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Seminar on

“New approaches in teaching history in secondary schools”

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

14 – 15 December 2001

**Report**

Strasbourg



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**Report by**

**Mr Kelvin SINCLAIR  
United Kingdom**

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

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The seminar was co-organised by the Council of Europe, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and UNESCO; it was financed by the Swiss and Austrian contributions to the Stability Pact and by the OHR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This seminar was the third in a series organised under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Introductory speeches were given by:

Mr Severin Montana	Acting Deputy Federal Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ambassador Don Hays	Principal Deputy High Representative
Mr Philip Stabback	Senior Education Expert, UNESCO
Dr Paul Roeders	Team Leader EC-TAER
Ms Alison Cardwell	Educational Policies and European Dimension Division, Council of Europe

In his speech, Mr Montana stressed that history, and especially teaching the history of modern times, was an essential component of a young person's education. However, given that history can be abused, how the teacher works in the classroom is vital, hence the importance of this seminar.

Ambassador Hays stated that divisiveness and ethnic conflict were at the core of the recent conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that this was reflected in the school textbooks. Therefore, reform of textbooks and teaching methods was necessary; for example, by promoting multi-perspectivity. In history new evidence and new points of view constantly emerged; students had to be encouraged to open their minds to different points of view and teachers should take on the responsibility to imbue their students with open minds prepared to question the past. This approach was important for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, if it hoped to become a positive part of Europe, where self-evaluation and the use of critical approaches was normal, for example, in Germany. By prompting students to subject their own views and prejudices to critical examination, history teaching would assist in achieving the ultimate aim of a more open and cohesive society in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Philip Stabback declared that "the future is our business". He stressed how important reforming history teaching is to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina; society expresses its core values through the school curriculum and its view of itself through the history syllabus; in Australia there was an ongoing debate whether the arrival of Europeans represented invasion and conquest or peaceful settlement. The study of history helps people achieve reconciliation with the past, while also developing essential analytical skills which encourage pupils to question different interpretations of the past and the validity of the sources they encounter.

Dr Roeders referred to the strategy for the modernisation of primary and secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was supported by EC-TAER; the aims

were to develop a flexible curriculum framework; country-wide teacher training and new teaching methods; improve educational management and encourage an inclusive approach to education, for example, by developing special needs education. He looked at this seminar to inspire tolerance and mutual understanding. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was unique and the harmonisation of history courses was a complicated issue, particularly as he felt that the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was still unenthusiastic about reconciliation. The main medium for achieving tolerance and respect was education and to make it more effective, the active involvement of pupils in learning (the key feature of this seminar) was necessary.

Alison Cardwell thanked the sponsors for supporting the seminar and said a lot had been achieved in the last two years in History teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of the history part of the Stability Pact was to develop teacher training by involving educators from the whole region through a series of regional seminars in 2001, for example, in Ohrid, Budapest and Bled, which had included participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina. She mentioned Council of Europe activities elsewhere in Europe which were relevant, such as in-service work in the Russian Federation for history teachers; “The Tbilisi Initiative” (to produce a joint Caucasian history textbook written by a team of co-authors) and the Black Sea Initiative. In each case, local history educators had worked with specialists from other countries. There had been problems when participants discussed difficult aspects of their shared history, but the important message from these activities elsewhere was that people could work together successfully. The Stability Pact offered a structured approach for similar future activities.

## **II. PRESENTATION ON THE REFORM OF HISTORY TEACHING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT TO DATE by Ms Heike Karge, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research**

Ms Karge outlined the results of the two previous seminars in November 1999 and April 2001. Politics, she said, still influenced history education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

She referred to the situation as viewed from the different perspectives of pupils and teachers. The pupils, who were the ones suffering most from the slow rate of change, had a pessimistic view of the possibility of change. She reported that most pupils find history very boring and hate the subject. Why?

- (a) Pupils have to memorise large amounts of material.
- (b) They are not asked to think about the material.
- (c) They are not asked to be critical or ask questions or develop historical skills.
- (d) Pupils have to learn too much.
- (e) The language in textbooks is often too difficult.

The perspective of teachers was summed up by a young teacher who was quoted as saying “On Monday morning I return to the classroom, where nothing has changed. I cannot really go on like this for years and years”.

Ms Karge noted that:

- (a) Teachers have little influence on classroom life as they receive directives “from above”.
- (b) Teaching is based on the effective delivery of information to pupils.
- (c) Teaching is based on control, not giving teachers the chance to find ways to deliver interesting lessons.
- (d) Teachers are tired of and very frustrated by political arguments dominating at the expense of educational developments.
- (e) However, teachers are finding ways to get around these problems – the example of teachers bringing in personal photographs to class was mentioned.

International involvement has brought change:

In 1998, it was agreed to remove offensive material from textbooks; in 2000 the Ministers of Education agreed to better coordination of the three education systems and an agreement was made that teachers be allowed free choice in 30% of the core curriculum. Unfortunately this last proposal has not been implemented.

It was agreed at the previous seminars that:

- (a) New textbooks are an urgent priority.
- (b) They should not contain offensive material.
- (c) There was increased public awareness of a more balanced approach and the need to develop textbooks promoting tolerance of other groups.
- (d) Specific subjects of study were agreed.
- (e) The way to start was by recognising that there is not one common history in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but one with some common elements and experiences.
- (f) Controversial topics in society should be looked at.

It was pointed out that multi-perspectivity was still a problematic issue, as the view that history can be reduced to one agreed interpretation still exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Indeed, both seminars had seen much discussion of the nature of history. The multi-perspective approach to dealing with sensitive issues remains controversial and needs more discussion.

Further conclusions noted by Ms Karge were that:

- (a) There is a focus on national history in the existing curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- (b) The curricula are overloaded in terms of content.
- (c) Knowledge dominates over skills.
- (d) Teaching materials are not adapted to different ages or abilities.
- (e) Political history and the history of war predominates.
- (f) Teachers are not involved in textbook design and believe they will not be allowed to contribute.

- (g) Teachers, however, want to take responsibility for the production of materials.

Ms Karge suggested that the 70% / 30% division agreed in 2000 should bring more teacher participation, although it is not clear what this proposed division means in practice. Local influence is still missing in history education and teachers must have some freedom in their classrooms. Therefore, she concluded, the following measures should be implemented:

- (a) Shift debate from politics to education.
- (b) Carry out the priority recommendations of the first seminar in 1999, ie improved teacher training and new textbooks. Teachers are the “essential mediators” in the process of improvement and they need more training. This training should be based on practical approaches and in developing new skills, reflecting the fact that teachers want to be actively involved in history education.
- (c) Make learning more meaningful through 70% / 30% division.
- (d) The Georg Eckert Institute could offer a seminar on writing textbooks.

Alison Cardwell pointed out that, in the Caucasus too, politics had dominated the educational debate. However, participants in “The Tbilisi Initiative” had agreed to look at issues which drew them together rather than divided them. Echoing Heike Karge, Ms Cardwell also stressed the importance of the teacher in the classroom and the need to reflect the teacher’s true status in history education.

### **III. “THE PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH TO TEACHING HISTORY”: ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS / SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES” by Professor Alois Ecker, Institut für Wirtschafts und Socialgeschichte, Universität Wien, Austria**

Professor Ecker opened his presentation by saying that he was aware that education, and especially the kind of education and training he was going to present, can only succeed if there is a will to peaceful cooperation between countries and their people and if there is a will to live a life with respect for human rights and democracy, the rule of law, the values of freedom, equality and solidarity. He believed that writing a critical history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was now vital. We have a chance to write and teach, hopefully together in the future “common house of Europe”, a history which does not turn nations and civilisations against each other but a history that leads our children to attitudes of mutual understanding, open-mindedness and tolerance.

Before describing the process-oriented approach to teaching history Professor Ecker briefly referred to the general development of European educational systems.

- (a) **History teaching in an era of accelerated cultural change : complex societies and complex learning processes.**

Rapid social, political and economic change in industrialised societies today has resulted in rapid change to apparently stable cultural conventions, norms and behaviours. In education, for example, established educational

institutions are under increasing social pressure and new technologies in the information sector are competing with schools and universities as providers of education. The range of education offered by the school and university systems is increasingly challenged and questioned.

As a result, once successful teaching methods and content are no longer unquestioningly accepted by young people today. The relationship between pupils and teachers is changing.

What is needed, therefore, are new methods whereby pupils do not just acquire factual knowledge but also develop social skills which can be used in everyday social situations.

**(b) What are we doing when we teach history in the classroom?**

Professor Ecker began by illustrating this question from his personal experience as a history teacher in 1978: realising his pupils were bored by his lecture on 14<sup>th</sup> Century Austrian history, he invited a pupil first to explain why and then to become an 'expert' on the life of a pupil in 1978. He then used the boy's information as the starting point for an interesting discussion on the similarities and differences in everyday life between the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and today. This episode was the turning point for Professor Ecker's view of history teaching, as he gained a new insight into group communication by asking the pupil to give feedback on his lesson, thereby acquiring a new role as a listener to the pupil's experience. As a result, he gained the group's consent and he was able, by putting the pupil in the role of 'expert', to achieve his original aim of teaching about life in 14<sup>th</sup> Century Vienna. Professor Ecker went on to explain how this lesson can be used to illustrate the process-oriented approach to teaching history developed at Vienna University (Professor Ecker issued a working paper with a detailed analysis of the communicative process in a history lesson).

- (i) Central idea of process-oriented teaching is to acknowledge that the teaching situation is a social situation in its own right: the history lesson itself is viewed and treated as a special social system created between pupils and teachers called 'history teaching'.
- (ii) The making of this social system starts as soon as a teacher begins to work with pupils, establishing the basic structure for the relationship between teacher and pupils as well as the latter's attitude to the subject.
- (iii) In his 1978 lesson, Professor Ecker had not established the rules of communication with the pupils for the learning of history, resulting in boredom; by changing the rules by intervening as described above, he had made the pupils interested and prepared to work with him on history.

- (iv) Social dynamics are part of the learning process and the history teacher can only be successful if she/he is aware not only of the pupils' perception of the historical content of the lesson but also of the social dynamics of the classroom; insights gained from this observation must be used to plan the next phase of learning.
  - (v) Only if history teaching is organised in a dynamic way can it develop learning which produces insight into historical processes.
  - (vi) If it is a central historical insight that political, social and economic structures change, then the learning environment must also be capable of change. The task of conveying historical change in a particular area will only be successful if what is said on the content level is related to the events on the social dynamic of the learning group.
  - (vii) Social misunderstandings, such as conflicts between the people involved in the teaching situation, will block the understanding of content in the classroom.
- (c) **Different ways of dealing with the past.**

Professor Ecker went on to discuss the following three models of communication and the implications of each for history teaching:

- lecture : the hierarchical organisation of learning;
- group work : the pupil centred form of learning;
- project work : the process and/or product oriented form of learning.

- (i) **The Lecture** has the lowest level of complexity in organisation and is still widely used in Europe, coming a close second to textbooks and/or worksheets.

- Advantages
- teacher can give an overall picture of a topic in a short time
  - suitable for introducing new topics
  - telling anecdotes

- Disadvantages
- teacher cannot be sure pupils have understood
  - only 20% of what is said will be retained by the listener
  - pupils do not want to listen so much
  - pupils 'switch off' from history because they have to spend so much time listening
  - does not develop critical skills of pupils due to lack of active involvement in the process of historical learning
  - does not encourage discussion between pupils or between teachers and pupils

- encourages misbehaviour among bored pupils

- (ii) **Pupil-centred learning / group work** – pupils want to be active and a pupil centred structure including discussion and role play can motivate them to acquire knowledge. With these methods, pupils will remember 50% of the historical content under discussion.

Pupil-centred learning leads to the pupils themselves starting to discuss, argue, analyse sources and ask critical questions and, therefore, is the basis for the process oriented approach in history teaching. Pupil-centred forms of learning change the relationship between teacher and pupil – knowledge does not just come from the teacher but can be acquired by the pupils themselves; they also discover that knowledge has to be questioned and verified through discussion, analysis and further research. History, in the classroom, therefore, becomes closer to the real structure of historical thinking which is a constantly evolving consideration of change in human societies. Professor Ecker then discussed group work as a pupil-centred method for dealing with theme or problem oriented approaches to history.

In group work, the teacher is the organiser or manager of the learning process responsible for coordinating activities and intervening, if necessary to keep the groups ‘on task’; pupils have the responsibility to acquire knowledge. It is vital for the process of learning that groups present their findings, otherwise great frustration will result. Professor Ecker gave an example of group work on the Austro-Hungarian Treaty of 1867: pupils in four groups analysed texts from four different national perspectives, then presented the arguments of each nationality in a role-play. This multi-perspective approach gave pupils an insight into the political conflicts over the 1867 treaty; the teacher’s role was to coordinate the presentations and to moderate the discussion.

An example of how group work can be used to deal with sensitive issues was also given by Professor Ecker. Pupils studied the civil war in Austria in February 1934 – first in groups they critically analysed newspaper articles giving different views, then with the teacher they identified the differences between totalitarian and democratic politics; thirdly, again in groups, the pupils researched the political, economic and social background of the period. Although the whole process took several hours, it made pupils critical observers of the events of 1934 and put them into the role of historians collecting and comparing views about the civil war.

Professor Ecker suggested that a similar study could be devised on the Balkan Wars comparing, for example, how the Wars are presented in Bosnian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Romanian or Albanian textbooks. Such a multi-perspective approach could help de-mythologise wars.

A wider range of historical skills can be developed by pupil-centred learning:

- to analyse historical sources;
- to deal critically with historical information;
- to argue for and against historical developments;
- to synthesise and report on the analysis of historical texts;
- to present a historical issue or problem.

Pupils also develop skills needed for teamwork, self-organisation and taking responsibility for smaller tasks. In addition, the method also aims to develop communication, presentation and social skills. Such skills are also much sought-after in the labour market and can help to establish more democratic forms of political and social relationship.

Pupil-centred learning demands that the teacher, in addition to academic historical skills, has the ability to direct a learning process, to organise group work or other active learning methods; to be able to plan and prepare resources for group work and to moderate group discussion.

### (iii) **Process-oriented learning**

According to Professor Ecker, process-oriented learning gives more responsibility for success to the pupils, involving them as central players in the process of learning and teaching. The teacher retains a key organising function.

The process-oriented approach aims to integrate pupils as far as possible in the process of reconstructing history. Pupils learn to research the past on their own and to develop their own questions about the past, often starting from topics or issues the pupils feel closely involved in, including political debates, gender issues or local history.

Professor Ecker gave an example of a process-oriented project on everyday life which involved pupils interviewing their older relatives on changes in family life. An inter-disciplinary approach involving cooperation with other subjects such as geography was developed. Pupils learned to analyse historical sources; they developed questionnaires for the interviews; they analysed the completed interviews and compared the results with other information on family life; finally, they prepared an exhibition.

Through these activities, pupils acquired a variety of skills and knowledge: they worked on their own, with parents, in groups and in plenary sessions; they acquired research and presentation skills and how to organise themselves; their research illuminated changing roles in family life which could be related to wider issues of gender roles and changes in society.

Professor Ecker concluded his presentation by summing up the characteristics of process-oriented learning:

- (a) the pupils and the teacher have to take on different roles – pupils partly work on their own coordinated by the teacher who manages the learning process;
- (b) feedback and reflection are necessary for planning – teachers need regular feedback from pupils on the progress of the work; pupils need to have developed skills such as source-analysis;
- (c) historical learning – pupils should be able to develop through project work a wide range of historical knowledge and skills;
- (d) by giving pupils greater historical insight and awareness of historical methodology, pupils can develop their own historical identity and be able to use this as a social competence in daily life;
- (e) pupils should be able to develop skills such as teamwork, self-organisation and presentation, as well as improving their self-confidence and capacity for taking personal responsibility for the learning process;
- (f) the teacher needs to be self-critical and to have the flexibility to deal with problems as they arise; planning, organisational and communication skills need to be well developed; the teacher also requires good historical knowledge and skills.

### **Discussion on Professor Ecker's Presentation**

Some initial concerns were expressed:

- (a) If pupils decide course content, there is the danger of ending up with a too narrow history syllabus;
- (b) Pupils want the subject to be presented in a simplified form; process-orientated learning is too complicated and demanding;
- (c) Pupils only want to do enough to get the necessary grades in exams.

Professor Ecker responded by saying that teachers had to start from what interested the pupils; teachers need to get to know what pupils are interested in or otherwise they will forget what they learn; pupils must be involved in the learning process. Teachers must encourage a more analytical approach to history in order to attack national mythologies. Planning and setting aims were essential.

Other concerns expressed were:

- (a) Process-oriented learning is time consuming; important topics might be excluded as a result;

- (b) Research could be difficult, eg use of the internet was time consuming and difficult;
- (c) Teaching history in the post-war situation was difficult;
- (d) Pupils were deprived of the chance to study history from the age of 16;
- (e) frequent curriculum reform over the last 20 years.

Professor Ecker responded by recognising that the teacher had responsibilities both to the state and to their pupils; he repeated that he felt that it was necessary to address the issues they were concerned about and to see what they wanted to study; he agreed that process-oriented learning is time-consuming and that all topics cannot be tackled in this way. However, what pupils will retain four or five years later is what they found interesting; therefore, the process-learning approach is justified. In his experience, his students remember what they studied through active learning methods. On the issue of the internet, Professor Ecker said pupils needed to be taught how to deal critically with the vast quantity of information that existed.

One teacher present who agreed with project work said that pupils had been highly motivated by their research and the resulting presentations. Another participant said that pupils had been excited by being asked their opinions. A teacher from Sarajevo spoke of the need to combat “quasi-history”; pupils were fed up with ideologies and wars and were more interested in the future of Europe.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION ON “TEACHING 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY HISTORY” by Dr Robert Stradling, Leirsinn Research Centre, Scotland, United Kingdom**

Dr Stradling began his session by asking participants two questions: (a) What history syllabus did they want five years from now? and (b) What did they want their pupils to retain five years after leaving school? Research shows pupils retain very little.

##### **(a) A comparative approach to teaching 20<sup>th</sup> century history**

Such an approach can be justified by:

- (i) More and more space was being given to 20<sup>th</sup> century history in school syllabi in Europe.
- (ii) It helps pupils achieve the aim of understanding the present and how we got to where we are now; pupils need a European and global context to understand this period of rapid and dramatic change.
- (iii) Is it possible to teach national history to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century without understanding the wider context?

However, there were challenges:

- (i) What do we leave out?
- (ii) The period contains sensitive and controversial issues for politicians, parents and pupils.
- (iii) When do we stop teaching the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

Dr Stradling then illustrated how to plan a topic or theme on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the following questions:

How far back in time do you need to go for students to understand the events and developments they are looking at? **Vertical dimension:** continuity and change across time

How comparative a perspective do they need in order to make sense of what is happening locally or nationally? **Horizontal dimension:** setting events and developments into a wider context

To what extent do you try to present them with a single, coherent narrative and to what extent do you reflect the diversity of narratives that may exist? **Multiperspectivity**

What do you want your students to understand about this topic, event or theme: its chronology? Its historical significance? Its international impact, its impact on the State, its impact on ordinary people's lives? The factors, causes or forces which brought it about? **Depth of coverage**

The structure of the syllabus can make it difficult to help pupils understand as there are often no connections between topics from one year to another and we cannot assume that pupils will make links. Dr Stradling showed how teachers, by using his approach to planning, can help pupils make links and relate 20<sup>th</sup> Century history to earlier events that have had an influence on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

As an exemplar, Dr Stradling referred to the break-up of the Second World War alliances and suggested addressing the four questions above to this issue. He also suggested that a way into a topic like this was through cartoons, for example, of Stalin during and after the war.

With an issue like the break-up of the Soviet Union, the question of how far to go back could be dealt with through columns of events giving a comparative perspective.

Widely taught themes such as women and migration all need a long time perspective; to make sense of the human side of the timescale involved, teachers should make use of the huge range of sources available.

Dr Stradling said the benefits of a thematic approach to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century included:

- (i) Helping to counter the view that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is all about crises and war;

- (ii) The ability to go beyond political history to look at social, cultural and everyday life history;
- (iii) Helping to identify forces of change;
- (iv) Encapsulating ideas.

(b) **Multiperspectivity**

Dr Stradling said that multiperspectivity is not just about identifying different views of an event but it also depends on relating the different perspectives to each other. It is a vehicle for analysing evidence from different sources in order to bring out the complexity of a situation and to work out what happened and why. Dr Stradling suggested ways of introducing the idea of complexity, even if pupils wanted history to be simple. For example, using the mass media to compare issues – newspapers gave an interesting range of perspectives.

Other strategies for facilitating multiperspectivity included:

- Looking at how the same event was perceived in different places at the same time;
- Looking at a range of photographs associated with an event to identify any differences in how people reacted to it;
- Looking at a range of audio-visual sources to see whether people were experiencing the same era (or event) differently;
- Looking at evidence from different primary sources to compare perspectives on the same event;
- Looking at 3-4 different accounts of an event produced at different times;
- Getting students to collect contextual information about key figures in an event to identify “where they are coming from”;
- Using source material to develop character sketches for a role play or simulation.

(c) **Controversial and Sensitive Issues**

Controversial historical issues centre on disagreement about what happened, why it happened and how significant it was. They become sensitive when they arouse people’s emotions, feelings and prejudices or call on their loyalties. Examples of sensitive topics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century include massacres, defeat in wars, civil wars and the treatment of ethnic, national, religious and linguistic minorities.

Dr Stradling outlined a number of strategies which teachers can use when dealing with controversial topics, themes and issues:

- Develop your own resources;
- Set up cross-border exchanges of material with other schools;
- Get students to examine different accounts of an event, produced at the same time and later;

- Trace back social and political divisions to their origins and look at what existed before;
- Get students to critically examine a textbook account, a TV documentary, some newspaper accounts of a sensitive issue;
- Get students to critically examine the language used in popular accounts of controversial and sensitive topics for:
  - \* Bias
  - \* Omissions
  - \* Unquestioned assumptions
  - \* Use of stereotypes
  - \* Use of false arguments and false analogies
  - \* Emotive statements which have no basis in evidence.

Northern Ireland was presented as an example of this type of issue – there is no agreement on history, no shared narrative. Young people live with several accounts of the past simultaneously – there is a version of the past for the teacher, one for their parents and the ‘street’ history which is the one they actually believe.

To deal with this situation, an enquiry based approach was developed using varied source material which should be analysed for bias, different perspectives and for omissions. Pupils were encouraged to develop their skills as historians. To deal with the problem of pupils becoming emotionally involved, teachers tried to distance the pupils by (i) getting them to look at similar situations in places like the Lebanon; (ii) taking a longer time perspective to a time when the people of Northern Ireland were divided on political lines rather than religious ones and (iii) challenging their assumptions.

Dr Stradling said these approaches had important implications for the role of the history teacher who needs to be able to:

- (i) Establish links across time;
- (ii) Help pupils draw parallels and comparisons;
- (iii) Give exemplars of source analysis;
- (iv) Encourage questioning;
- (v) Develop an overview to help pupils remember what they have been learning;
- (vi) Help pupils take new information and fit it into a framework.

In conclusion, Dr Stradling said that what school leavers needed from history education was historical understanding, ie:

- (i) The ability to compare events over time;
- (ii) To understand historical forces;
- (iii) To learn how history can be misused, for example, to justify actions in the present.

## **Discussion on Dr Stradling's Presentation**

There was much interest in the issue of divided communities, particularly in Northern Ireland, but also in the West of Scotland. Dr Stradling made the point that in Northern Ireland teachers were getting round the problem of a lack of common textbooks by producing their own materials.

Ms Alison Cardwell outlined the Council of Europe's approach in the Caucasus – there local history educators tackle issues that are less controversial, such as social history, to avoid conflict; gradually over time, difficulties have been overcome. The aim has not been to replace existing national textbooks but to create supplementary materials. Strict guidelines were set for textbook authors, for example, they must include non-aggressive language; there must be multiperspectivity; they must include topics that unite rather than divide. There was a common format for the materials, ie a section on national history, then a series of agreed themes such as archaeology, architecture, food, population movement, dance and culture; plus tasks for pupils. Ms Cardwell said a great deal of progress had been made, using the experience of teachers in Northern Ireland as the basis for the work. She pointed out that the Council's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina was just one of several projects in Europe. Controversial issues exist elsewhere and have always existed.

One participant said that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a paradigm of Europe – there was a shared common history in a small area and Bosnians could use their own history to illustrate tolerance; Professor Ecker agreed that Bosnia and Herzegovina can make a contribution to Europe with its evidence of a multi-cultural approach. Another participant agreed that a multiperspective approach was necessary to be able to understand why neighbouring communities had different positions.

The problem of state prescribed syllabi which teachers are obliged to follow, thus limiting educational innovation, was brought up. It was agreed that teachers need more freedom to teach.

A teacher from Brcko said that in a pilot scheme Muslim, Serb and Croat colleagues had successfully agreed to work together to teach ancient history (as it was non-controversial) to mixed Grade 1 classes. The experiment was working well so far – the pupils were mixing well together in the joint lessons and did not want to be separated at the end of the year. The big problem, however, was the lack of textbooks. Other problems included the need to follow the state curriculum which made it hard to use multiperspectivity and source-based approaches; teachers wanted to compare accounts, for example, of the role of Gavrilo Princip (terrorist or national hero?) but it was difficult to get access to textbooks from other parts of the Federation or the Republika Srpska.

Ms Joke van der Leeuw-Roord agreed that more pressure was needed to achieve a more flexible syllabus; she recognised that skill-based and evidence-based approaches are time-consuming but these were all common problems across Europe.

It was agreed that starting to work on non-controversial issues, as in the Caucasus, was the best way forward. The Finnish participant offered her textbook collection as a basis for comparing different views on issues to help overcome the problem of access to textbooks; the books included a recent multiperspective analysis of World War Two.

There was agreement that existing syllabi are full of stereotypes and lacked an awareness of different perspectives; pupils were burdened with facts and were bored; they needed to be taught how to think and the curriculum had to be adapted to achieve this.

Participants from Republika Serpska delegates said their textbooks were being reviewed and it was evident they were full of stereotypes; new methods of technology were being introduced and schools rebuilt with the aim of matching international standards; new textbooks would have no offensive material; teachers were being consulted on new textbooks.

Professor Ecker said that opportunities had to be created for all people to find their place in history; we all have a complex identity and multiperspectivity is therefore needed for a democratic approach to history.

Dr Stradling said that, by applying the basic principles referred to in his presentation, sensitive issues could be dealt with successfully. Groups of teachers should start the process of moving to a new syllabus and methods by producing new materials and trying them out. This would require planning and pressure on those in charge of the curriculum and teacher training.

In her final comment, Alison Cardwell identified the main concerns as being : changing the curriculum, improving teacher training and new textbooks.

#### **V. “WORKING WITH SOURCES”, a presentation by Ms Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, EUROCLIO Executive-Director**

Ms van der Leeuw-Roord said that her workshop on working with sources was a response to requests for practical in-service training.

She began by urging participants to look at the Council of Europe’s recommendations on history teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 October 2001. States which signed the document are obliged to carry it out! Ministers, she said, saw history teaching as an important tool for strengthening trust and tolerance within and between states; in achieving reconciliation between peoples; for developing young people’s intellectual ability through, for example, debate based on multiperspectivity. The recommendations also dealt with the misuse of history and referred at length to the European dimension, including assistance in preparing new textbooks in south-east Europe. The section on syllabus content described types of history to be taught, including controversial issues. Appropriate teaching methods and detailed criteria for in-service training for history teachers were also listed. In other

words, this was a particularly valuable document, not just as a source of new approaches for history teaching, but as a way to put pressure on politicians to deliver resources for history teachers.

Ms van der Leeuw-Roord then went through lists of key skills that history should develop in young people, as outlined in Dr Stradling's book 'Teaching 20<sup>th</sup> Century European History'.

Ms van der Leeuw-Roord next outlined, as an example of active, source-based learning, an investigation into the role played by a Dutch woman, Kenau, in the siege of Haarlem in 1572. Participants were asked, in groups, to evaluate a set of primary and secondary sources and assess the importance of Kenau's contribution to the siege. The group presentations revealed strong source analysis, although not all groups had the time to answer fully the key question of Kenau's importance. Delegates were then asked, in pairs, to relate the activity to Dr Stradling's materials; to consider the drawbacks and benefits of using this method of teaching. There was discussion of the amount of time needed; the need for preparation in advance and for introducing the skills of source evaluation to pupils at an early stage. The exercise clearly indicated the point made by Professor Ecker that activity based work is remembered by pupils – Kenau will not be forgotten quickly by the participants!

## **VI. ADDRESS by Mr Mujo Demirovic, Federal Minister for Education, Science, Culture and Sports in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Minister announced that a common strategy for education and training was to be implemented; the aim was to create common textbooks and curricula which will nevertheless ensure each constituent people in Bosnia and Herzegovina retains its identity; this would also allow children to move from area to area. There would be a competition for drafting textbooks by September 2002. The rights of minorities such as the Roma would also need to be respected, for example, in the provision of suitable materials. The new curricula would help to lead Bosnia and Herzegovina into Europe. The Minister recognised the intellectual value of history in enabling pupils to handle the often conflicting versions of history they received at home, from publications and from the media. He expected there would be some resistance to the 'new approaches' – every effort would be needed to convince doubters that the future lay in the new methodology.

## **VII. PLENARY**

The rapporteur, Mr Kelvin Sinclair, summed up the main conclusions and recommendations of the seminar (see pages 16-18 below).

Ms van der Leeuw-Roord invited teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina to start a history teachers' association and offered EUROCLIO's assistance. Ms Cardwell stressed the importance of teachers taking responsibility for future activities; Professor Ecker echoed the importance of net-working. Mr Stabback said UNESCO was working closely with EC-TAER in curriculum development; however, curriculum change would only succeed if the teaching methodology was also changed to optimise student

learning. Well trained and motivated teachers were vital to the process of change in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr Claude Kieffer (OHR) said that a watershed had been reached; although there would only be one new textbook in 2002 (not a history textbook), the OHR was prepared to support history textbooks. The priorities identified in the first seminar in 1999 (improved teacher-training and new resources) still needed to be achieved. Therefore, the OHR would recommend the formation of working groups supported by the international community and by the local authorities to provide new packs of materials which would be piloted in both entities.

One participant pointed out that an association of teachers already exists in the Republika Srpska and that it was already discussing active teaching methods.

Alison Cardwell concluded the seminar by looking to the future:

- (a) small groups of teachers should prepare materials with Council of Europe expertise available;
- (b) the Council of Europe runs a very good education programme and some teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina should be able to participate in courses abroad;
- (c) networking is vitally important, for example, through the Council of Europe and EUROCLIO;
- (d) she was optimistic that financing will continue.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In his speech at the opening of the seminar, Mr Philip Stabback, the UNESCO representative, acknowledged that it can take time to change the attitudes of teachers and the methodology they used. However, he said there was also danger in taking a slow approach. Therefore, the participants at the seminar should consider developing a vision of where they wanted history teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be in five years.

Speakers at the seminar repeatedly stressed the importance of the role of the teacher in achieving reform of history teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mr Montana, the Deputy Federal Minister of Education for example, described the work of teachers as being “decisive”; Mr Demirovic, the Federal Minister of Education in his address said that teachers are the “bearers of the new wave of history teaching”.

On the whole, teachers need and want to take responsibility for developing new approaches. However, if teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are to be able to carry out this crucial reforming task, then considerable practical help will be required. With this in mind, the participants at the seminar agreed on the following recommendations which will be necessary to achieve their “vision” of history teaching:

#### **1. New Textbook and Resources**

As was identified in the first seminar in 1999, providing new teaching resources remains an urgent priority. Specific problems in history teaching were clearly

identified in the report on the ‘Seminar on History Curricula and Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 2001’. It is also essential that teachers be involved in writing the new textbooks and preparing new resources. Heike Karge’s overview of activities already carried out indicated that teachers felt they had little influence on the curriculum and that they are accustomed to getting directives from above. Developing a sense of “ownership” of the new materials is, therefore, essential.

The new textbooks also need to have common, agreed elements, a proposal endorsed by the Federal Minister of Education who spoke of the need to reconcile existing curricula in an effort to make progress towards better coordination of the different education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. **Implement the proposal made in 2000 to allow teachers to have free choice in 30% of the core curriculum**

The inflexibility of the existing system makes it hard to use teaching approaches utilising multiperspectivity and source-based learning.

3. **Improved Teacher Training**

Teachers need more guidance on using a more varied methodology, including source analysis, multiperspectivity and active learning approaches such as group work and investigations.

4. **The creation of local networks of teachers and teacher trainers committed to change to produce new materials and to pilot new methods**

The experience of the Council of Europe and EUROCLIO in projects elsewhere in eastern and south-east Europe shows that such networks, properly supported by the expertise of international organisations with in-service training, can act very effectively as multipliers of good practice.

5. **The use of existing Council of Europe and EUROCLIO projects as models of successful collaboration between divided states or communities.**

Projects such as “The Tbilisi Initiative” offer a practical basis for moving forward in Bosnia and Herzegovina for example, by encouraging the identification of issues that draw people together, or by providing clear guidelines for the co-authorship of teaching materials.

**Conclusion**

It was very encouraging to note that the representatives of the international organisations present at the final plenary session of the seminar were prepared to state their whole hearted support for the initiatives proposed by the participants in Sarajevo. Claude Kieffer of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) indicated that a turning-point had been reached and that the OHR would give support for new textbooks, new resources and improved teacher-training. Mr Kieffer said that the OHR would form working groups supported by the international community and the

local authorities with the aim of providing packs of teaching materials which would be piloted in both entities. Alison Cardwell (Council of Europe) was optimistic that projects in south-east Europe would continue to be financed and she also hoped that the Council of Europe would give its support to small groups of teachers preparing new resources. Ms Cardwell stressed the benefits for teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in getting involved in the networks of the Council of Europe and EUROCLIO.

Finally, the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on History Teaching in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Europe (adopted on 31 October 2001), which was issued to participants at the seminar, is a valuable tool for teachers to put pressure on their political leaders to achieve the aims of the Council of Europe in the area of history education, dealing as it does in detail with the very issues at the heart of the Sarajevo seminar – developing trust and tolerance, encouraging reconciliation, and promoting the intellectual development of young people through multiperspectivity and active learning.

**APPENDIX I**

**PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR**

**Friday, 14 December 2001**

**09.30 – 10.30 Plenary Session**

Chair: Ms Alison CARDWELL

Opening of the Seminar by:

- (i) Mr Severin MONTINA, Acting Deputy Federal Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Sports in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- (ii) Ambassador Don HAYS, Principal Deputy High Representative
- (iii) Mr Philip STABBACK, Senior Education Expert, UNESCO
- (iv) Ms Alison CARDWELL, Educational Policies and European Dimension Division, Council of Europe;

Presentation on the reform of history teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina – an overview of the activities carried out to date by Ms Heike KARGE, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research

10.30 – 11.00 Break

**11.00 – 12.30 Plenary Session on “The Process-oriented Approach to Teaching History:- active learning methods;  
- sensitive and controversial issues”**

Chair: Ms Alison CARDWELL

Speaker: Professor Alois ECKER, Austria

Discussion with all the participants

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

**14.00 – 16.00 Plenary Session on “Teaching 20<sup>th</sup> Century History”**

Chair: Ms Alison CARDWELL

Speaker: Dr Robert STRADLING, United Kingdom

Discussion with all the participants

16.00 – 16.30 Break

16.30 – 17.30 Discussion with all the participants

**Saturday, 15 December 2001**

9.30 – 11.30 **Plenary Session on “Working with Sources”**

Chair: Ms Alison CARDWELL

Speaker: Ms Joke VAN DER LEEUW-ROORD,  
EUROCLIO

Address by: Mr Mujo DEMIROVIC, Federal Minister of  
Education, Science, Culture and Sports in Bosnia  
and Herzegovina

Discussion with all the participants

11.30 – 11.45 Break

11.45 – 12.30 **Plenary Session**

**Closing Speeches of the Seminar by:**

(i) Mr Kelvin SINCLAIR, Rapporteur, High School of Glasgow

(ii) Ms Joke VAN DER LEEUW-ROORD, EUROCLIO

(iii) Professor Alois ECKER, Vienna University

(iv) Mr Philip STABBACK, UNESCO

(v) Mr Claude, KIEFFER, OHR

(vi) Ms Alison CARDWELL, Council of Europe

Departure of participants

**APPENDIX II**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**GENERAL RAPPORTEUR**

Mr Kelvin SINCLAIR, Principal Teacher of History, The High School of Glasgow, 10 King Edward Road, Jordanhill, GLASGOW G13 1QW, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 141 576 5944

Fax: +44 141 959 0191

e-mail: [gks@hsog.co.uk](mailto:gks@hsog.co.uk)

**SPEAKERS**

Professor Alois ECKER, Institut für Wirtschafts und Sozialgeschichte, Universität Wien, Dr Karl Lueger Ring, A – 1010 WIEN, Austria

Tel: +43 1 4277 41320

Fax: +43 1 4277 9413

e-mail: [aloisecker@univie.ac.at](mailto:aloisecker@univie.ac.at)

Dr Robert STRADLING, Laoghras, The High Road, BROADFORD, Isle of Skye, IV49 9AA, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1471 822965

Fax: +44 1471 888551

e-mail: [bob@laoghras.demon.co.uk](mailto:bob@laoghras.demon.co.uk)

Ms Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD, Executive Director, EUROCLIO, Juliana van Stolberglaan 41, NL – 2595 CA DEN HAAG, Netherlands

Tel: +31 70 385 36 69/31 70 382 48 72

Fax: +31 70 385 36 69

e-mail: [joke@euroclio.nl](mailto:joke@euroclio.nl)

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

Ms Alison CARDWELL

Administrator

Educational Policies and European Dimension Division

Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport

Council of Europe, F – 67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX, France

Tel: +33 3 88 41 26 17

Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 50 / 27 56

e-mail: [alison.cardwell@coe.int](mailto:alison.cardwell@coe.int)

## **UNESCO**

Mr Philip STABBACK, Senior Education Expert, UNESCO, Aleja Bosne Srebrne b.b.  
UN HOUSE, SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Tel: +387 33 497 314

Fax: +387 33 497 312

E-mail: [philip.stabback@unmibh.org](mailto:philip.stabback@unmibh.org)

## **OHR**

Mr Claude KIEFFER, Seniro Education Advisor, Human Rights/Rule of Law  
Department, Office of the High Representative, Emerika Bluma 1, 71000  
SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Tel: +387 33 283 595 (Mobile : +387 66 137 185)

Fax: +387 33 283 501

E-mail: [claudio.kieffer@ohr.int](mailto:claudio.kieffer@ohr.int)

## **RS**

1. Boro Bronza, assistant, Faculty of Philosophy, Banja Luka
2. Ranko Pejic, assistant to the Minister of Education of RS
3. Mira Sobot, professor, Technical High School, Banja Luka
4. Petar Rosic, professor, Grammar school, Banja Luka
5. Velibor Vasovic, primary school Sveti Sava, Pale
6. Phd. Stevo Pasalic, deputy MoE RS
7. Cvijanovic Samojko, Medicine School, Doboj
8. Zivak Zdravko, School of Turism, Banja Luka
9. Kupresak Slavica, Economic High School, Banja Luka
10. Nijemcevic Djordje, School Inspector for History, Doboj

## **FEDERATION**

11. Prof. Severin MONTINA, Acting Deputy FMoE
12. Prof. Nijazija Maslak, Bihac
13. Prof. Miljenko Milos, Mostar
14. Prof. Enver Dervisbegovic, Sarajevo
15. Prof. Cesko Sanela, I Gymnasium, Sarajevo
16. Prof. Barakovic Ekrem, III Gymnasium, Sarajevo
17. Prof. Adem Krgo, High School, Stolac

## **BRCKO**

18. Mitrovic Stevan -Tehnicka skola
19. Dragic Dragan - Ekonomska skola
20. Svetlana Paunovic - Gimnazija

**EUROCLIO**

21. Sonja Dujmovic – Institute for history, Sarajevo
22. Zoran Pejasinovic - Banja Luka
23. Vera Katz – Institute for history, Sarajevo
24. Edin Veladzic – Sarajevo
  
25. Omir Tufo – Civil Society Promotion Center, Sarajevo



