration of the remote past of Sochy. The twenty-fifth anniversary of her school had been marked, among other things, by a research project into the school's background. Ms Irina Lubetskaya, a history teacher from the Multicultural College of Sochy, in which participants of the conference were earlier invited to attend master classes on selected topics, described the museum that had been set up in the school as an archive for local data and artefacts. She was impressed with the production quality of the teaching pack.

These introductory remarks were followed a lively discussion among participants. Dr Maria Radeva commented that the examples of applications of the new teaching pack were applied in the context of the compulsory or statutory history curriculum. What was missing was a consideration of the wider, regional historical situation, within the Black Sea area as a whole. She referred to a series of Bulgarian reforms, passed in 2002, which have broadened the scope of history teaching to include a number of general themes that provide the framework for multi-cultural components. Recent seminars on history teaching have helped to formulate more creative and reflexive approaches, in particular, they have isolated some essential elements:

- the need to provide basic historical information about the constituent ethnic groups within society;
- study of the development of institutions within the context of local communities;
- the use of user-friendly language;
- the importance of providing a narrative that will encourage the principles of civil society.

Ms Irina Gordeichuk commented that the Bulgarian example of multiperspectivity had been an inspiration and example to schools in Sochy and in the Russian Federation.

Dr Lyudmila Alexashkina pointed out that the discussion of history teaching has focused on four distinct levels of analysis: local, regional, inter-regional, and worldwide. National and local perspectives were most easily satisfied in terms of available data. Where help was really needed was at the regional and inter-regional levels, for example, in terms of pan - Siberian, Caucasian, or eastern European contexts. She cited the master class on Byzantium that she had attended that morning in Sochy's Multicultural College. This provided a most interesting exploration of this period of history in a wider geographical perspective. Ms Irina Chechel, Vice Rector, In-service Training Academy of Moscow, reiterated the need for guidelines for teachers but stressed that teachers needed to have flexibility, particularly in small group settings.

Dr Mihai Manea from Romania emphasised that national and international perspectives could not be readily separated. It was understandable that each community should want its own presence to be underscored in any historical consideration. But since Europe is composed of multi-cultural societies, and since social and cultural aspects of society are now increasingly appreciated, particularly when considering the matter of democratic citizenship, then distinctions should not be made between national and international themes or components. He proposed that:

- the teaching pack might be made available on CD-Rom, if financial resources are available;
- the Council of Europe should continue to monitor the implementation of the teaching pack;
- the issue of multicultural dimensions in history teaching, as summarised in Dr Stradling's address, should be explored further.

Dr Aleksey Filitov, Institute of World History, Moscow, felt that there were, in his view, weaknesses in the teaching pack's overall approach that should be mentioned. In particular he considered that more emphasis should have been placed on the realities of political power and the gravity that major powers exerted over lesser ones. Professor Olexandr Udod (Ukraine) returned to the fact that teacher training is of fundamental importance to the use that could be

made of the teaching pack. Teachers who did not have experience of working in a multicultural environment, and had not received professional training, were often ignorant of basic methods in using such materials. He recommended that the teaching pack should first be used by more experienced teachers. The current political climate in Ukraine meant that there is considerable polarisation of views, within society as a whole, about how certain historical topics should be treated. Professor Udod regretted the temptation of politicians to intervene in the content of history textbooks. Ms Julia Kushnereva (Euroclio) also drew attention to the difficulty of dealing adequately with well - established cultural stereotypes. More exercises were needed to provide pupils with opportunities to empathise with groups outside their immediate circle, as well as exercises in critical thinking.

Dr Kemal Çiçek (Turkey) felt that the teaching pack was a step in the right direction. However, its equal treatment of all communities gave it a slightly unreal quality. In reality there had been empires in the past and empires continued to dominate current political life.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Dr Robert Stradling drew attention to the reasons why history education in Europe needs a multinational dimension. Events do not take place in a vacuum. Nor can one readily identify a viewpoint that represents the position of all the people involved in a given situation. In order to ensure that pupils understand the significance of what has taken place in the past, they need to engage with the realities of social and cultural heterogeneity, of the factors that link groups beyond national boundaries, as well as those that cause division within borders. An emphasis on multiple perspectives is substantially different from the nation-building approach of conventional school textbooks and does alter the way in which we perceive national undertakings. It moves beyond the monolithic framework of a static state entity into a dynamic forum where students can recognise familiar experiences. In a dynamic, heterogeneous environment the political and the social can be rediscovered in new relationships. The Black Sea Initiative was a conscious attempt to implement such ideas in a very practical way.

Participants involved in the project were invited to Sochy to reflect on the contents, format, and appearance of the teaching pack; and to outline how it could be used for teaching purposes. General reactions to the former were positive. The scope of the contents was criticised in certain respects for not providing sufficient support for what might be perceived as *core* subjects, although this refers primarily to the political dimension. The applications of the teaching pack, as witnessed in the master classes that participants attended in Sochy's Multicultural College, provided a valuable and most interesting example. They also enabled a clearer appreciation of how such a resource should or should not be used.

The following are more specific remarks and recommendations made by the participants after publication of the teaching pack:

- one of the issues that has consistently emerged is that of guidance for teachers using the pack. Ms Alison Cardwell proposed that this was a matter that would be investigated further in association with the Tbilisi Initiative, which is approaching completion;
- many speakers asked for more teacher training initiatives. There are opportunities for in-service training through the Council of Europe that can be used by the member countries. If the training centre envisaged by Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni can be realised, there will be an additional, permanent facility;
- electronic resources: a number of speakers requested access to the teaching pack in electronic form;
- the anxieties expressed by a number of speakers, about the political dimensions of textbook writing, and the difficulties of combating prejudice and intolerance, reflect the practical challenges experienced by teachers and writers when preparing historical texts.

The publication of the teaching pack on the Black Sea has shown that collaborative projects in senior school education are not only possible but can benefit the specialists involved and recipients at several levels. The product already reflects the principles of multicultural learning that European governments are seeking to encourage. It has provided opportunities for teachers and educationalists to explore new ways of considering historical phenomena, and to engage with a wide range of material, using imaginative and resourceful methods. It has brought into existence an accessible and readable account of complex historical dynamics.

In recognising the success of the Black Sea Initiative on History, it is important to bear in mind that it represents an early stage within a much longer process. The teaching pack cannot be expected to satisfy all the pedagogical and intellectual desiderata that the topic of Black Sea historical interrelations entails. It is worth emphasising that:

- the contents reflect established scholarly opinion on a limited range of themes, this is not a piece of speculative research;
- scholars are notoriously divided in their assessments of even the most general topics and disagreement between contributors is to be expected. Readers should not expect absolute consistency in a collaborative venture of this kind;
- the choice of topics is inevitably highly selective, there are numerous issues and subjects that could equally have found their place within these pages;
- the choice of topics directly reflects the experimental nature of the project and the suggestions of individual contributors.

It would, of course, be gratifying to all those involved in the project if a team of historians were to be inspired by it and undertake a more comprehensive survey of the subject, in an equally collaborative, if more academically rigorous, manner. The near absence of academic precedents for such writing only serves to emphasise the pioneering nature of the whole initiative by the Council of Europe. For those present in Sochy, this was graphically symbolised when Ms Alison Cardwell, on behalf of the Council, grafted a new shoot onto one of the *peace trees* in Sochy's Botanical Garden, which will bear fruits nourished by the same gestures of many foreign hands.

**APPENDIX I
PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE**

Monday 27 September 2004

Arrival of the participants

Tuesday 28 September 2004

10.00 - 11.30 Plenary Session

Chair: Mr Evgeniy Kovalev, Deputy Head of the Sochy Administration

Opening of the Conference by:

- i. Mr Evgeniy Kovalev, Deputy Head of the Sochy Administration;
- ii. Mr Alexander Svynarenko, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- iii. Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General, of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Council of Europe.

Key-note presentation on “Teaching history in regional and multinational contexts in the 21st Century”, by Dr Robert Stradling, United Kingdom

11.30 - 12.00 Coffee break

12.00 - 13.30 Round Table on the preparation of the teaching pack on the history of the Black Sea

Chair: Ms Alison Cardwell, Head of the History Education Section, Council of Europe

Presentation on “The Black Sea Initiative on History: the development and the results of the Project: an overview of the Council of Europe” by Ms Tatiana Minkina-Milko, Programme Officer, History Education Section, Council of Europe.

One representative from each country should give a 10-15 minute presentation on:

- the development of the Project;
- the results achieved;
- the ways in which the results of the Project could be used in teaching history in present-day secondary schools.

13.30 - 15.00

Lunch

15.00 - 16.30

Continuation of the Round Table on the preparation of the teaching pack on the history of the Black Sea

Chair: Ms Alison Cardwell, Head of the History Education Section, Council of Europe

Continuation of the presentations prepared by the countries.

Presentation on “The Black Sea Initiative on History - the development of the Project” by Dr Zofia Archibald, Senior Lecturer, School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

16.30 – 17.00

Coffee break

17.00 - 18.00

Continuation of the Round Table on the preparation of the teaching pack on the Black Sea history

Chair: Ms Alison Cardwell, Head of the History Education Section, Council of Europe

Presentation on “The Black Sea Initiative on History: the development of the Project”, by Ms Mette Molland, Gyldendal Publishing House, Norway

Discussions with all the participants

19.30

Official dinner

Wednesday 29 September 2004

10.00 - 13.30 Visit to the College of multicultural education in Sochy.

13.30 - 15.00 Lunch

15.00 – 16.30 **Round table on “How to teach history in a regional multicultural context”**

Chair: Ms Larisa Efremova, Head of the Division, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation

One representative from each country should give a 10-15 minute presentation on:

- approaches used when teaching history in a regional and multinational context;
- difficulties and challenges facing teachers when teaching history in a regional and multinational context;
- how to overcome these difficulties and teach history in the 21st Century to strengthen reconciliation and mutual understanding between peoples.

16.30 - 17.00 Coffee break

17.00 – 18.00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Ms Larisa Efremova, Head of the Division, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation

Presentation by the General Rapporteur of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Conference.

Comments by the participants

Closing of the Conference by:

- i. Ms Alison Cardwell, Head of the History Education Section, Council of Europe;

- ii. Ms Larisa Efremova, Head of the Division,
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19.30 Dinner

Thursday 30 September 2004

Departure of the participants

APPENDIX II

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