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**Activities for the Development and Consolidation  
of Democratic Stability (ADACS)**

Second National Stocktaking Conference on

**"History Teaching in the Russian Federation"**

St Petersburg, Russian Federation,

11 – 13 March 1999

**Report**

Strasbourg



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**Report by**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This Conference had four broad aims which were to:

- a) evaluate the progress which has been made since the First National Stocktaking Conference in Suzdal in 1996 and, indeed, more generally take stock of the progress which has been made since cooperation on history teaching between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe began in the early 1990s;
- b) evaluate the process of implementing changes in history teaching, including the constraints and problems which have been encountered in:
  - the development of history curricula and standards;
  - the development of pre-service and in-service teacher training for history teachers;
  - the production of history textbooks;
- c) identify development priorities within these three areas:
  - curricula and standards;
  - teacher training;
  - textbooks;
- d) present some recommendations for the immediate future.

## **II. THE PRESENTATIONS**

Over the course of the Conference eight plenary presentations were given, four by speakers from the Russian Federation and four by visiting speakers. The presentations were grouped around the four main themes of the conference:

- the background to the reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation;
- developments in curricula and standards;
- developments in teacher training;
- developments in history textbooks and teaching resources.

### **2.1 The background to the reform of history teaching**

For many years Mr Maitland STOBART, as Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport in the Council of Europe, played an active role in the development of the Council's activities in history teaching and textbooks. For the last 12 years his work had focused increasingly on negotiations with the new partner countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As such, he was in an

ideal position to talk about the background to the current and future co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation on matters relating to history teaching, even though he wished to emphasise that he was now speaking in a personal capacity and not as an official representative of the Council of Europe.

He began his presentation by observing that at the end of the 1980s the Council had quickly responded to the changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe so that 10 years later the large majority of States within the region, including the Russian Federation, are now full members of the Council of Europe. Co-operation on the processes of reforming history teaching had been, and still was, high on the list of political and educational priorities. In particular the Council had given its support to the process through organising national, regional and multilateral conferences and seminars and cross-border projects and initiatives. He emphasised that the planning of these activities, the inputs from the participants and the specific outcomes had reflected a dialogue of equals where all those involved had shared information and experiences and learned from each other.

Mr STOBART then briefly outlined the specific activities in history teaching which had been jointly organised by the Council and the Russian Federation since 1995. In doing so he identified what he believed to be the most important features of this programme of cooperation:

- the breadth and range of topics covered by the seminars and conferences;
- the diversity of participants invited, including history teachers, teacher trainers, academic historians, museum curators, textbook authors and publishers, representatives of Government Ministries, the Duma, local, regional and central administrators and speakers drawn from all parts of Europe;
- the fruitful, ongoing cooperation between Russian and foreign experts;
- the influential role of five organisations: EUROCLIO, Austria's KulturKontakt, the International Center for Educational Innovation of Herzen State Pedagogical University, the European Educational Publishers' Group and the Georg Eckert Institut for International Textbook Research;
- the active involvement of the different regions of the Russian Federation.



He concluded with the hope that the forum for exchange of information, experience and expertise which had now been established could be maintained and further developed; that Russian history teachers should play an increasingly active role in their regional History Teachers' Associations and in EUROCLIO, and that there should be more cross-frontier co-operation and projects in the future.

Dr Vladimir BATSYN, in his presentation, set out to assess what has been achieved in the reform of history teaching over the first eight years of the educational reforms and what still needs to be done. Initially, he observed, the emphasis had been on the content to be taught and, in particular, the coverage of events in modern national and world history. During this stage (1991-96), little emphasis had been given to re-defining the nature and purpose of history teaching in schools. For this to happen a number of taken-for-granted assumptions would have to be questioned by historians, textbook authors and history teachers, particularly regarding assumptions about the objectivity of history as a discipline and whether or not it is realistic to assume that historical methods can reveal historical truths. While it has become more common for history teachers and textbooks to present alternative versions and perceptions of what happened there is still a widely-held assumption that one of these versions is the correct one. In this respect he wanted to emphasise that historians dealt with evidence not historical truth and while there were always some basic facts that all would accept, mostly historical evidence was open to different interpretations. The student therefore needs to learn not only about what happened but also about how historical knowledge is constructed and interpreted. That is, to see why two historians (or two cultures or two distinct generations) can interpret the same event differently either because they have different perspectives and make different assumptions or because the evidence is incomplete or open to more than one interpretation.

Having highlighted the importance of bringing about this 'cultural' shift in teachers' and textbooks' approaches to teaching history, he then went on to identify some of the constraints which were still inhibiting the implementation of these major changes in history teaching. First, a consensus about the direction of change still needed to be generated. The draft of the federal programme for the development of school education which emerged in 1994 has yet to be ratified by the State Duma. On standards there is still not a unified view on the criteria that should govern standards or on which aspects of history teaching and learning should be subject to standards setting. Second, there needed to be an overall strategy for curriculum planning rather than a set of discrete tactics, but a strategy was unlikely until a consensus about the changes had emerged. In this respect he wondered if the solution might lie in the specification of a minimum core of knowledge that students should be able to demonstrate by the time they had completed their formal schooling. This would still enable regional administrations and individual schools to incorporate into the history curriculum different aspects of local, regional,

ethnic, cultural and national history tailored to local and regional circumstances. However, he was concerned that the minimum might become the totality rather than the core.

Dr BATSYN then went on to express the hope that in another three years they would be able to point to significant qualitative changes in history education and, in this respect, hoped that cooperation with the Council of Europe would continue and be strengthened.

## **2.2 Developments in history curricula and standards**

Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA has been actively involved in the development of new standards for history teaching in the Russian Federation. In the process she and her colleagues have looked at approaches to standards adopted elsewhere in Europe. Much of the emphasis in Western Europe has been on specifying what should be achieved by students at different ages and levels in their schooling. In this respect there has been a widespread, though not universal, shift in the balance of what is assessed so that now much more emphasis is given to establishing learning or attainment targets for skills and historical understanding.

However, the tradition in the Russian Federation has been rather different, partly because of the highly centralised educational system under the Soviet regime but also because of the problems of scale identified by Dr BATSYN. Standards have been a mechanism for specifying the curricula and the contents to be taught. As a result it has been difficult to develop standards for skills and historical understanding.

A discussion document was issued in 1998 which sought to identify the basic skills and ways of thinking for which norms or attainment levels could be established. These included:

- understanding of chronology;
- ways of looking at historical knowledge;
- ability to handle historical documents;
- ability to reconstruct events and produce a narrative;
- historical analysis and explanations;
- understanding why there can be different versions and interpretations of historical events.

However, as yet, this document had not been widely circulated or discussed. A process of consultation was now needed before any kind of consensus could be generated about these new types of standard.

Dr ALEXASHKINA then went on to raise a number of issues that still needed to be resolved. First, at present, theoretically, there could be federal, regional, local and school-based standards. But, if a standard is a 'norm' then more needs to be done to produce a unified, consensual set of standards. Second, the shift of emphasis to incorporate into standards the skills and understanding to be developed and attained by the student, raises the question of whether such skills can be acquired through a diversity of courses and curricula or must the standards still specify the curricular structures and course content? Third, would the inclusion of learning or attainment targets mean that the education authorities would also need to introduce formal testing to verify that the skills, knowledge and understanding were being acquired? Finally she raised the central issue of how these standards will influence and be integrated into classroom teaching.

Mr Gary BRACE had been the Rapporteur General at the first National Stocktaking Conference in Suzdal in December 1996. At that Conference he had identified a number of key issues associated with the reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation. These included the need to:

- highlight in curriculum development, textbook publishing and teacher training the importance of historical interpretation in the study of history, including the recognition that historical judgments were always provisional and open to re-interpretation in the light of new evidence;
- review the content of the history curriculum;
- clearly define the historical understanding and skills which will be developed through that curriculum;
- reflect on and evaluate the ways in which history textbooks could most effectively support the proposed reforms;
- respond effectively to the training needs of history teachers;
- cooperate and establish partnerships in history education both within the Russian Federation and between Federation and relevant international organisations.

He then went on to review the progress which had been made since 1996 and concluded that it was very encouraging to see that so many of the issues which had been raised at the Suzdal Conference were being addressed constructively. As evidence of this he referred to the discussions and conclusions of the working groups which had met at the joint seminars organised in Novgorod (November 1997), Ekaterinburg (April, 1998), Arkhangelsk (June 1998) and Khabarovsk (September 1998).

Mr BRACE finished his presentations with some thoughts regarding the next set of priorities for development and suggested that future challenges might include:

- identifying a minimum core of curricular content for all children within specific age bands;
- exploring ways in which history teachers could play a more active role in the curriculum development process;
- focusing on issues relating to learning progression (from primary to secondary and from lower secondary to upper secondary);
- looking at the potential role of libraries, archives, museums, historical sites and the mass media in history education; and how their respective inputs might complement those of the history teacher and the textbook.

### **2.3 Teacher education**

Dr Ludmila ANDRUKHINA began her presentation by identifying the new demands now being made on the history teacher in the Russian Federation. She included here changes in the structure and content of history teaching; the greater emphasis on the learning of skills and historical understanding; the growing recognition that differentiated approaches to teaching might be needed with different groups of students; and the demands created by new kinds of textbook and other learning resources.

She then reviewed the conclusions which had emerged from recent seminars on teacher training organised by the Council of Europe, including one held in Ekaterinburg in April 1998 [CC-ED/HIST (98) 48]. The conclusions could be summarised under three broad headings:

***Changes in the content of teacher training:*** it was recognised by participants at these seminars that more emphasis needs to be given to the specific methodological component of history teaching, both in initial teacher training and in research on teaching. The tradition has been to concentrate on the academic component and the general orientation in pedagogy. A greater emphasis on the practical component of teacher training was now needed.

***Changes in the structures of teacher training:*** a diversity of approaches was now beginning to emerge, such as modular courses, often drawing on the experience of teacher training in other European countries. However, in the absence of a federal policy statement on teacher training each region is developing its own models and frameworks for initial and in-service training. The absence of clear guidelines on course content and standards is also having

a knock-on effect on developments in the course content and structures of training for history teachers.

***Changes in systems for teacher training:*** in this respect participants at the seminars were agreed that more needed to be done to establish effective partnerships between the various kinds of institutions engaged in initial teacher training and between them and the schools, the in-service training organisations, the history teachers' associations and the regional administrations.

Dr ANDRUKHINA noted that some changes were beginning to take place along these lines but it takes time to implement and establish practical changes such as these; developments tend to be localised; there is a shortage of resources; and the teachers in the more remote rural areas experience real problems in accessing appropriate in-service training.

Dr Alois ECKER started his presentation from the premise that the training of history teachers in the Russian Federation is confronted by two new challenges:

- the need to develop new partnerships and possibilities for cooperation amongst the various institutions of teacher education and between these institutions and the schools, the ministries and the regional and local administrations;
- the need to develop new training methods which will:
  - provide student teachers and practising teachers on in-service programmes with the skills and analytical frameworks for reflecting upon and improving their classroom teaching;
  - support and encourage them to employ teaching and learning methods that go beyond the transmission of factual historical knowledge in order to develop their students' analytic, investigative and interpretative skills and historical understanding.

Dr ECKER went on to stress that reflective history teachers are not only aware of what is happening in their classrooms (what works and what does not, which students are having difficulties with particular aspects of historical thinking, which students have different preferred styles of learning, etc); they are also aware of school history's social and cultural functions, and of the ways in which the ethos and culture of the school as an institution and the wider developments taking place in society at large can impinge on what they do in their classrooms and on what their students learn.

He then went on to raise the general but important question of what academic and didactic competences were needed by the history teacher who would be

teaching the reformed history curriculum. As far as academic competences were concerned, he emphasised the importance of a good knowledge of social, economic and cultural history as well as political history; and being able to establish connections between these different historical dimensions and across extended periods of time. He also stressed the importance of being able to integrate the other extra-mural sources of history education into their classroom teaching. As far as didactic competences were concerned, he emphasised the ability to be self-consciously reflective about one's teaching; the need for good planning and design skills; the need for social and communicative competence and the need to understand that the school as a place of learning strongly influences how the student learns. In this respect it was important to address or redress the balance within teacher education (initial and in-service) between theory and practice.

## **2.4 Textbook development**

Ms Larisa SOKOLOVA explained that the new generation of history textbooks in the Russian Federation follow Council of Europe guidelines and their structures and contents were in line with the general trends to be found elsewhere in Europe. That is, they are designed to help students develop skills and historical understanding as well as acquire knowledge of what happened during a specific period. However, at present, while these books are on the federal recommended list they are not widely available in all regions of the Federation. Indeed there are very few schools where a complete set of new history textbooks is available and, in most cases, history teachers are still unable to exercise much choice regarding the textbooks they are using to support their teaching. She then went on to describe some of the most recent history texts to be published for students at different grades and levels.

Ms SOKOLOVA then stressed that it takes a long time to produce new textbooks and that publishers need clarification on curricula, course content and standards before they can deploy scarce resources to the development of new books. At this stage, she felt that few of the publishers were in a position to either publish a series of history books or to produce supporting material to accompany the existing texts. Given the constraints within which the publishers had to operate, she felt that it would be worthwhile to pilot test the next generation of textbooks in a sample of schools drawn from all of the regions of the Russian Federation *before* they were published.

Mr Maitland STOBART then focused on a number of issues regarding textbook development. He acknowledged that across Europe there were different educational traditions regarding the use of history textbooks in the classroom, varying from a situation where the textbook is the main source of historical knowledge to one where it is just one of a variety of sources, including materials developed by the teacher. However, regardless of tradition it is still essential that initial and in-service teacher training addresses the issue

of how textbooks and other teaching resources can best support the learning of critical skills and historical understanding as well as the acquisition of knowledge.

In this respect, he emphasised that textbook publishing cannot take place in isolation from the development of official curricula and courses, standards and teacher training. Textbooks needed to be seen as a means to an end not as an end in themselves.

His own view was that current trends in thinking about history teaching, including the greater emphasis on economic, social and cultural history as well as political history, means that no textbook can hope to be comprehensive. Authors have to make choices but, with increasing selection, there is a greater risk of bias and distortion through compression and omission. He recommended that teachers should look at the guide for teachers on how to evaluate history textbooks which had been reproduced by the Council of Europe in the report, "*The preparation and publication of new history textbooks for schools in European countries in democratic transition*", Warsaw, November 1996 [CC-ED/HIST (97) 2].

Looking to the future he thought that it was just a matter of time before history teachers everywhere were making more use of new technologies. Some good CD-ROMS were now available which had been designed to be used by students at different age and ability levels. This meant that they were potentially a very cost-effective resource for schools. Also the amount of history material on the Internet was growing rapidly, but important questions were being raised about the accuracy, authenticity, reliability and provenance of some of these websites. As a result teachers and their students needed the skills and analytical frameworks to be able to distinguish what was and was not valid and reliable.

### **III. THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE**

#### **3.1 Curriculum development**

I first attended a meeting on history teaching in the Russian Federation in Moscow in 1994 and since then, on behalf of the Council of Europe, I have been evaluating the outcomes of the national, regional and multilateral seminars which have been held in the Russian Federation and in other member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Ukraine under the auspices of the New Initiative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1996-99).

In reviewing developments in curricula and standards over the last five years, it is my impression that significant progress has been made in thinking about the following areas:

- the aims, goals and nature of school history;
- the balance within history teaching between the development of pupils' knowledge and the development of historical consciousness, by which I mean the development of ways of thinking central to the study of history;
- the balance between regional, national and world history;
- teaching national history in a multi-national, multi-ethnic State;
- the importance of addressing the learning needs of the average and below average students as well as those who will go on to University;
- teaching controversial and sensitive issues in history.

Now I want to emphasise again that I am referring here to my perceptions of *changes in thinking*. I realise that this new thinking has not necessarily been translated yet into official curricula or into the classroom practice of most history teachers. But that is in the nature of the curriculum change process. It starts with a vanguard of innovative people and, hopefully, their new ideas are gradually disseminated to a wider group of history educators.

I have reviewed these development in more depth in my Consolidated Report to the Council of Europe on the outcomes of the Secretary General's New Initiative which will be published later in 1999. For now, I would like to just make a few brief observations on each of these dimensions of curriculum development.

### *The aims, goals and nature of school history*

School history is public property. In almost every society history teaching at school level has social as well as educational functions. We think school history will help to develop a sense of national or ethnic identity, help students to appreciate their heritage, and to prepare them for democratic citizenship. But school history is also public property in a second sense in that almost everybody in a society has an opinion about what children should learn about the past, particularly their own nation's past. Therefore it is crucial when developing a new history curriculum that we should be totally transparent about the aims and goals of that curriculum so that they can be publicly debated.



It is also important to be clear about aims and goals because they provide us with a set of principles and criteria for selecting content, identifying teaching and learning approaches and deciding how learning should be assessed.

Clearly the debate on aims and goals is ongoing within the Russian Federation but my impression at this Conference is that there is a greater degree of agreement now about the need for history teaching to develop pupils' intellectual skills and values as well as their historical knowledge.

### ***The balance between teaching for skills development and teaching for knowledge development***

The key question here is how best to integrate the skills-based approach with the development of historical knowledge within the same curriculum. Across Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the same pattern emerged. The first reformed history curricula were usually content-rich - overloaded with content - often because they were developed by academic historians who had not taught in schools. The scope for skills development was very limited within such an overcrowded curriculum. But many policy-makers were worried, and are still worried, that, if the coverage of content was reduced to provide more time for the development of skills and values, then there would be distortion through omission of some content. This is a dilemma for all curriculum planners and can only be resolved effectively by open and wide-ranging discussion about the aims and goals of history teaching.

### ***The balance between regional and national history***

We have seen over the last three years a growing recognition that regional history and local history is important. Much more thought is being given to how to teach and what to teach young people about the region they live in. But, also, more thought needs to be given to the place of regional history within the national history component of the curriculum as well. That is, there seems to be much more awareness now of the importance of teaching national history within the context of the multi-national, multi-ethnic State. For example, at an earlier regional seminar it was observed that Russian children in the west of the country learn very little about the history of the peoples living east of the Urals.

### ***Meeting the learning needs of all students***

Progress has also been made in thinking about how history teaching and history textbooks should reflect the learning needs of all pupils, including the average and below average ones. This problem is not simply solved by teaching them in different classes, or by providing them with different textbooks. It calls for differentiated teaching and learning approaches which are adapted to their individual learning styles and thinking about how best to motivate and

challenge them to learn. Potentially, this whole issue of differentiated teaching and learning is critically important to new thinking about the aims and processes of teacher training for history teachers and may also have implications for textbook development. At the very least, it raises issues about what should constitute the basic core of history learning for all students and what might be regarded as extension work, whether this be for the more able students or just for those who are particularly interested in history.

### **3.2 Progress in developing standards**

We spent a considerable amount of time at this Conference in St. Petersburg in discussing standards, and, at one level, it may seem that little progress has been made over the last 7-8 years. Indeed this point was made by several members of the Working Group which focused specifically on this theme at this Conference.

It is certainly the case that history teachers, teacher educators and textbook authors are still waiting for official guidance on standards. However, it was also apparent from Dr Ludmila Alexashkina's presentation, and the subsequent discussion that thinking about standards has moved on significantly over the last three years to incorporate not only curriculum structures and content but also the skills and values to be acquired by the students and the means by which the learning outcomes might be identified and assessed.

### **3.3 Progress in teacher training**

Since the First National Stocktaking Conference in 1996 a number of related issues have emerged regarding the pre-service and in-service training of history teachers:

- the need to re-train the teacher educators as well as the history teachers;
- the need to narrow the gulf between the teacher training institutions and the classroom teachers;
- the need to recognise that the training of teachers requires the same methodological approaches as those to be utilised when teaching school students;
- the need to utilise a variety of strategies to disseminate information about innovative approaches to history teaching through:
  - regional history teachers' associations;

- more networking led by those history teachers and teacher educators who have been involved in innovative developments and have a potential role to play as ‘multipliers’ in the dissemination process;
- distance learning programmes for in-service training, particularly for those teachers located in the more remote, rural areas and regions.

It is clear from the discussions in the Working Groups at this Conference that there is widespread awareness of the problems which exist as a result of the diversity of institutions and approaches and the problems associated with the inadequate resourcing of some training programmes. It is also clear that awareness is growing about the priorities for development in teacher education.

### **3.4 Progress in textbook publishing**

There were several references at this Conference to the emergence of a second generation of history textbooks which are putting more emphasis on design and pedagogical methods or didactics, including more illustrations, maps and cartoons; extracts from historical documents; inclusion of different viewpoints on the same events and books which are not attempting to be as encyclopaedic in their coverage of content as the earlier versions were. We also heard about the emergence of a new generation of regional history textbooks, teachers’ guides and books on specific themes which are designed to supplement the main textbooks.

It would also appear that a more open market in textbook publishing is now emerging. However, we also heard about some of the problems associated with this development:

- the low purchasing capacity within the education system;
- the ongoing shortage of authors;
- the need to change the ways in which many teachers use textbooks;
- the fact that many teachers do not have a genuine free choice of books as yet.

#### **IV. THE PROCESSES OF IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM CHANGE**

In reflecting about developments over the last 3-5 years, it is realistic to conclude that significant developments have taken place in a relatively short time. However, a number of participants at this Conference expressed disappointment, even frustration, at the pace of change and the extent to which change is being constrained by limited financial and tangible human resources and the difficulties involved in getting policies clarified and decisions taken. Indeed, that is why my earlier comments focused more on changes in thinking rather than on tangible actions.

However, that slow pace of change is normal, particularly in decentralised, democratic systems. The processes of curriculum development and implementation take quite a long time, especially when they involve wide-ranging educational reforms. In the late 1980s and early '90s, most Western European States reformed their school curricula. They all found that the processes of change took time, they needed to be well-resourced and supported by in-service training for teachers and changes in pre-service training. In most cases, it took around five years to effectively implement these reformed curricula and within another three years most of these governments were introducing more changes to compensate for the implementation problems that had arisen.

Educational reform is a cyclical process beginning with development, then implementation, then evaluation of the changes, then further developments which need to be implemented and evaluated, and so on. What we learned from this experience of wide-ranging curriculum reform was that it always takes longer than anticipated for curricular and other educational reforms to be accepted by the teaching profession and the public at large.

We also found that changes in teaching and learning approaches take much longer to implement than changes in curriculum content, and that the structural and institutional changes which were designed to support the reforms tended to take even longer to implement.

Generally, then, effective educational reforms in most of these Western European States took around 8-10 years to implement and this was in countries where there was a basic consensus about the need for change and about the broad direction of that change.

In other instances, such as Germany after 1945, and Spain, Portugal and Greece after the fall of the dictatorships, educational reforms tended to take a lot longer to implement and they were still working through some of the residual problems of the reforms some 20 years later. So, be encouraged by this! The

slow pace of change which may be a source of frustration now is quite normal; particularly when the curriculum reforms are part of a much broader package of educational changes associated with the shift from a centralised to a devolved education system, which is taking place during a period of political uncertainty and limited resources.

## V. THE NEXT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Standards and curricula

The need for further clarification of the standards issue is of paramount importance. I share the view of one of the Working Groups, expressed at this Conference, that a wider consultation process is now needed.

Clarification of the relative significance of content and skills within the formulation of standards is of critical importance here. I understand that, in the past, the standard has been the curriculum itself, and the content specified within it. But the Russian Federation is now in a very different situation. A plurality of curricula is beginning to emerge and there is more widespread recognition that relevant skills as well as knowledge should be learned and that skills-based learning needs to be integrated into the framework for establishing standards. Standards are '*norms*' and have to operate at a level of generality. This is possible if standards are formulated around skills and concepts since these can be developed through a variety of curricular content and approaches. It is much harder to establish norms based on content in a devolved education system where there is no consensus about the content to be taught.

If the intention is to continue to include curricular content within the context of standards then there may be little choice but to identify *a basic minority core of content* that would be common to all curricula at a given grade or level. But then there is a risk, as Dr Batsyn pointed out at this Conference, that the minimum core of content becomes the norm for some teachers.

### 5.2 Teacher training

My view is that there are three key priorities for development here:

- The need for greater congruence between the teaching and learning approaches being advocated for use by history teachers in their classrooms and the teaching and learning approaches which are widely used still in teacher training. The monologue lecture is not the best means of developing teachers who can then facilitate student-centred learning, enquiry-based learning, active learning and source-based learning.

- There is a need for colleagues working in teacher training to engage in action research and self-evaluation strategies to evaluate the impact of their training on their student teachers. This is a way of building up a body of good practice that can be disseminated across the network of teacher-training institutions.
- I would also like to emphasise the point made by Dr Alois Ecker, in his presentation, that all teacher educators need to develop an approach which encourages the further professionalisation of the history teacher's work. That is to say, to help teachers to become reflective practitioners who are skilled at evaluating their own teaching and the resources they use in their classrooms.

### **5.3 Textbooks**

An important priority here is to try to meet the diversity of demands on the textbook publishers in ways which take account of the economics of publishing in an open market characterised by low purchasing capacity in the education system. It is not realistic at this stage to expect publishers in such a situation to produce textbooks for different ability levels or textbooks on the histories of small ethnic or cultural minorities.

Ways need to be found through which a best selling textbook can meet a variety of needs. We heard at this Conference of one or two possibilities. For example, as Gary Brace observed in his presentation, publishers in Wales reduced the costs of publishing for a bilingual market by retaining the same formats, illustrations, learning activities, and student exercises in the Welsh-language textbooks as are used in the English-language books. This meant that they only had to change the text. A second example referred to at the Conference, would be to follow the strategy now being developed for the latest generation of educational CD-ROMS and other multi-media materials, where content and learning activities are included for different levels of ability and interest in history, including both basic level material and material suitable for extension work.

There is also a critical need at this important stage in the development process for some kind of systematic textbook evaluation and for mechanisms that would obtain feedback from users of textbooks (both teachers and students).

Publishers, like teachers and teacher educators, also need a greater degree of certainty and clarity about the direction of future developments so that they can plan ahead and make realistic cost projections. Publishers are not likely to be able to do that until there is a greater degree of consensus on the way ahead and a strategic framework for implementing future developments within which they can make their own plans.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Recommendations to colleagues in the Russian Federation

I would like to structure my recommendations here around five key words:

**DISSEMINATION** of innovative thinking about history teaching.

**CODIFICATION** of the range of documents which have emerged in recent years relating to history teaching, e.g. on standards, curriculum frameworks, teacher training.

**CONSULTATION** as widely as possible amongst history teachers and teacher educators on current thinking about standards and curricula.

**CONSENSUS** about the way ahead.

**COORDINATION** between the different institutions and sectors of education.

**DISSEMINATION:** The seminars have been a useful mechanism for identifying potential ‘multipliers’ (teachers, teacher educators and textbook authors who can disseminate new thinking to their colleagues). However, more now needs to be done by national, regional and local administrations to utilise a wider variety of strategies for disseminating information about innovative approaches to history teaching. These could include:

- the development of more regional associations of history teachers;
- publishing curriculum guidance for history teachers at regional and national levels which focus on pedagogical issues and concerns;
- developing networks and in-service training programmes for teacher trainers as well as classroom teachers;
- exploring the potential for developing distance learning programmes for the in-service training of history teachers, particularly those located in the more remote and rural areas;
- creating a culture of innovative teaching amongst history teachers, which is largely a matter of developing not only their thinking about methodologies but also their confidence in applying them.

**CODIFICATION:** There is also a need to put much more emphasis within pre-service and in-service teacher education and in the next generation of textbooks on the kinds of pedagogy that need to be adopted in order to deliver the educational objectives which underpin reformed history curricula. In particular, I would emphasise here:

- teaching for multiperspectivity;
- teaching sensitive and controversial issues;
- enquiry-based and activity-based learning;
- developing analytical and interpretative skills;
- differentiated teaching and learning in order to effectively meet the different learning needs of the most able, the average and the below average learners.

**CONSULTATION:** There is a need to consult more widely about proposals to reform the history curriculum. This point applies to all aspects of educational and curriculum change but it is particularly important in the case of history education because, as pointed out earlier, school history is, to some extent, public property. Everybody has an opinion on it. Not just education administrators, teachers and teacher educators but also parents, political parties, minority groups (ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious), pressure groups, and organised religion. A consultation process is of central importance in helping to generate the level of **CONSENSUS** within the profession, amongst decision-makers and within society at large, that will give impetus to the kinds of changes that were discussed at this Conference.

**COORDINATION:** It is also critically important that more is done to establish and improve the links between the classical universities and the pedagogical universities; the in-service institutes and the pedagogical universities; the teacher training institutions and the schools, and between all of these institutions and the federal and regional administrators who have some responsibility for supervising or supporting curriculum planning and development, teacher training and textbook purchasing.

## **6.2 Recommendations to the Council of Europe**

The need for continuing support from the Council of Europe was highlighted by all of the Working Groups at this Conference and by numerous individual participants as well. In my view, this could best be achieved by a programme of activities that would:

1. Support the dissemination process through the continuation of the seminar programme, particularly if:
  - the strategy of ensuring that seminars are held in different regions of the Russian Federation is continued;



- the local partners are encouraged to think strategically about who to invite to these seminars in order both to extend the existing networks and also to develop the networking and disseminating skills of the ‘multipliers’ who have already been identified;
  - the teacher workshops which are planned to be run in parallel with these seminars, support the dissemination process by focusing on teaching approaches and strategies.
2. There is also a strong case now for producing a Council of Europe publication which brings together the key texts and thematic reports (in a suitably edited form) which participants in the seminar programme have found particularly useful. I would strongly recommend that this material is also made available on the Council of Europe’s Internet website.
  3. It is important that the Council of Europe also continues to provide access to expertise, particularly relating to curriculum development, pre-service and in-service training and the assessment of learning. Two developments would be particularly useful here which might represent a shift of emphasis away from the seminar format:
    - advisory missions, in which a small group of experts would work alongside their peers for a period of 2-3 days on a set of related planning development tasks associated with curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher training or assessment of learning (the specific theme to be negotiated in each case with partners in the host region);
    - workshops set up specifically around such themes as teaching sensitive and controversial issues, differentiated teaching, and developing students’ analytical and interpretative skills, where participants would work together to develop draft learning activities and teaching materials that could then be trialled in their own classrooms. This would play an important role in moving beyond the rhetoric of curriculum reform to the implementation of innovation within schools.
  4. There is also a need to develop and support cross-border initiatives in the area of history education, particularly in those regions where, historically, there have been tensions, or extensive population movements or mutual influences over an extended period of time.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Finally, I would like to congratulate the organisers for planning and running a highly stimulating, constructive and enjoyable Conference. A great deal of progress has been made in a comparatively short time, particularly in terms of thinking about what to teach within the school history curriculum and how to teach it. But now it is essential that the innovative vanguard of history educators, represented at this Conference, and their colleagues who have participated in earlier seminars, go on to share their ideas and innovative developments with other professionals to ensure that this new thinking is put into practice more widely. Those of us who have gone through this intensive, and sometimes frustrating, process of curriculum reform in other countries will confirm that it is now that the really hard work begins.

## APPENDIX I

### PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

**Thursday 11 March 1999**

09.30 - 11.00      **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, St. Petersburg

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Dr Alexander KISELEV, First Deputy  
Minister, Ministry of General and  
Professional Education of the Russian  
Federation
- ii. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator,  
Technical Co-operation and Assistance  
Section, Directorate of Education, Culture  
and Sport, Council of Europe
- iii. Mr Oleg GRISHKEVICH, Member of the  
Parliament, Education Committee of the  
State Duma
- iv. Mr Vladimir KRILICHEVSKIY, Head of  
the Education Committee, Lenigrad Region
- v. Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA,  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, Herzen State  
Pedagogical University
- vi. Ms Erika PRATSCHNER, KulturKontakt,  
Austria

11.00 - 11.30      Break

11.30 - 13.00

**Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, St. Petersburg

Introductory presentations on:

- i. "The background to the co-operation on the reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation" by Mr Maitland STOBART, Consultant, United Kingdom
- ii. "Co-operation on the reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation" by Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Head of the Department for Regional Policies, Ministry of General and Professional Education, Moscow

Round Table on "Curricula and standards":

- i. "The results achieved since 1996 and future steps in the preparation of new curricula and standards on history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation" by Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Senior Researcher, Institute of General Secondary Education, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow
- ii. "The preparation of new curricula and standards on history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation since 1996 and the way forward: an overview" by Mr Gary BRACE, Deputy Director, ACCAC, United Kingdom

Discussion with all the participants

13.00 - 14.30

Lunch

14.30 - 16.30

**Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, St. Petersburg

Round Table on "Teacher training"

Presentations on:

- i. "The results achieved since 1996 and future steps in initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation" by Dr Ludmila ANDRUKHINA, Expert, Institute of Regional Educational Policies, Ekaterinburg
- ii. "Developments in initial and in-service training for history teachers in the Russian Federation since 1996 and the way forward: an overview" by Dr Alois ECKER, Vienna University, Austria

Discussion with all the participants

Introduction to the questions for the working groups and the working methods to be used by Dr Robert STRADLING, General Rapporteur

16.30 – 17.00

Break

17.00 – 18.00

**Three Parallel Working Group Sessions**

- i. Working Group No. 1 on "The preparation of new curricula and standards on history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation"

Chair: Professor Mikhail DYOMIN,  
Barnaul

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana AGARKOVA,  
Petrozavodsk

Resource person: Mr Gary BRACE, United  
Kingdom

- ii. Working Group No. 2 on "The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation"

Chair: Dr Mikhail SYVOV, Nijniy Novgorod  
Rapporteur: Dr Elene ZAHKAROVA,  
Moscow  
Resource person: Dr Alois ECKER, Austria

- iii. Working Group No. 3 on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks in the Russian Federation"

Chair: Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Moscow  
Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana PASMEN, Pskov  
Resource person: Mr Maitland STOBART,  
United Kingdom

19.30                      Official Dinner

### **Friday 12 March 1999**

9.30 – 11.00              **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, St. Petersburg

#### **Round Table on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks and teaching resources "**

- i. "The results achieved since 1996 and future steps in the preparation and publication of new history textbooks for secondary schools in the Russian Federation" by Ms Larisa SOKOLOVA, Head of the Department for Publications on History, Publishing House "Prosvetshenye", Moscow

- ii. "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks for secondary schools in the Russian Federation since 1996 and the way forward: an overview" by Mr Maitland STOBART, Consultant, United Kingdom

Discussion with all the participants

11.00 – 11.30	Break
11.30 - 13.00	<b>Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions</b>
13.00 - 14.30	Lunch
14.30 - 16.00	<b>Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions</b>
16.00 - 16.30	Break and end of the parallel working groups sessions
16.30 – 17.30	<b>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 report of the Conference.</b>
18.00 – 20.00	Cultural Programme
20.00	Dinner

### **Saturday 13 March 1999**

09.30 - 11.00      **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA  
Director of the International Center for  
Educational Innovation, St. Petersburg

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

Comments by the participants

- iii. Presentation by the General Rapporteur of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Conference.
- Comments by the participants
- 11.00 - 11.30 Break
- 11.30 - 12.30 **Closing speeches of the Conference by:**
- i. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Technical Cooperation and Assistance Section, Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe;
  - ii. Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Head of the Department for Regional Policies, Ministry of General and Professional Education, Moscow;
  - iii. Ms Erika PRATSCHNER, KulturKontakt;
  - iv. Mr Oleg GRISHKEVICH, Member of the Parliament, Education Committee of the State Duma
  - v. Ms Natalia GOROKHOVATSKAYA, Director of the International Center for Educational Innovation, Herzen State Pedagogical University;
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 17.30 Cultural Programme
- Departure of the participants



## **APPENDIX II**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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## **APPENDIX III**

### **WORKING GROUPS' REPORTS**

#### **Working Group 1**

##### **“The preparation of new curricula and standards on history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation”**

Chair: Professor Mikhail DYOMIN, Barnaul  
Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana AGARKOVA, Petrozavodsk  
Resource persons: Mr Maitland STOBART, United Kingdom  
Mr Gary BRACE, United Kingdom

The working group participants noted that over the last five years, more attention had been paid to the introduction of standards in history education and that even though the process was not yet complete, considerable headway had been made, as various educational establishments had sought to get to grips with the concept of “standards”.

A federal curriculum has emerged, which consists of a federal, regional and school component. Although this federal curriculum still needs some work, it can at least serve as a basis for developing curricula for various kinds of schools.

The curriculum paves the way for the creation of a “single area” in education.

It establishes the minimum level of knowledge that pupils are required to achieve and the amount of time that pupils should spend in full-time education.

It provides a guarantee of free education in modern-day Russia.

It is a standard-setting, methodological document for organising history teachers’ activities.

The curriculum, as one of the key elements of standards in history education, is the most highly developed aspect of these standards to date.



The working group participants identified a number of problems which must be resolved in order to allow the introduction of standards in history education:

- the need to establish official objectives in the area of history education;
- the need for the Russian Ministry of Education to develop a standards "blueprint";
- the establishment of basic rules for maintaining a balance between the compulsory element of these standards, the potential afforded by individual schools and the pupils' interests;
- the lack of standards has led to a welter of rules and regulations at every level of school administration - federal, regional and local - so that very often "local standards" prevail, in the absence of state-wide provision;
- the introduction of state-wide standards should ensure a proper balance between the interests of all concerned: the Federation, the regions, organs of local self-government, educational establishments at every level, pupils and parents.

In our opinion, these objectives can only be achieved if the different ministries work together to develop the necessary standards, which should then be subjected to a comprehensive evaluation, incorporating an academic, pedagogical and psychological component.

In the opinion of the working group, the persons responsible for drafting these standards should take account of the changing role of the teacher in a period that has seen the emergence and spread of new information and educational technologies, when the teacher is becoming not so much a purveyor of information, as a facilitator who helps pupils to make sense of the world around them and to develop the appropriate study skills and practices.

The working group participants believe that the quality of standards in history education will depend on how widely all the various elements of these standards are discussed by history teachers and educational establishments at every level, via conferences, seminars, etc.

The participants wish to express their gratitude to the Council of Europe for giving them this opportunity to discuss the key issues of history education in the Russian Federation and look forward to further fruitful co-operation in this area.

## **Working Group 2**

### **“The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation”**

Chair: Dr Mikhail SYVOV, Nijniy Novgorod  
Rapporteur: Dr Elene ZAHKAROVA, Moscow  
Resource person: Dr Alois ECKER, Austria

The working group looked at the problems involved in the provision of initial and in-service teacher training by teacher training institutions and history education centres. It was agreed that such provision must be centred on the teacher, and that the purpose of the in-service training system was to produce highly skilled, creatively-minded teachers with a good knowledge of history, a sound grasp of educational technologies and an arsenal of effective teaching methods.

It is important to realise that it is not just the Russian economy and the socio-political sphere that are in crisis at present. The fundamental shift in consciousness and core values has permeated the history education system as well.

“Perestroika” set out to demolish old stereotypes. And indeed it succeeded. Following the move away from the old totalitarian system of history education based on a single syllabus, a single set of textbooks and uniform curricula for initial and in-service teacher training, a new diversity emerged for which neither teachers nor pupils were truly prepared.

Across Russia, staffing problems have arisen as, with the decline in the number of history teachers and the “greying” of the profession, the vacuum has been filled by individuals who do not have the proper training, e.g. former military personnel with degrees in politics or former party workers. This most “problematic” section of the teaching profession requires special attention on the part of the methods experts.

The economic crisis in Russia is such that teachers are no longer being paid and cannot really afford to buy the materials they need to upgrade their professional skills.

The entire face of teaching has changed, with the emergence of new working conditions and a new element of choice in terms of syllabuses, textbooks, in-service training schemes, teaching methods, etc.

Unfortunately, the response of many teachers to all this has been one of hostility towards the notion of personal choice and calls for a return to the one-textbook, one-curriculum approach. Thereby proving that many history teachers are ill-prepared for life in the new political and cultural climate.

In these circumstances, a special role falls to the in-service teacher training institutions which work directly with teachers, and whose job it now is to demonstrate the importance of having a variety of teaching formats in an open society based on human values.

Of particular importance in today's schools is the personality and skill of the individuals who provide teacher training. The working group participants noted that the in-service training function can be performed either by teacher training institutes or by specialised institutions. It is important to be aware, however, that not everyone who works in a teacher training institute, however good their knowledge of the subject concerned, is cut out for in-service teacher training. This is something that requires a special brand of expertise.

It is extremely difficult, however, to train staff to work with teachers at a time when the entire system of in-service teacher training is being balanced. All too often there is little co-operation between the different regional departments responsible for in-service teacher training, so the members of the working group are grateful to the Council of Europe for giving them the opportunity to hold this meeting and to discuss the most pressing issues relating to education in the Russian Federation.

The group noted that the system of initial and in-service teacher training was developing at a time when there was no continuity between school education, higher education and in-service teacher training. It was observed that the absence of a uniform system of initial and in-service teacher training in the Russian Federation fostered competition, with the need to constantly update particular teacher training systems.

The representatives of teacher training institutes dealt with both the negative and positive developments that had occurred. Among the former are the introduction of a rigid set of standards in higher education listing the subjects that may be studied at university level or equivalent, and overcrowded curricula.

Mention was made of the need for greater flexibility in higher education standards in order, for example, to take account of the specific features of regional higher educational establishments. Attention was drawn to the decline in the level of knowledge acquired by graduates of teaching training institutes, and with it the emergence of a more cavalier attitude towards historical facts.

At the same time, more needed to be done in order to give teachers greater freedom of manoeuvre in the classroom.

Over the past few years, teacher training institutes have adapted their courses to take account of the new school curriculum and new teaching structure. Also, a number of new subjects have been introduced such as history of culture, sociology, the history of world civilisations, etc. which will enable future generations of teachers to teach according to a concentric system of school education, and not just along linear lines.

In many teacher training institutes, however, the fact remains that staff are simply not ready to teach the new methods, often preferring to stick with monologue-style lectures, which their students will then tend to replicate in the classroom. It often falls to the in-service teacher training system, therefore, to remedy the deficiencies of initial teacher training.

The working group came to the conclusion that greater emphasis needed to be placed on the practical side of teacher training, so as to enable future generations of teachers not just to cope with new subject-matter but also to work in various types of educational establishments.

The participants talked about improving the way in which in-service training institutions operate, and about the possibility of them training teachers *in situ*, particularly in rural areas.

The participants stressed the need to continue developing criteria for evaluating the activities of both teachers and methods specialists. They asked the Council of Europe to:

- to disseminate more widely, via the Council of Europe experts, information about recent developments in in-service teacher training in Europe;
- to hold further meetings and seminars on topical issues related to history education reform.

### **Working Group 3**

#### **“The preparation and publication of new history textbooks and teaching resources in the Russian Federation”**

Chair: Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Moscow

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana PASMEN, Pskov

The working group discussed the following issues:

- how much progress has been made in the Russian Federation as regards the preparation and publication of textbooks and other teaching resources?
- have the strategies used to develop textbooks and other teaching resources proved effective?
- what problems still remain and how should they be tackled?
- what are the main priorities as regards the future development of textbook publishing?

These issues aroused keen interest among the members of the working group, who consisted of teaching staff from every level of the education system as well as authors and publishers of modern textbooks and other teaching resources.

In the course of the discussion, some common ground was established and the following conclusions reached:

- the work being carried out on history textbooks in the Russian Federation has entered a new phase: the development of a new generation of teaching resources, with due regard for past experience and the current situation in education;
- among the merits of the first generation of textbooks and teaching resources are their eschewal of a single, dominant ideology, the incorporation of a variety of viewpoints and the emergence of a wide range of textbooks and teaching aids, which draw on European and international experience in educational publishing.

The strategies used to develop the new generation of history textbooks drew a mixed review. On the one hand, the fact that there are now over 40 textbooks and other teaching resources in the federal stock, and over 200 in the

country as a whole, is a good sign, since it means that teachers and pupils now have freedom of choice.

Many problems still remain, however: the production of textbooks is often a rather arbitrary business, there is no continuity in terms of methodological approaches and principles when it comes to designing individual courses, and textbooks are not geared to the different types of schools or classes, or to the specific needs of the regions where they are used.

Full use is not being made of the educational and developmental potential of textbooks and other teaching resources, or, for that matter, of the opportunities for co-operation between representatives of the various specialist areas (psychologists, methods specialists, teachers, specialists in history of culture, etc) in order to take account of the needs of the different pupil age groups and developments in scientific thinking.

The main reason for the continuing existence of these problems lies in the absence of an in-depth examination of the aims and purposes of school history education, and the appropriate standards.

The working group participants suggested the following solutions:

- It is essential to prepare the ground for the development and publication of new textbooks by creating standards, as well as various models of history teaching.
- Teams of authors, made up of academics, methods specialists and teachers from the various regions should be set up to devise an integrated system of textbooks and other teaching resources, based on a uniform approach. These textbooks and other teaching resources would be approved on a competitive basis.
- It is important to change teachers' and pupils' attitudes to textbooks. Textbooks should be seen as an instrument for developing historical reasoning, rather than as the sole source of knowledge.
- It might pay to take a closer look at, and to use, the experience of other European countries in incorporating illustrations, source documents and reference material in textbooks.
- Each teaching resource recommended for use in schools should be independently reviewed, approved and widely discussed by historians, methods specialists and leading members of the Russian teaching profession at conferences and seminars. One of the main yardsticks for any textbook should be its democratic nature, and its ability to develop pupils' capacity to form judgments about past

events and the author's interpretation of those events, based on a particular code of values.

Looking ahead to the next stage in developing textbooks and other teaching resources, it was proposed that priority be given to the following:

- developing teaching resources for the new 12-year schools, with due regard for the lessons learnt during the first stage;
- paying particular attention to the production of teaching resources for remedial classes, as well as for secondary vocational education;
- creating regional teaching resources, encompassing both neighbouring states of the Russian Federation and nearby foreign countries;
- in each subject, creating a database of educational literature and teaching resources within research libraries, universities, teacher training institutes or education departments. This will help to promote freedom of choice, and will be of use in training future generations of teachers.

The working group participants expressed their gratitude to the Council of Europe for giving them this opportunity to discuss some important issues, and to the Council of Europe speakers for their co-operation and support during the discussions and plenary sessions. They hoped that they would continue to work together constructively in the future.

## APPENDIX IV

### LETTER OF Mr I. I. MELNIKOV

**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY - PARLIAMENT OF THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION  
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10 March 1999

No. 3.5 - 282

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Committee on Education and Science of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation welcomes you to the Second National Stocktaking Conference on "History Teaching in the Russian Federation" in St Petersburg, a city that is the pride and joy of the Russian people.

The State Duma deputies who make up the Committee on Education and Science share the Council of Europe's view that history, as a discipline which plays a unique role in shaping the way we think, gives us a knowledge of historical experience that ultimately enables us to make objective judgments about modern political and social processes. The global changes that have occurred in recent decades in Europe and beyond have led to even more attention being paid to the teaching of history. We believe that today, as we approach the end of the second millennium, it is essential during the course of our discussions to think about the values and behaviour patterns that education as a whole should foster, and to consider ways in which history teaching can contribute to the construction of a democratic society, and help develop a sense of patriotism in the coming generation.

It has to be said that in the early 1990s, the federal authorities responsible for education in the Russian Federation failed to achieve the kind of objectivity and pluralism to which we claimed to aspire in the teaching of humanitarian subjects. On the contrary, one dogmatic ideology in the teaching of history and social sciences merely gave way to another, which was no less dogmatic. It is a well-known fact that each new revolution tries to create a new kind of human being in the image of a particular social ideal, embodying the "bright future" that lies ahead. Meanwhile, yesterday's people and culture are



more or less disowned, in a process that can range from gentle mockery to complete and utter repudiation. Not only was the so-called “second Russian revolution” no exception in this respect but it also went far beyond the bounds of objectivity and political expediency. In effect, the first half of the 1990s saw the breakdown of the moral and spiritual traditions not just of Soviet but also of pre-Soviet Russian culture. For Russia, this collapse of the system of norms and values has perhaps been the greatest loss of all.

On 8 April 1998, a Resolution of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation “To the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the state and tasks of history education in Russia” was adopted, in which deputies articulated their concern about the current situation and put forward concrete proposals as to how things might be improved. It was suggested that the Russian government set up a commission on history education in Russia, comprising - subject to approval - representatives of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian Academy of Education and the Board of Vice-Chancellors of Higher Educational Establishments of the Russian Federation. This commission would examine the effectiveness of the current system of history education, and provide educational establishments with textbooks and other teaching resources. There is a sound case for asking the Russian Ministry of General and Professional Education to draw up and approve unified history syllabuses for students entering higher education, to constantly review decisions to confer “seals of approval” on particular history textbooks, in order to “de-politicise” history education, and to pay special attention to the creation of comprehensive, readily available reference books and databases, covering the various aspects of history.

Recently, there have been some attempts to rectify the situation: the first in a new generation of more objective history textbooks have begun to appear and the composition of the expert committee of the Russian Ministry of General and Professional Education responsible for history education in Russia is being reviewed. The sad fact remains, however, that, in the eyes of today’s young people, the lives of the older generation have been debased; the temporal connection has been broken. Now, once again, society must pay for its failure to heed the old adage that nothing is more easily destroyed, and more difficult to restore, than moral and spiritual values.

In the current difficult political climate, with elections just around the corner, we cannot afford to become embroiled in any new ideological experiments in education. Of course, education can never be entirely divorced from ideology, for that would be to deprive it of its core function. The ideology of education, however, must be underpinned by the values of traditional Russian culture and love for the motherland.

Ladies and gentlemen. The State Duma Committee on Education and Science wishes you every success in realising this historic opportunity to strengthen peace and solidarity and in helping to create a democratic, prosperous Europe founded on the principle of cultural diversity and uniquely European traditions.

**Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology  
of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
I.I. Melnikov**

**Vice-chair of the Committee**

**O.N. Smolin**





