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Seminar on

**"Standards for history teaching for secondary schools:
present situation and future developments"**

Irkoutsk, Russian Federation,

16 - 18 September 1999

Report

Strasbourg

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Report by

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

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I. CONTEXT OF THE SEMINAR

From 16-18 September 1999, a seminar was held in the city of Irkutsk on “Standards of history teaching in secondary schools: present and future”. It was organised by the Council of Europe together with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Administration of the Irkutsk region.

The seminar was part of the project “Reform of history teaching and the preparation of new history textbooks in the Russian Federation” (1999-2000). The development of new curricula and standards for the teaching of history had been addressed previously, together with other problems, at seminars organised by the Council of Europe in 1996-98 under the programme entitled “The Secretary General's New Initiative”. In the project for 1999-2000, these questions were identified as a special subject which opened the way for a constructive exchange of experience and progress in one of the most important areas of teaching for modern Russian schools.

II. TASKS AND PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

The main tasks of the seminar were to:

- i. discuss the material published in 1998-99 on educational standards for history in secondary schools;
- ii. analyse the purposes and principles applied in selecting the regional components of history standards;
- iii. consider the relationship between federal, regional and school components of educational standards.

The seminar was attended by Council of Europe staff members (Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Minkina-Milko), experts (Arild Thornbjornsen and Liz Ogilvy), a representative of the Russian Ministry of Education (T. I. Tyuliaeva), the Head of the Directorate of General and Vocational Education of the Irkutsk region (L. A. Vygovskiy) and university lecturers and history teachers from Irkutsk and the Irkutsk region, Vladivostok, Moscow, Tver, Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude as well as by deputies from the State Duma of the Russian Federation (O. P. Grishkevich and Yu. M. Ten) and a Duma secretariat staff member (N. B. Volodina). In all, there were some 50 participants.

The seminar was held at Irkutsk Experimental School No. 47. The opportunity to work at a school specialising in the arts and humanities and to mix with the teachers and pupils proved very favourable for the general atmosphere of the Seminar: the teachers felt at home and the problems of standards were discussed in a lively, interested and creative manner. The programme of visits to the Cultural Centre and the

summer health facility of School No. 47, as well as to the home and museum of the Bolkonsky family in Irkutsk, was useful and interesting for all participants.

The opening of the Seminar took place on 16 September.

Leonid Vygonkiy, Head of the Principal Directorate of General and Vocational Education of the Irkutsk region, opened the seminar and welcomed the participants on behalf of the administration of Irkutsk and the Irkutsk region. He stressed the importance for Siberia's teachers of work on improving the teaching of history in schools.

Tamara Tulieva (Leading Specialist of the Humanities Section of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) noted that the elaboration of educational standards in history was now one of the most important tasks, and tackling it successfully would require the concerted efforts of the country's academics and teachers, as well as a study of other countries' experience.

Alison Cardwell (Acting Head of the Council of Europe's Technical Co-operation and Assistance Section), after pointing out that the Seminar was taking place in the Council of Europe's 50th anniversary year, described the most important areas of the Council's work and achievements and outlined the Council's current activities. She told participants about the joint programme of work of the Council of Europe and Russian organisations in the area of school history teaching for 1999-2000.

Greetings were addressed to the participants in the seminar by deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, **Yuriy Ten** and **Oleg Grishkevich**, as well as by the principal of School No. 47, academician **Valeriy Stepanov**.

III. REPORTS AT THE PLENARY SESSIONS

There were three plenary sessions during the Seminar, at which three presentations were presented by the Russian participants and three by representatives and experts invited by the Council of Europe. The general purpose of the presentations was to define a range of topical issues pertaining to the subject of the Seminar and to identify questions requiring joint discussion and practical resolution.

1. **Tatiana Minkina-Milko** (Technical Co-operation and Assistance Section of the Council of Europe) presented the programme entitled "Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in the elaboration of new forms of history teaching in secondary schools". The principal areas of joint work in 1999-2000 were as follows:

- i. curricula and standards in the teaching of history;
- ii. history textbooks and teaching resources;

iii. the training of history teachers.

The creation of educational standards was a relatively new area of activity for Russian educationists. The materials developed in the 1990s were now at the stage of discussion by academics and teachers, and a search was on for the best way of structuring educational standards so that they combined federal, regional and school components. The nation-wide and regional seminars held in 1996-98 by the Council of Europe and the Russian Ministry of Education, as well as the discussion of general problems, had also afforded an opportunity to study the interesting experience of developing regional components of educational standards in various parts of Russia (Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Khabarovsk, etc). The task of the Irkutsk Seminar was to continue the search for ways of improving educational standards and applying them in various types of school.

2. The presentation by *Ludmila Alexashkina* (Russian Academy of Education) on "History standards in Russian schools: present status and future prospects" presented a general description of what was done to develop history standards between 1993 and 1998. A definition of the concept "standard" was put forward, and the principal targets of standard-setting were identified (the curriculum; the contents of teaching materials; elements and levels of schoolchildren's training). The paper identified the various requirements to be met as regards pupils' history education (chronological knowledge and ability; knowledge of facts; work with historical sources; historical description and reconstruction; analysis and explanation; consideration of historical versions and evaluations).

Special consideration was given to the widely discussed question of how the universal nature of a standard can be reconciled with the diversity of particular pedagogic situations in different types of school and different regions of the country, and how many standards there can be. In this expert's view, there could be only one standard for each level of instruction (otherwise it ceased to be a standard), but it must be incorporated on several mutually related levels:

- a) in general normative documents and programmes;
- b) in textbooks and other teaching resources;
- c) in materials used to test and evaluate pupils' progress.

Consideration was given to the problem of the regional components of history standards. It was stressed that their main function was not just to supplement the curriculum but also to assist in mobilising and organising the work pupils do with material that was close at hand and readily accessible - impressive material that could help develop their cognitive sphere, their system of values and their socialisation as individuals.

The following were identified as the most relevant areas for further work on the standards of history teaching in schools:

- i. establishing an optimum relationship between substantive and activity-related components of history teaching standards;
- ii. preparing history textbooks that meet the requirements of educational standards;
- iii. elaborating a system for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which the requirements of history standards are being met.

3. In his presentation on “Standards of history teaching in schools”, **Lev Dameshek** (Irkutsk State University) defined a standard as a national document stating the aims of history teaching and specifying what pupils are required to know and to what level. A standard, in this speaker's view, should guide teachers in their efforts to provide pupils with a comprehensive and coherent understanding of past and present, inculcate in them the skills of thinking and investigation and impart to them the experience of discussing historical and contemporary problems that is so important for today's democratic society.

The regional components of a standard help students to form a coherent picture of the life of their local area, and through the exercise of historical memory to establish a link between the generations living there. In Russia's multinational and multicultural society, it is particularly important to study the history of the peoples inhabiting our country as well as their cultural interaction among themselves and with the peoples of neighbouring countries.

Among the unresolved problems associated with the application of educational standards was that of history textbooks. At the present time, with rare exceptions, the textbooks did not satisfy the requirements of the standards - a situation which called for special discussion.

4. The presentation by **Zinaida Rabetskaya** (Irkutsk State Pedagogical Institute) on “Standardising the teaching of local history” was devoted to the contents and methods of teaching regional and local history.

It was noted as a positive factor that the general federal documents contained no rigid prescriptions as to how regional history should be studied. The preparation of appropriate course materials was left to the teacher's creative initiative. Teachers had put together a fair number of original courses on local and regional history in the Irkutsk region.

At the same time, Ms Rabetskaya suggested the advisability of discussing and defining some general approaches to this work. In the first place, this concerned the principal subjects dealt with in local history courses. In the past, the majority of these had been devoted to political history. Nowadays, more attention was paid to the daily lives and living conditions of people in the past, the features of economic life, the

economic and social organisation of society, ethical standards, customs and traditions. Secondly, there was a need for a new textbook on the history of the Irkutsk *krai* (administrative area). A good supplement to this would be a computerised manual, on which work had already started. Thirdly, it was important to decide where a local history course belonged in the school curriculum. It was suggested that it might be offered as an optional subject in the 8th and 9th grades (an elective course).

Of particular interest for participants in the seminar were the papers from the Council of Europe experts, who described the experience of various European countries in tackling problems like those discussed at the seminar.

5. **Arild Thornbjornsen** (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, Norway), in a presentation on “National history and local history in Norway’s secondary school curriculum”, concentrated on what was taught in history courses in his country’s schools and on why and how it was taught.

The aims of history teaching were formulated in terms of the various kinds of competence pupils were required to develop: social competence in the broad sense, as well as cognitive, communicative and creative competence.

With regard to contents, priority attention was given to consideration of events in their historical context, including the context of relations between Norway, other Scandinavian countries and the rest of the world, as well as to an analysis of various aspects of society (the economy and natural resources, social organisation and democratic institutions, population, social and ethnic groups, etc) and, in particular, human activities. Specific examples were adduced to illustrate approaches to the choice of material on local history and national history as a whole, and their interrelationship.

Teaching methods gave pride of place to organising pupils’ active cognitive process with various sources of knowledge in various forms (individual and group work). The organisational principles adopted - “from the close-at-hand and the understandable to the depths of history”, from local history to national and world history - helped to make learning accessible and interesting.

6. The presentation by **Liz Ogilvy** (Scottish Department of Education, United Kingdom) on “History examinations in Scotland’s secondary schools” presented its chosen subject in the broad pedagogical context. The presentation began by describing the structure of history courses in Scotland’s secondary schools, including the relationship between materials about Scottish history, the history of the United Kingdom, and world history (examples were given from the history of the 18th and 19th Centuries).

The speaker outlined the approach to educational standards adopted in Scottish schools. General norms took the form of:

- a) a curriculum, which specified the subjects to be studied and the approximate number of hours to be spent on each;
- b) levels of attainment for the different age groups.

The main components of pupils' competence were considered to be knowledge, understanding and analytical skills. Particular attention was paid to work with primary and secondary historical sources, the analysis of facts, the discovery of cause-effect relationships, and so on. The requirements of the standards were reflected in model questions and exercises and annexed evaluation tools.

The principal means whereby pupils' levels of attainment were verified and attested in Scottish schools was through written examinations. The presentation described the method of "standard grade" examinations and the system used to assess the results.

IV. MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Consideration of the questions presented in the plenary sessions was continued at the meetings of three working groups.

Group 1 - Chairperson Lev Dameshek, Rapporteur Petr Bokhanov.

Group 2 - Chairperson Viktor Dyatlov, Rapporteur Grigoriy Sverlik.

Group 3 - Chairperson Zinaida Rabestskaya, Rapporteur Tatiana Dykusova.

The following subjects were proposed for discussion in the working groups:

A. The *basic reasons* for standards in history: the concept of an educational standard; the reasons for using a standard; the structure of a standard, the concept of regional components of a history standard, the relationship between federal and regional components.

B. *Expert review* of existing standards: pros and cons, proposals for improvement.

C. *Application* of standards in school: levels of implementation (region, school, teacher); standards in various types of school (urban and rural schools, ordinary and specialised schools and classes).

The discussions in all the working groups covered the whole range of questions and were notable for the active involvement of participants. In connection with the above-mentioned issues, the following views were expressed:

- a standard, as the embodiment of national requirements for the educational level of secondary school pupils, should be a mandatory document and the same for everybody. Most speakers thought standards were necessary, both for the basic nine-year school and for the senior 10th and 11th grades; however, others felt that they did not need to be mandatory in the senior school.
- the aims of history teaching in schools, which should be incorporated in a standard's requirements, were considered by participants to include the following for students:
 - i. a thorough knowledge of people's historical journey from antiquity to the present day;
 - ii. assimilation of the spiritual values developed in the course of history and acquire the experience of self-determination in relation to it;
 - iii. they should grasp the diversity of the changing world from age to age, as well as develop an ability to relate to time;
 - iv. they should know the principal tools and techniques of historical analysis of the past and present; they should acquire the ability to review and evaluate different points of view without preconceived notions and without being swayed by tendentious information;
 - v. they should develop their own ethical and aesthetic criteria for relating to the world and other people, as well as a positive attitude to professional and social activity.
- Participants in the discussion generally approved the initial assumptions, structure and composition of the provisional history standards now in existence. At the same time, there were proposals to reduce the substantive and factual side of standards and concentrate more on defining what students should achieve in terms of knowledge, analytical activity, the formulation of attitudes to past events and contemporary phenomena and the acquisition of values.
- Many teachers drew attention to the fact that, even if a standard incorporated a single set of requirements, there were really different levels of achievement in different students. It would, therefore, be inadvisable to confine the exercise to a formal assessment, such as "meet the requirements" or "failed to meet the requirements" of a standard. It was essential to define the possible levels of achievement; this would allow certificates and similar documents to reflect the

quality of individual performance and a student's progress in particular disciplines. There was also a suggestion that the package of standard documents should include norms for evaluating students' attainments in history.

- The teachers urged that standards should not remain a narrow professional document used only in the “ministry-to-school” circuit, but should be well known to authors of textbooks as well as to pupils and parents.
- It was stressed that at a time of major changes in historical education in Russian schools, it was important for the standard requirements to be borne in mind in new textbooks (as the teachers noted, so far this could only be said of very few textbooks).
- The participants showed particular interest in the question of the relationship in school courses between local, regional, ethnic, national and world history. While regarding these levels as components of a coherent overall picture of history, the teachers paid special attention to the regional components of educational standards. Views were expressed as to the functions of these components, such as:
 - i. shedding light on historical events and processes by using striking material close to pupils' own experience, thus developing their interest in history;
 - ii. making pupils aware that their lives, and the lives of their family, town or village and local area are a part of history, and on that basis helping to shape civic consciousness;
 - iii. developing schoolchildren's creative abilities by research into many different sources of local history;
 - iv. inculcating respect for the history and culture of peoples living in the local area, tolerance of other people's beliefs (it was emphasised that the teaching of regional history should not foster notions of superiority of one nation or ethnic group over another or encourage chauvinistic attitudes).

Views differed on the question of the geographical framework and internal structure of regional components, and various different scales were proposed: Siberia, Eastern Siberia, Priangar'ye (Irkutsk region).

Speakers drew particular attention to the fact that regional components were not confined to history, but encompassed a number of interacting aspects, such as the historico-cultural, natural-geographical, socio-economic and civic-legal aspects; this

made it possible to tackle a wide range of issues in the education, development and socialisation of students. A broad view of regional history was also expressed in the recommendation that there should be more detailed study than was possible in a general history course of the history and culture of peoples in neighbouring States.

In the course of the discussion, proposals were put forward for ways of combining general and regional material at various stages of teaching. It was recognised as desirable that, in the first stage, the study of history should begin with local material that was close at hand and easily surveyed, gradually moving on to the history of the country. In the main and senior grades of secondary school, regional history could be studied in the context of the history of Russia or world history, just as it could on special courses.

What the teachers had to say testified to their creative approach to the definition of attainment in this sphere (for instance, the commendable work of T.A. Andreyeva, a history teacher at Irkutsk School No. 47, where the seminar took place). At the same time, a programmatic or methodological approach to the study of regional history was felt to be insufficient.

The participants listened with interest to an account by Tatiana Romanchenko (Vladivostok) of experience with teaching regional history in the schools of the Primor'ye area. The teachers made a proposal for the creation of regional co-ordinating groups or centres.

The participants in the working groups stressed the usefulness of this cooperative effort, both for tackling the common problems facing Russian schools and for the personal work of every teacher, and they thanked the organisers of the seminar from the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Administration of the city of Irkutsk, and the principals and staff of School No. 47 for providing the opportunity for such co-operation.

V. SUMMING UP OF PROCEEDINGS - RECOMMENDATIONS

At the closing plenary session, the reports of the working groups were presented (rapporteurs *Petr Bokhanov, Grigoriy Sverlik, Tatiana Dykusova*).

Speakers *Arild Thornbjornsen* and *Liz Ogilvy*, who took part in the work of the groups, noted the keen and active interest displayed by the teachers in the course of the discussions, and the usefulness of the exchange of views and practical experience in dealing with the problems under review.

A summary of the work and recommendations of the Seminar was presented by the General Rapporteur, **Ludmila Alexashkina**. She noted that the Seminar could be seen as a qualitative advance in addressing the problems of school history standards. This was expressed in:

- the teachers' wide-ranging and lively discussion of federal educational standards in history, and their specific proposals for improving those standards (placing substantive and activity-related components on an equal footing; defining levels of schoolchildren's attainment; including norms for the evaluation of attainment);
- the teachers' growing tendency to see standards not as a constraint on their pedagogic activity, but as a system of goals and definitions that could help to make their work in the classroom more productive (it was particularly noted that, at a time when most authors of new history curricula and textbooks were mainly concentrating on updating and extending teaching materials, the teachers themselves were calling for priority to be given to a diversity of cognitive activities by schoolchildren);
- the practical elaboration of regional components of history standards by creatively-minded teachers (tailor-made courses, preparation of teachers' own materials, combination of classroom and extramural work, study circles, etc);
- the growing co-operation between teachers from various regions of Russia and a series of European countries, involving a comparison of the experience concerning the development and use of standards for the teaching of history in schools. During the Seminar, contacts were established between teachers from Irkutsk, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Buryatia, and possibilities of further regional co-ordination were explored.

Olga Strelova (Khabarovsk State Pedagogical University) put forward a proposal for co-operation among regional associations of history teachers in the development of regional components of history curricula and courses.

General recommendations of the Seminar.

1. In further work on federal history curricula and standards, attention should be paid to defining the activity of schoolchildren in cognition, analytical work and the development of values and attitudes.

2. It is desirable for history standards to include materials defining pupils' levels of attainment (elementary, advanced), as well as norms for the evaluation of knowledge and skills.

3. The requirements of educational standards concerning the basic contents of historical material and the system of students' cognitive activity should be made known to the authors of textbooks and other teaching aids and taken into account in new history textbooks.

4. The following should be regarded as important tasks in the elaboration of regional components of history standards:

- i. a comprehensive statement of the aims, providing for the interaction of federal and regional components; the reflection of all levels and aspects of history; interdisciplinary links; the combination of classroom and extramural activities;
- ii. the organisation of creative groups and centres to develop regional components of history standards and to introduce the standards in the classroom;
- iii. the co-ordination of efforts to elaborate and improve history standards on the regional, interregional and national levels.

It was proposed that the Seminar's recommendations should be transmitted to the team working on federal history standards for secondary schools, as well as to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. The recommendations concerning the elaboration of regional components of standards are intended for lecturers and teachers.

Closing of the seminar

The closing session was addressed by the directors of the co-operation programme and the organisers of the Seminar.

Alison Cardwell (Council of Europe) thanked all participants in the seminar for their co-operation, and the organisers for their hospitality and for the excellent working conditions. The Seminar had marked a considerable advance in dealing with problems of urgent concern to Russian schools and could be regarded as one more step towards bringing together the teachers of European countries.

Tamara Tuliaeva (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) thanked the organisers of the seminar and wished all participants further success in their work.

Oleg Grishkevich (Committee on Science and Education of the State Duma of the Russian Federation) expressed satisfaction that history curricula and standards were becoming the subject of wide professional and public discussion.

Valeriy Stepanov (Irkutsk School No. 47) wished participants in the seminar success in elaborating a strategy for the teaching of history in the coming 21st Century.

Leonid Vygovskiy (Irkutsk City Administration) thanked the organisers from the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, as well as all the participants in the Seminar for their useful work, wished them further success and declared the Seminar closed.

The results and recommendations of the Seminar are to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on “Curricula and standards” in 1999 and the planning of further activities for the year 2000.

APPENDIX I

REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Working Group 1

Chair: Dr Lev DAMESHEK (Irkoutsk)

Rapporteur: Mr Petr BOKHANOV (Irkoutsk)

Resource person: Mr Arild THORBJORNSSEN (Norway)

- i. What does the term "federal standards for history teaching" mean?
- ii. What does the term "regional standards for history teaching" mean?
- iii. What are the main aims of the federal component for history teaching standards in present-day secondary schools?
- iv. What are the main aims of a regional component of history teaching standards in present-day secondary schools?
- v. What are advantages and disadvantages of the federal standards proposed for discussion at the Seminar?
- vi. What would you like to change in the present-day federal standards for history teaching for secondary schools and why?
- vii. How should the regional component be linked to the federal standards in present-day secondary schools?

1. The term “federal standards” in history teaching refers to the basic parameters (norms) of history education (historical knowledge) laid down by the state within the territorial framework of the Russian Federation (Article 43 of the RF Constitution). These federal standards ensure that all citizens enjoy equal opportunities for receiving a proper history education in all Russian educational establishments, whatever the type, thereby creating the necessary conditions for the exercise of every citizen’s right to a flexible choice of education.

2. Implementing these federal standards requires that the appropriate (necessary) number of lessons (teaching hours) be set aside.

3. Some of the teachers in the working group believe that the federal history standards define the compulsory minimum knowledge of history that pupils must acquire by the time they finish basic (9-year) school, under the concentric system, or by the time they complete their full-length (secondary) education, when studying under the linear system. Others feel that two different levels of standards should be introduced for basic and full-length (secondary) schooling.

4. The regional history teaching standards are parameters (norms) which come under the responsibility of the regions. These standards are an integral part of the federal standards and are conveyed through teaching material selected on a competitive basis. In practical terms, these standards require pupils to study the history not just of their own *oblast* or region but also of neighbouring territories. In our particular case, for example, it makes sense for schoolchildren in the Irkutsk *oblast*, Buryatia, Chita *oblast* and Krasnoyarsk *krai* [territory] to study the history of Eastern Siberia.

5. The aims of the federal component in history teaching are as follows:

- to ensure that pupils acquire a sound knowledge of the history of mankind from ancient times to the present day;
- to teach pupils about the moral values that have evolved over the course of history and to encourage them to define their own position in relation to these values;
- to cultivate an understanding of the diversity of the world in which we live, and the patterns and connections to be found in the process of historical development;
- to create in pupils' minds a dynamic picture of a changing world and to develop their ability to maintain an inner balance in this shifting environment;
- to teach them the basic methods and techniques of the job of historian;
- to develop subjective ethical and aesthetic criteria for relating to a world in flux and for situating themselves in this world;
- to develop pupils' ability to evaluate different viewpoints, to spot inconsistencies in various judgments and attitudes, to recognise erroneous or prejudiced beliefs and not to be taken in by biased information.

6. In terms of content, history education should offer a combination of local, national and global history. The regional component is an integral part of the federal standard and should be studied during the basic (9-year) schooling. The aims of the regional component are as follows: to expand upon the Russian history course by introducing regional material; to highlight the characteristic features and distinctive aspects of the history of a particular region; to develop the notion of a “a homeland within a homeland”, and to make pupils aware of its place and role in the history of the country as a whole; to study pupils’ genealogy using local material; to foster in pupils a sense of patriotism. At the same time, care must be taken when teaching regional history not to encourage jingoism or ideas about the supremacy of one particular nation, race or ethnic group.

7. The actual, physical vehicle that conveys not only content but also methodology is the school textbook. The latter is a key instrument for imparting knowledge, organising the learning process and developing pupils’ historical reasoning and cognitive skills. By no means all modern textbooks, however, reflect the radical shifts that have occurred in historical science or manage to present information in an attractive and clear manner. The Russian Ministry of Education should adopt a system of competitive tendering for textbook publishing and should take steps to ensure that the textbooks produced are scientifically sound and that only those which comply with recommended publishing practice are used in schools. This would help resolve the current mismatch between textbook content and school history syllabuses.

8. Something which could usefully be included in the standards would be a section on “Knowledge evaluation norms”.

Working Group 2

Chair: Dr Andrey DANILENKO (Irkoutsk)

Rapporteur: Mr Grigoriy SVERLIK (Irkoutsk)

Resource person: Ms Liz OGILVIE (United Kingdom)

- i. In your opinion, what are the main elements of federal standards for history teaching for secondary schools?
- ii. In your opinion, what are the main elements of regional standards for history teaching for secondary schools?
- iii. How should federal standards on history teaching apply to different types of secondary schools: eg in rural areas (in normal classes and in classes with few pupils); in specialised schools and classes; in ordinary and elite schools and other types of secondary schools?
- iv. How should regional standards on history apply to different types of secondary schools: in rural areas (in normal classes and in classes with few pupils); in specialised schools and classes; in ordinary and elite schools and other types of secondary schools?
- v. What would you like to change in the present-day federal standards for history teaching and why?
- vi. How should a regional component be linked to the federal standards?

The discussion began with an attempt to clarify the attitudes and beliefs at the heart of the concept of standards. In particular, the group considered the question of what to aim for when implementing standards in general education schools, ie the accumulation of factual knowledge or the development of particular skills and practices. The group unanimously agreed that “reproductive” learning was in fact the least productive kind. Instead, the teacher’s practical efforts should be directed towards ensuring that by the time they leave school, pupils were capable of comparing, synthesising and analysing historical phenomena and processes. All this was considered to be a more important product of history education.

One issue which aroused keen interest in the group was that of the regulatory role of federal standards and the degree of regulation to be adopted. Should the federal standards be a strict, regulatory instrument or should they be more in the

nature of a list of desirable outcomes, ie a list of the skills which were needed in today's world and which were universally, internationally applicable.

The group agreed that the federal standards should not be enshrined in law, as there were certain dangers in this. The fact was that in Russia, laws were made by the State Duma, a highly politicised body with the right to introduce amendments and there was no guarantee that, after the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the Duma would not come under the control of some radical majority, that would feel it could do as it pleased. The federal standards would then become an instrument of state ideological or party dictatorship in the education sphere.

There were some objections to the use of the term "standards", on the ground that it raised the spectre of precisely this kind of despotic control over the teaching profession. Ms Volodina did not agree, however. She reminded the participants that a draft law on educational standards had been before the State Duma committee since October 1997 and that the term "standards" had been established in the current RF Law "On education", and was therefore imbued with the necessary legal and moral legitimacy. The Duma committee was now waiting to hear teachers' response to the draft. Ms Volodina also pointed out that there were 3 elements to the federal standards:

- workload;
- minimum content;
- requirements as to pupils' knowledge.

The group participants expressed concern that alongside the danger of ideological dictatorship, the federal standards could also become a powerful tool in the hands of education officials, to be wielded against any teacher who happened to incur their displeasure. Officials might be tempted to abuse the potential offered by educational standards. It was proposed that the necessary safeguards be built into the standards in order to protect teachers.

In response to this warning, Ms Tyulyayeva pointed out that there were no longer any inspection officials in the leading educational institutions, which was why it was all the more important to develop a set of standards. As yet, however, no such standards had been introduced in our schools. Officially, we would not have them until the highest legislative body approved them. Teachers, however, could not afford to wait that long and so a number of different standard-setting documents were currently being used:

- a set of teaching requirements, aimed not at pupils but rather at textbook and syllabus authors and parents;
- model syllabuses;
- a set of provisional requirements pertaining to the quality of education received by the time pupils leave school;

- a document on instruments for gauging the quality of pupils' education.

All this had been published in a single booklet. Ms Tyulyayeva further added that opinion was very divided on these matters, both in society at large and among education experts. Discussions were also under way in the Ministry of Education on numerous issues, including textbooks, conceptual issues, etc. Ideally, the standard-setting documents and school textbooks should be neither pro-monarchy nor liberal, neither left-wing nor right-wing, but rather universal, in the full sense of the world.

The group observed that the current draft standards for history education were aimed at teachers, whereas it would be better if they were aimed at teachers, pupils and parents. The standards should, first and foremost, lay down the requirements as to the quality of pupils' knowledge. Once again, the problem lay in Russia's abiding attachment to the "reproductive" approach. In western countries, efforts were focused on developing appropriate forms of social behaviour. We in Russia were only just beginning to move down this path. It was important to remember that children differed greatly both in terms of their general development and in terms of their intellectual growth. The standards should therefore incorporate various levels of requirements.

On the subject of the main aspects of the federal standards, such as content, requirements and measuring instruments, the working group said it regarded these as something which had already been decided, ie it considered that there was an established state policy on the development of standards, which was unlikely to change.

The group drew attention to the fact that the draft federal standards gave no indication of the mechanisms by which schoolchildren were to be taught to "discriminate", "analyse", "compare", "characterise", etc. In other words, there was no mention of the process by which knowledge was to be acquired. Nor was there any provision in the standards for teaching pupils how to learn about history on their own and discover things for themselves.

It was observed that, despite the reduction in the content part of the standards, the document still placed too much emphasis on factual knowledge and there was still too much material to be covered in order to achieve the requisite minimum knowledge. As in the past, therefore, pupils would be put under unnecessary strain.

With regard to medieval history, it was observed that there was a lack of material on the culture of the Slavs, and the ethnic groups of the East, and that the existing material was unduly Eurocentric. There was a need to alter the balance of the content part of the standards. The East should not be treated merely as an extension of feudalism. Were this short-sighted approach to the selection of factual material to continue, the history of Kievan Rus, for example, would almost certainly disappear

from the Russian and world history syllabus, just as the history of the Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs and Bulgarians, etc. had already been consigned to obscurity.

It was suggested that it might be a good idea to introduce standards for basic education only, and that full-length education would be better left in the hands of the teacher.

When it came to actually applying the standards in the classroom, the area where they would be of greatest use was school-leaving exams. Here, more than anywhere else, teachers and other interested parties would be able to judge pupils' skills, knowledge, capacity for understanding, analysis, etc.

On the subject of how federal and regional standards would work in relation to the different types of schools, the group observed that the standards would be applied differently, according to the type of school. It was important here that the standards take account of the growing gap between ordinary and elite schools. Within the standards, there should be room for different sets of requirements. In different schools, different criteria were inevitably going to apply when evaluating pupils' knowledge and skills, ie different levels of learning would be examined under one and same system of assessment. Clearly, this might mean having to award different grades of school-leaving certificate. Such practices were common in the West, however, and no-one seemed to mind.

The group felt that, in terms of content, the standards should provide for a certain basic minimum which would be the same for all schools, regardless of type, but that there should be some differentiation in terms of the demands placed on pupils when they came to leave school. It was agreed that pupils should share some of the responsibility for their history education and that teachers should be responsible for the business of assessment. In this respect, the examination format used abroad had been shown to work well. Granted, under this arrangement, the pupil, having been awarded a particular mark for his or her written answers, could always appeal if he or she disagreed.

The opinion was expressed that some effort should be made to co-ordinate the standards with the requirements of higher education entrance exams. If the standards were enshrined in federal law, people might use them to sue over the quality of education delivered to pupils.

There was some discussion as to whether the study of the history of our immediate neighbours should be incorporated in the federal or regional component of the standards. The group concluded that the history of neighbouring countries such as Mongolia, China, etc. deserved special treatment and should be studied within the framework of the regional component of the federal standards, and that the federal standards should allow enough time for this.

Working Group 3

Chair: Dr Zinaida RABETSKAYA (Irkoutsk)

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana DYKOUSOVA (Irkoutsk)

Resource person: Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO (Council of Europe)

- i. In your opinion, what are the main aims of the federal component for history teaching standards in present-day secondary schools?
- ii. In your opinion, what are the main aims of the regional component for history teaching standards in present-day secondary schools?
- iii. What are advantages and disadvantages of the federal standards proposed for discussion at the Seminar?
- iv. What would you like to change in the present-day federal standards for history teaching and why?
- v. What do the federal and regional components mean from the point of view of a history teacher and a pupil?
- vi. How are you, as a practising teacher, going to use the federal and regional components of history teaching standards in your every-day work in a classroom?
- vii. How should the regional component of standards on history teaching be linked to the federal standards?

CONCLUSIONS

on the discussion on standards for school history education

In the course of our discussion on 17 and 18 September, we managed to establish a few points about the relationship between the federal and regional components of school history education standards.

The structure of history education standards, as interpreted by Ms Aleksashina, is already fairly clear. They set out the aims of education with due regard for the specific features of the content of the subject, and its potential contribution to pupils' moral development; also defined are the minimum content of the teaching material

and the general requirements as to the level of education which pupils are expected to attain at the various stages of schooling; for the first time, we are offered a set of instruments for gauging the degree of knowledge and level of skills acquired.

An analogy can be drawn between the federal standard and the structure of the regional component, which must include the following:

- detailed statement of the aims of history education in the region, with due regard for the specific geopolitical, ethnic features, etc.
 - show the role played by regional history in Russian and world history;
 - develop pupils' interest in learning about history through the history of their own region;
 - develop pupils' awareness that they, along with their family and the street, town and district they live in, are part of history; as a guarantee of active participation in current social processes - foster a sense of civic responsibility;
 - develop pupils' creativity by involving them in exploratory activities;
 - cultivate respect and tolerance towards the culture and history of the ethnic groups present in the local territory.
- The regional standards should specify the area to be covered when teaching the history of the region (or *krai*).

In order to do this, however, one must first determine what is meant by the "regional component of educational standards". A number of opinions were expressed on this point.

Opinion No. 1. Our region is the whole of Siberia, so it is essential to study the history of Siberia and, within that, the history of our particular *krai*. "*Krai studies*" [school subject involving the study of local lore, history and economy] do not quite fully reflect the concept of "regional component", therefore.

Opinion No. 2. The regional component should focus primarily on the *oblast*. The history of Greater Siberia should be presented in general outline with, at its core, the history of the local area, ie Priangarye (Irkutsk *oblast*).

Opinion No. 3. The regional component will not be complete if it deals only with the historical element of “*krai* studies”. It should also reflect the historico-cultural, socio-economic, natural, geographical, civil and legal aspects.

Opinion No. 4. Given the patent Eurocentricism of the history teaching material provided for in the federal standards, it is important that, in the regional component, consideration be given to the specific geopolitical features of our *krai*. There is a real need to portray the history and culture of our eastern neighbours.

The content part of the regional component is beginning to take shape in syllabuses and methodological recommendations written or adapted by imaginative, innovative teachers. There is, however, a need to set up a single co-ordinating centre, supported by academic historians.

Within the regional component of school history education standards, some effort could be made to map out the structure of regional history courses. In the introductory course, we could begin with the simplest and hence most accessible type of history for children, ie the history of their own family, street and town and how these tie in with the history of Russia as a whole. In basic and full-length school, regional history could be studied either in the context of world and Russian history, or as a separate course. Formal lessons, incidentally, are not the only way of achieving the established objectives. Other possible routes include optional subjects and extra-curricular activities.

The structure and content of both federal and regional standards should avoid any suggestion of formalism, and should be straightforward and readily comprehensible without further comment from the authorities, so that there is no risk of manipulation.

Just as today, the issue has arisen in the federal standards of the balance between Russian and world history (30 and 70%, 40 and 60%), so too it is important to establish a balance between the regional and federal components in educational standards: 15 and 85%, thereby making it compulsory, rather than just indicative. It follows from this that the regional syllabus should be compiled in keeping with the basic syllabus, with due regard for the specific features of the region concerned. That way, there will be room in it for both the variable and invariable elements of history education.

The regional component should be provided with the appropriate curricular and methodological support, so that a system can also be established for gauging the level of pupils' knowledge and skills.

APPENDIX II

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APPENDIX III
PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Thursday 16 September 1999

Morning Arrival of the participants

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.30 – 15.30 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Mr Leonid VYGOVSKIY, Head of the Education
Department of the Irkoutsk Region

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Mr Leonid VYGOVSKIY, Head of the Education
Department of the Irkoutsk Region;
- ii. Mr Juriy TEN, a member of the State Duma;
- iii. Ms Tamara TULIEVA, Leading Specialist, Ministry
of Education of the Russian Federation, Moscow;
- iv. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Technical
Co-operation and Assistance Section, Council of
Europe;
- v. Mr Oleg GRISHKEVICH, a representative of the
State Duma;
- vi. Mr Valeriy STEPANOV, Director of School N° 47,
Irkoutsk.

15.30 - 16.00 Break

16.00 - 18.00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Mr Leonid VYGOVSKIY

- i. Presentation on: "Co-operation between the
Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in
the preparation of new standards for history

teaching for secondary schools” by Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Programme Officer, Technical Co-operation and Assistance Section, Council of Europe, France;

- ii. Presentation on: "Standards for history teaching on their way to secondary schools" by Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Academy of Education in the Russian Federation, Moscow;
- iii. Presentation on: "The balance in teaching national and local history in the curriculum for secondary education: the example of Norway" by Mr Arild THORBJORNSSEN, Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, Norway.

Discussion with all the participants

18.00 - 19.00 Cultural Programme

19.30 Dinner

Friday 17 September 1999

08.30 Breakfast in the Hotel

09.30 - 11.00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Valeriy STEPANOV, the Principle of School N° 47;

- i. Presentation on: "The regional component of standards for history teaching for secondary schools: present day and future developments" by a representative of the Irkoutsk Region;
- ii. Presentation on: "The structure of the examination system for history teaching in secondary schools in Scotland" by Ms Lis OGILVIE, United Kingdom.

Discussion with all the participants

11.00 - 11.30 Break

11.30 – 13.00	Three Parallel Working Group Sessions
i.	Working Group No. 1
	Chair: Dr Lev DAMESHEK (Irkoutsk) Rapporteur: Mr Petr BOKHANOV (Irkoutsk) Resource person: Mr Arild THORBJORSEN (Norway)
ii.	Working Group No. 2
	Chair: Dr Andrey DANILENKO (Irkoutsk); Rapporteur: Mr Grigoriy SVERLIK (Irkoutsk) Resource person: Ms Liz OGILVIE (United Kingdom)
iii.	Working Group No. 3
	Chair: Dr Zinaida RABETSKAYA (Irkoutsk) Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana DYKOUSOVA (Irkoutsk) Resource person: Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO (Council of Europe)
13.00 - 14.30	Lunch
14.30 - 16.00	Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions
16.00 - 16.30	Break
16.30 - 18.00	Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions
19.30	Official dinner

Saturday 18 September 1999

8.30 – 9.00	Breakfast in the Hotel
09.30 - 11.00	Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions
11.00 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.30	Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch

14.00 – 16.00 The rapporteurs should report to the General Rapporteur and the Secretariat on the conclusions and recommendations of their working group. They should prepare their texts in writing and submit a copy to the Secretariat. These texts will be included in the final report of the Seminar.

16.00 - 16.30 Break

16.30 – 18.00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Valeriy STEPANOV, the Principle of School N° 47

- i. Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the rapporteurs of the working groups

Discussion with all the participants

- ii. Comments by the three speakers invited by the Council of Europe on the discussions held in the working groups in which they took part

- iii. Presentation by the General Rapporteur of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar

Comments by the participants

Closing speeches of the Seminar by:

- i. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Technical Cooperation and Assistance Section, Council of Europe;
- ii. Ms Tamara TULIEVA, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, Moscow;
- iii. Mr Leonid VYGOVSKIY, Head of the Education Department of the Irkoutsk Region;

- iv. Mr Valeriy STEPANOV, Director of School N° 47,
Irkoutsk.

19.30

Dinner

Departure of the participants

