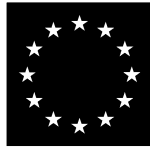


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the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
in the Russian Federation

Seminar on

“Intercultural and interfaith dialogue through education:  
history teaching, language policies, teaching about the  
historical and cultural basis of world religions”

Yakutsk, Russian Federation

19 – 20 May 2005

Strasbourg



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*Report by*

**Mr John HAMER  
United Kingdom**

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. INTRODUCTION

*“Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved through understanding”*  
*Albert Einstein*

One of the main trends in the present-day activities of the Council of Europe, and, in particular, in education, and in our case, in history teaching, is the development of new approaches which reflect principles of inter-cultural dialogue.

Why has the notion of inter-cultural dialogue become so important at this particular stage in the activities of the Council of Europe?

In order to answer this question we have to look at other phenomena which will help us to better understand the philosophy of inter-cultural communication.

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

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

This Recommendation reflected the changes in the late 1990s when many European countries were going through a period of transition. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the notion of Europe changed, as it marked the starting point for the creation of a so-called Greater Europe. At that time, it became clear that all the countries which make up Europe are different even though they share common democratic values. Therefore, it became paramount to make people understand that diversity is not a threat but, rather, an enriching factor.

The new Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2001, thus highlights the necessity to:

- understand our differences;
- realise the value of diversity;

- respect others;
- develop inter-cultural dialogue;
- build relations on the basis of mutual understanding and tolerance.

Having stressed the idea of being different, the latest Recommendation drew special attention to the notion of diversity which characterises the present-day world.

The present-day situation in the world could be characterised by two contradictory trends. On the one hand, the development of global common processes which unite different peoples. Among them, the extension of the European Union, creation of the Schengen and Euro areas, intensification of intellectual exchanges and the development of travelling, and of course, the new technologies including the Internet.

At the same time, we all are witnessing a deepening of national, ethnic and religious conflicts, an increase in violence at all levels, including within the family and at school, and an escalation in military conflicts and terrorism.

As different peoples start to communicate more within the process of globalisation, the more evident it is for everybody that we need diversity. Indeed, people have begun to realise that we are all different. We have different systems of education, we speak different languages; we are integrated in different religious systems and we have different historical roots. Of course, all these differences existed before and, moreover, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century they constituted a solid basis for such important notions as national identity. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has seen new approaches in the evaluation of these factors in peoples' minds. These factors represented a new phase and opened doors for development of a new system of values.

*Appropriately, a question was raised at this stage: Diversity - is it a danger or an advantage?*

One interesting factor which emerged almost immediately was that the idea of diversity could be presented in completely different ways. Everything simply depends on the way in which diversity is presented.

If one uses the mechanism of comparison and opposing differences, this will inevitably lead to confrontation. In this case, the world will be divided in a new way between those countries who are in the European Union and those who are not; those who belong to the Schengen and Euro areas and those who do not, etc.

The real threat of creating new dividing lines, in particular, in peoples' minds was stressed at the Third Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in May 2005.



Spreading ideas of confrontation through education is a definite risk, in particular, when teaching history. History teaching in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century provides us with many examples of the use of the method of comparison when often the ideas of national superiority were channelled through historical facts.

The latest changes in the world raised once more the question of a link between such notions as diversity and national identity. Quite often this question is limited to deciding which one of the two is more valuable and important.

As usual, a correct answer can be found somewhere in the middle: both notions are important and should be taught in a balanced way as this allows the younger generation to understand common and specific features of different peoples and cultures as well as the full complexity of the present-day world which, as a result, will help to strengthen social cohesion and provide stable peace.

*How it could be done?*

One of the main mechanisms which could help is the development of principles of intercultural dialogue at all levels and, primarily, through education.

*But what does a dialogue mean?*

A dialogue is a multi-faceted notion which comprises the following elements:

- *level of knowledge:* information exchange through which one gets his/her first knowledge about others;
- *level of understanding:* at this level knowledge transforms into understanding through ability to analyse differences on the basis of open-mindedness which helps to accept differences as positive factors; curiosity plays a particular important role at this stage;
- *level of evaluation:* one agrees or disagrees with what he/she has learnt about others; this process is based on the system of individual values;
- *level of action:* having completed the three previous steps, one reacts accordingly in society and builds relations with different peoples.

These are the main elements of a dialogue mechanism which is directly connected to such important factors as social cohesion, reconciliation and prevention of conflict.

The analysis of the mechanisms of a dialogue brings us to a crucial question of values and attitudes:

- a) one of the main conditions for the development of a dialogue is *understanding global human values* and, most of all, the value of a human life. Therefore, the Council of Europe suggests including more topics from everyday life when learning history so pupils may understand better their role in making history;
- b) other important elements are *open-mindedness and tolerance* which constitute an open system of perception of the world and provide the ability to accept differences; in history teaching, this is linked to the suggestion of the Council of Europe to use multiperspectivity, in particular, when teaching about controversial and sensitive issues;
- c) one of the crucial elements which constitutes a basis for dialogue is *mutual respect*. It consists of two components: *self respect and respect of others*. These two components correspond to the two stages in a dialogue: self-expression and ability to listen to others, including those who have different perspectives. The latter is the most problematic and the result is very often a series of monologues rather than a real dialogue. In this regard, at the seminars organised by the Council of Europe during the few last years, special attention was given to linguistic forms of self-expression, including the languages of history textbooks. It was pointed out that the language of textbooks should not impose authors' views or perspectives but rather try to create an opportunity for free discussion and debate in the classroom.

As an example, we can take three different history textbooks published in the Russian Federation during the last two years which depict the events of October 1917 in the following ways:

- as a revolution;
- as a coup d'état;
- as an event.

This example clearly shows that the third neutral term provides real opportunity for pupils to evaluate what happened at that time whilst utilising their analytical skills.

- d) another element which should help to motivate the development of a dialogue is *the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and trust*; therefore, the Council of Europe suggests to develop interactive methods in teaching history to help teachers and pupils to create this atmosphere on daily basis;
- e) *curiosity* plays an important role in the education process as it is an important instrument for dialogue. History teachers are increasingly trying to find and develop new methods in their work so as to bring

more fun into learning process. Motivation of curiosity seems to be crucial to the development of a life-long learning process;

- f) ability to communicate through dialogue is directly connected with *training communication skills*. The paradox is that, on the one hand, the explosion in the development of new technologies provided access for almost everybody to the global dimension. On the other hand, this created additional difficulties in training communication skills. Therefore, nowadays school education plays the special role in the development of communicational skills and it becomes crucial if we really want to help pupils to find their place in the rapidly changing world. Moreover, it is necessary to stress that dialogue forms of communication traverse all spheres of life, including family, school, political and social life etc. Therefore, knowledge of dialogue mechanisms and ability to use them could help the development of reconciliation factors, conflict resolution processes and provide a solid basis for social cohesion and stable peace.

*What prevents the development of dialogue forms in communication?*

Firstly, the following factors must be considered:

- stereotypes and prejudices;
- all kinds of fear, in particular, fear of differences;
- a lack of curiosity and unreadiness for life long learning;
- a lack of flexibility in thinking.

Dialogue approaches in teaching and learning should help pupils to:

- provide a deeper learning process;
- create confidence as a basis for understanding;
- create the foundations for balanced and considered actions.

The skills which could be acquired by youngsters through a dialogue form in teaching and learning, such as: critical and independent thinking; an ability to form conclusions; and act as independent and responsible citizens, will help them to better understand what is going on around them and allow them to escape from all kinds of manipulation and find their place in this rapidly changing world.

*The seminar on “Intercultural dialogue through education: history teaching, languages policies, teaching about historical and cultural basis of world religions ”* which took place in Yakutsk, Russian Federation from 19-20 May 2005 was the first attempt to look at intercultural dialogue through disciplinary approach. It was organised within the Joint Programme of co-operation

between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation.



*The seminar took place in the Hotel “Polar Star” which is situated in the centre of Yakutsk*

The seminar was aimed at:

- analysing how intercultural dialogue should be integrated in present-day school education;
- discussing approaches which could be used when teaching about diversity and, in particular, multiperspectivity;
- looking at how teaching about diversity and intercultural dialogue could help pupils to develop skills and competences necessary for their life in the present-day world.

The federal and regional authorities of the Russian Federation attached great importance to the seminar and it is not surprising as Russia is a multicultural state and the question of the development of intercultural dialogue is one of the most important. The Seminar was opened by Mr Alexander AKIMOV, Vice President of the Republic of Yakutia, Ms Feodosia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia and Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

The seminar brought together about 100 participants from different regions of the Russia Federation, including:

- officials from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- officials from the administrations of different regions responsible for history education;
- representatives of universities;
- authors of history textbooks;
- publishers;
- teachers.

This report reflects the main discussions, conclusions and recommendations proposed by the participants of the history education section.

Tatiana Minkina-Milko  
Administrator  
History Education Section

## REPORT ON THE HISTORY EDUCATION SECTION OF THE SEMINAR



### I. THE PRESENTATIONS

There were three presentations. Mr Vladimir BATSYN considered a number of important general issues about the role that history teaching might play in enabling constructive inter-cultural dialogue. In their presentations, Mr John HAMER and Mr Martin SACHSE described the ways in which schools and history teachers in the United Kingdom and Germany were attempting to further such a dialogue.

#### 1.1 How to teach inter-cultural dialogue through history: by Mr Vladimir BATSYN

In addressing the issue of seeing the promotion of cross-cultural dialogue as a possible alternative rationale for formal history education, Mr BATSYN suggested that it was necessary to find answers to two closely related questions:

- (i) What would be the nature of such dialogue?

- (ii) Why we are not happy with existing practice and are looking for new grounds as a basis for formal history teaching; and, if we are so determined to search for them, why in this particular direction?

The concept of cross-cultural dialogue appeared in European political vocabulary relatively recently. It resulted from two integration processes that are still in progress on the continent of Europe. On the one hand, the integration of civilizations – the integration of European states into the European Union; and on the other hand, cultural integration - millions of non-Europeans coming to Europe as immigrants into the European cultural context. What made the development of cross-cultural dialogue high priority was the formation of the ‘Big Europe’ when central-European and eastern-European countries that had not previously belonged to the ‘old democracies club’ joined the Council of Europe. In this respect our present seminar was a good example of the development of such dialogue.



*A visit to the Folklore Centre in Yakutsk*

As European historians have now acknowledged, inherent in the common perception of a universal world history has been a hidden Euro-centrism. History as a story of unlimited progress, for example, or the periods into which the past has been divided (Antiquity, the Dark Ages and Modern Times) are both based on an unjustified universalisation of western historical consciousness. This resulted in a perception of world history that highlighted the commonality of different societies; whereas, in reality, there is abundant evidence of their uniqueness and we should rather stress the great diversity of their historical development.

The reverse side of this recognition of the uniqueness of different societies has to be the recognition of their equivalence. They are of equal value. There is no unified scale that would allow for their comparative valuation. There is no such thing as the unified flow of the historical process. It breaks out into a multitude of various local histories. We need, therefore, to think in terms of 'global' rather than 'world' history. 'Global' embodies both a wider understanding of the historical reality, and the idea of the planetary unity of mankind combined with a recognition of the uniqueness of local social and natural systems.

Developing this further, Mr BATSYN introduced the notion of 'humanitarian globalisation' as distinct from 'total globalisation'. Globalisation interpreted not as the Western imposition of a universal economic, cultural, political and information model or system of values on to the whole world, but as a mutual exchange of experiences. That is as a developed dialogue between the different cultures and civilisations. Understood in such a way, 'globalisation' suggests an overcoming of the 'colonial' mentality and proceeds from the assumption of the freedom of nations to choose their own path for historical and/or cultural development.

Such an approach, however, recognises 'local globalisation', or 'field globalisation' – the close coming together of countries economically, politically and socially. A good example of such 'regional globalization' is the present European Union. No doubt such an approach is of interest to Russia, itself a multi-cultural country, which is striving to keep itself a centre of attraction for countries historically involved in the sphere of Russian civilization. At the same time, Russia also sees itself a part of a Greater Europe cultural area.

The principle of cross-cultural dialogue should not be viewed as some kind of new teaching method enabling pupils to learn more effectively what was taught to their parents thirty years ago. Cross-cultural dialogue should be seen as a new philosophy of history that sees the past primarily as the interaction of individuals who are carriers (or hostages) of this or that cultural matrix.

Following on from this, what principles could be built into history as a school subject? The starting point would be an elementary definition of culture as 'the system of attitudes which humans adopt toward nature, society and themselves'. All nations have such 'systems of attitudes', and they interact in time and space in such a way that this interaction constitutes the inner essence of the historical process.

At the risk of being provocative and encroaching upon what many historians would regard as sacrosanct, Mr BATSYN put forward the following list of issues for further consideration:



- (i) Firstly, we should stop considering political history - the emergence and development of states, wars, uprisings, laws, dynastic succession, and so on - as the only appropriate 'carcass' for the historical process. Particularly, as for the majority of young people this knowledge is excessive and irrelevant. In reality it is much more important for them to be aware of what sort of people live on the same planet, their similarities and differences, the distinctive features of their origins and how this might affect them. The foundations of history as a school subject should be considered as part of the cultural discourse.
- (ii) Secondly, the concept of patriotism should be depoliticised and returned to where it has always belonged and should be – in the most intimate corners of our souls.
- (iii) Thirdly, we should reject the current practice of making the subject of history an endless succession of events, and stop being frightened of chronological gaps. Let this remain the concern of university history courses. We should offer pupils a selection of events and phenomena that would facilitate their understanding of how and why the current zones of civilization have emerged; how and why they have interacted; what prejudices, false stereotypes, double standards and divisions of individuals into 'natives' and 'strangers' have existed.
- (iv) Finally, it is absolutely necessary to stop treating the textbook as a source of 'true knowledge'. We have, at least in the long term, strive to replace the textbook by authorised materials, not of a narrative nature, but consisting of primary sources such as documents, video materials, etc. Such materials are increasingly available in the age of the computer and the internet.

## **1.2 How to teach inter-cultural dialogue through history in present day schools: the example of the United Kingdom**

**By Mr John HAMER**

Educationally, Mr HAMER suggested, the United Kingdom is in fact in many ways a disunited kingdom. Its four constituent countries each have their own separate education system. The curriculum and the examination systems in England, Northern Ireland and Wales are similar; in Scotland they are rather different. In each case they are approved by Parliament or by the appropriate national assembly.

Teachers and textbook publishers within the United Kingdom have a good deal of freedom to determine precisely what and how history should be taught. The various national curricula lay down broad outlines about, for example, the periods to be studied and the balance between local, national, European and world history. But on some points they are very specific. The National

Curriculum for history in England, for instance, requires that, by law, young people between the ages of 5 and 14 should be taught 'about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, both in Britain and the wider world'. It also stresses that they should be taught history 'from a variety of perspectives including political, religious, social, cultural (and) aesthetic'. There are similar requirements in the curricula for schools in the other three member countries.

Translating these legal requirements into effective practice, however, is by no means an easy task. This is particularly so when the intention is that what they are taught should affect pupils' attitudes in some way - that teaching about cultural diversity, for example, will influence the way in which pupils respond and relate to the different types of groups of people that exist within their country or elsewhere in the world.

Amongst teachers, politicians and others, in the United Kingdom there has been – and continues to be - widespread discussion and some disagreement about the part that history teaching should play in relation to moral or values education.

Firstly, there is debate about what *kind of values* history teaching should be promoting. In a phrase that used to be widely quoted, the British medieval historian, David Knowles, wrote that 'the historian is not a judge, still less a judge who hangs people'. Knowles's argument was that the historian's task was to find out what happened in the past and why it happened - not to pass moral judgments on why people had acted in the way they did. Nor should people study history in order to become better people. There was no reason why a bad man should not be a good historian.

But, as Knowles and others who argue similarly readily acknowledge, that is not to say that history teaching can have nothing to do with values education. In one very important sense it clearly is about the transmission of certain kinds of values, namely *intellectual* values. Historians have to recognise intellectual values and principles such as a concern for truth, validity in argument and respect for evidence.

One of the concerns put forward by those who claim that history teaching is not doing enough to help pupils come to terms with the cultural diversity of the world in which they live is that history teaching too often disregards these intellectual values; that it presents a very partial, one-sided and highly selective view of the past.

But there are those who go much further than saying merely that history teaching should be concerned with *intellectual* values. They assert that it is a requirement of all teachers, and especially history teachers, to promote particular *social values* and attitudes, certain ways of acting and behaving as

well as certain ways of thinking; and, similarly, that they should condemn others. History teachers must recognise that they have a duty to attempt to undermine undesirable traits such as racism, bigotry and religious persecution. Actively challenging the attitudes of mind that create racism is the responsibility of us all whatever the colour of our skin or our ethnic background. History teachers have a special responsibility since young people will only be able to understand the nature of contemporary race relations by appreciating the historical legacy that created it.

Secondly, there are issues surrounding the development of pupils' *sense of identity*, including national identity. If history teaching is to be useful in helping young people to discover and have confidence in who they are, so the argument goes, it has to:

- Recognise that people have a number of different identities – social, cultural, racial, religious – and that the history of minorities cannot be ignored. In Britain this means that the history that is taught has to be relevant, for example, to young people from African, Afro - Caribbean, Asian and Jewish backgrounds – as well as to those with different social experiences and living in different regions of the country.
- Demonstrate that people from all sorts of backgrounds were important in the past and made major contributions towards the development of Britain. History teaching in Britain should not focus exclusively on the actions of white, Protestant, middle class, dead English men. It should provide young people with appropriate role models drawn from a wide range of significant national and world figures.
- Ensure that love of one's country is not accompanied by something deeply unpleasant like hatred of foreigners or persecution of those who have a different colour of skin or hold an opposing view about what is nationally significant.

It is, of course, important to stress that ensuring that teaching addresses the history of minority groups via multi-cultural and anti-racist approaches, and looking at differences, should not exclude those aspects that people have in common. Rather, such approaches should be seen as a strategy to promote cultural pluralism which assumes as basic certain social and political values such as the right and freedom to be different, openness, equity, justice, solidarity, rationality, and the democratic right of all to contribute equitably to shaping society.

In summary, therefore, what it is suggested is needed is a history curriculum and history teaching that seeks to:

- Produce citizens who have a properly informed perception of their own identity as well as those of others.
- Actively promote an inclusive, as opposed to an exclusive, view of community, society and nation.
- Cultivate a depth of vision amongst pupils that addresses universal values such as tolerance social justice and honesty.
- Cultivate a view of the world that looks outwards not inwards.
- Encourage pupils to recognise and to celebrate the fact that they possess a multiplicity of identities.

What does this mean in practice? What strategies are history teachers adopting to enable young people to acquire such qualities? Mr HAMER identified five strategies in particular.

**(i) Teaching that stresses that cultural and racial diversity in the country is not something new.**

Whereas contemporary multi-cultural Britain was mainly created after World War II with mass immigration from the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian sub-continent, it is important to emphasise through the history curriculum that Britain has always been a country of immigrants and settlers, and that there has been a black presence in Britain since Roman times i.e. for some two thousand years or so.

**(ii) History teaching that acknowledges the bad as well as the good, the failures as well as the successes, the injustices and oppressions as well as the achievements in national history.**

For Britain, as for other countries, this means having to address some extremely unpleasant and uncomfortable topics and issues. The list of such topics will vary from country to country, but in Britain it means that history teaching cannot ignore, for instance – the medieval persecutions of the Jews living in Britain; the trade in slaves from Africa to America and the West Indies; the treatment of indigenous populations that accompanied the expansion of the British Empire in India, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere; the exploitation of adults and children in factories and mines that followed the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century.

**(iii) History curricula and teaching that do not see the world solely through British or European eyes.**

In part this is about content; but it is also about other things. What it means is not only that pupils study the histories of countries other than Britain and outside Europe, but also that the language used to describe those histories and the nature of the explanations that are provided do not encourage pupils to think in stereotyped ways. For example to describe the exploration undertaken by Europeans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as ‘voyages of *discovery*’ is to suggest that the countries they arrived at were unpopulated and unknown until Europeans got there. Similarly, to describe the attempt by Indians to force the British out of India in the mid-nineteenth century as the ‘Indian *Mutiny*’ is to assume that the British had a legitimate right to be there.

Explanations about the abolition of slavery can often suggest that it came about only as a result of what white people did, ignoring the role that black people played in their own emancipation, and thus reinforcing the stereotype of white/superior and black/inferior. Traditional textbooks commonly tell the narrative history of the Crusades from the perspective of western Christendom thus reinforcing the moral right of the crusaders in contrast to the ‘infidel’ Muslims. Such accounts fail to consider the long-term legacy of the crusades upon European life in a range of spheres such as trade, architecture, mathematics, astrology, etc.

**(iv) Teaching that seeks to ‘personalise the past’.**

It can be difficult for pupils, certainly younger pupils, to think in abstract terms about the experiences of large numbers of people, especially when those people are from backgrounds other than that of the pupil. One approach to overcoming this is to focus upon the individual, the recorded experiences, for example, of the individual slave rather than slavery in general; of the individual who was being persecuted rather than persecution; of the individual immigrant arriving in a new country rather than immigration.

**(v) Teaching that attempts to develop pupils’ ability to think critically.**

Amongst other things, living in a healthy multi-cultural and multi-faith society involves debate, discussion and finding ways of reconciling different points of view. It means having to evaluate confusing and sometimes deliberately biased information. What it does not mean is the unquestioning acceptance of what we are told by politicians, the media or those who claim to know the correct answers to problems. If, then, history teachers are to help their pupils to become active citizens in a democratic state, they should not seek to set themselves up as

ultimate authorities. They should be open in acknowledging that historical judgements can never be more than tentative; they should be careful to put forward the evidence upon which their judgements are based; they should be honest in presenting the strengths and weaknesses of their own and others' arguments and interpretations; and, above all, they should make certain that their pupils have the curiosity, the understanding and the tools with which to challenge what they say.

In Northern Ireland, for example, where cultural and faith divisions run extremely deep, writing and teaching history is a difficult, and sometimes even dangerous, task. How are current textbooks attempting to tackle it? Mr Hamer quoted one example. In a book on 'Northern Ireland and its Neighbours since 1920' the authors are quite clear what it is they are setting out to achieve:

*This book is an attempt to help young people, and others who may read it, to come to terms with the historical forces which have operated within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920.*

They tell the reader how they hope to do it:

*The format and methodology of this book aims to assist young people to develop a critical and objective outlook and an appreciation of all points of view.*

They point out the difficulties with some of the language and terms that they use and explain that these must be treated with caution:

*The terms Protestant and Catholic and unionist and nationalist have been used frequently in the text to describe the main groupings in Northern Ireland. But readers should be aware that these terms are open to a range of interpretations.*

*The labels Protestant and Catholic are particularly misleading because they imply that the dispute in Northern Ireland is primarily religious, which it is not. Over the years also they have become even more misleading as people's allegiances and views changed.*

And, in the body of the book, they present a wide range of materials from all kinds of sources and pose questions that require the reader to analyse, evaluate, interpret, judge and perhaps re-examine the views they already hold.

In reflecting multi-cultural and multi-faith diversity it is this that the best textbooks do. They are clear, and tell the reader, that what they are offering are interpretations of the past – tentative judgements based upon a process of analysing the available evidence – and they invite the reader to join in that

process. They attempt balance and objectivity, but they recognise and admit that it is unlikely that they will get it right. And finally, far from presenting people as national, regional or cultural stereotypes they assert that history is a rational discipline that accepts, indeed welcomes, the existence of social, cultural, political and religious diversity.

Properly taught, history can help people to become critical and humane. Wrongly taught, it can turn them into bigots and fanatics.



*Mr John HAMER, United Kingdom, and Mr Martin SACHSE, Germany,  
experts of the history education section*

### **1.3 How to teach inter-cultural dialogue through history in present day schools: the example of Germany: by Mr Martin SACHSE**

The school system in the Federal Republic of Germany is determined by the principle of federalism. This allows the individual Länder great freedom and variety with regard to specific areas such as the school system. Because of these differences it is impossible to talk about one single way of teaching history in Germany.

Modern societies, Mr SACHSE argued, are characterized by their diversity, and mutual tolerance is becoming a key function for the maintenance of the democratic system and the non-violent resolution of conflicts. Promoting education for democracy and tolerance, including inter-cultural and inter-

religious education; the understanding of minorities; and the desire for a peaceful community are among the most important future challenges.

Since its inception as a nation state, Germany has been a country of considerable linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. Today, with its population of 82 million, Germany is demographically the largest country in the European Union. More than 7.3 million people, 9% of the total population, have a foreign nationality. The largest group among the foreign residents comes from Poland, followed by people from Turkey and the Russian Federation.

Intercultural education, as both a field of research and a practical perspective, became established in West Germany in the early 1980s as a pedagogical reaction to the educational and societal challenges of growing heterogeneity. In the course of the 1980s, it became evident that immigration in Germany could no longer be treated as a temporary phenomenon. Educational science consequently underwent a change of perspective and began calling for an intercultural education for all children, both native and newcomer.

One of the main tasks of the German school system, therefore, is the teaching of intercultural competence, multi-lingualism, tolerance, integration and anti-racist attitudes. There has to be a readiness to deal with issues of interculturalism and minorities - especially in history lessons. The pupil and the teacher has to know that talking about tolerance is not the same as being tolerant. Education for democracy and for living together with minorities should not be a preparation for life in society, it should be life itself.

Another indicator of the topicality of questions of ethnic identity is the fact that more and more wars are based on communal rivalries and ethnic challenges to states. About three-quarters of the world's refugees, estimated at nearly 27 million people, have fled from ethnic conflicts or have been displaced by them. These various ethnic reactions to their social experiences have to be understood by pupils, and their context studied, with the aim of developing peaceful societies. Intercultural living and education is part of the daily life of every pupil in Germany. Intercultural school education in this context can be seen as a preventive measure to prepare children, both foreign and German, to live in a multi-cultural society.

Mr SACHSE identified intercultural education in Germany as being well established at several levels, in:

- **The academic sphere:**

- Intercultural education is professionally organized in the German Society of Education (DGFE) Section of International and Intercultural Comparative Education. It has developed relatively



extensive empirical research activities. Intercultural education is also an aspect of teacher education at most universities.

- **Educational policies and the school sphere:**  
Inter-cultural learning is an explicit or implicit part of the curricula in all 16 federal states, although the status of intercultural learning in everyday practice in schools varies widely. There is also a growing number of bilingual schools.
- **The informal and non-formal education sphere:**  
Non-school based programmes and trainings are common, although it is not possible to make any sound evaluation concerning their quality, their effectiveness or sustainability.

The new curriculum includes the following principles:

- a concentration on the essentials;
- an increased freedom for pupils, teachers and schools to take part in independent activities;
- a firm knowledge of the important themes of history; and
- an emphasis on practical application, revision and combination of knowledge - talking about tolerance is not the same as being tolerant.

The following aspects are of special importance:

- factual competence, methodological competence and competence in developing well thought-out points of view, all of which go to make up so-called general education, and
- the encouragement and development of problem-solving skills.

Factual competence covers the knowledge of historical facts and developments, of persons, structures, ideas and eras within the regional, national, European and global history. Referring to minorities there are references in the basic knowledge part of the new curriculum, for example, to 'ghetto', 'human rights', 'anti-Semitism', 'concentration camps'.

Within the context of history lessons, methodological competence refers to the ability and proficiency to implement historical skills in order to ask questions and find answers of historical interest. The aim is to integrate skills-based learning into a predominantly knowledge-based syllabus framework. Finally, competence includes the ability to develop well thought-out points of view. This skill is the most important of the three competences because of its general applicability. Here, the focus is on positive attitudes and values including tolerance towards minorities, respect for diversity, open-mindedness, and the conviction that judgements, opinions and conclusions should be supported by rational evidence. Historical education must not be merely a mediation of

simple facts, but must contain aspects such as the consideration of values and the multi-perspective and controversial nature of historical findings.

Three examples from the new curriculum for the eleventh and twelfth grade that are relevant to the present topic are:

- understanding democracy as a concept which is not historically self-evident, but has to be defended;
- willingness to engage in frank dialogue and to live peacefully in community; and
- insight into the multi-causality of the history process.

Instances of where we find references to minorities in the curriculum are:

- Year six: Christianity: from persecution to state religion.
- Year seven: the crusades as an example of religious fights and exchange between cultures; the exclusion of population groups like Jews and heretics; the reaction of foreigners when encountering extra-European cultures.
- Year nine: ideologies within National Socialism such as racial segregation and anti-Semitism; the persecution, disfranchisement and killing of the Jews, and the policy of exterminating other groups in the population; escape and expulsion after 1945; exhibition of local history, e.g. 'anti-Semitism'.

In the upper secondary level in Bavaria there is a lesson structure based upon surveys and horizontal perspectives which is a markedly different approach from the chronological one used in classes six to nine. This structure has the advantage that important content is revised, the different perspectives provide for change and encourage selective, age-appropriate and introductory work.

When planning the work for pupils in the final years of the upper secondary level, the following two aims and intentions were taken into consideration:

- Pupils should be able to analyse and interpret multiple perspectives on the same event or historical phenomenon by comparing the perspectives of different historians.
- They should be able to handle controversial and sensitive issues, particularly ones which relate to national or group identity. The curriculum contains topics such as:  
The historical foundations of European society and culture, including subjects like: European thinking – spirituality and rationalism in

European history; or: individual and society – models and principles of political structures in Europe.

Troubles in German history 1871 to 1990.

Nations, states and cultures: conflict and co-operation.

The history curricula of other German Länder also make references to minorities in the upper secondary level. For example, in:

- Bremen: ‘minorities in history (separation, extirpation and integration, assimilation)’.
- Hamburg: ‘minorities and outsiders in history’.
- Rhineland-Palatinate: ‘anti-Semitism, including anti-Judaism in the Middle Ages, emancipation and anti-Judaism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; anti-Semitism in the Third Reich; anti-Semitism after the Second World War.

To summarise, the teaching of difference allows the following principles in educational practice:

- Preoccupation with all cultures as a part of the normal day-to-day pedagogy.
- Dissent as a part of the curricula: the views of the religious and cultural minorities should not be seen as threatening the dominant religion or State ideology but as part of the national richness.
- The role of the teacher is to present differing perspectives fairly because it is given that societies have many voices vying for attention.
- Teaching about difference is not only teaching to learn more than one language but also seeing how languages construct world views or how these languages are associated with social and cultural costs.
- Educational institutions, in particular schools, should have staff of various backgrounds.
- Facilities must cater for all cultures.

Education for all must recognise the right to differ, and should be part of lifelong learning and not just something that stops at the school-door.

## **II. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Discussion following the presentations focused on three main areas:

- (i) General issues, in particular, the nature of dialogue and the conditions that make dialogue possible.
- (ii) The particular contribution of history teaching in enabling dialogue to take place.
- (iii) Practical approaches to promoting dialogue in the teaching of history.

### **2.1 General issues**

In any form of dialogue it is important that the participants agree on the meaning of the terms and concepts that they are using. For dialogue to take place between individuals or groups of individuals certain necessary conditions have to be in place. The idea of a 'dialogue' implies, for example, that:

- There is a willingness on the part of those involved to listen to each other and to exchange ideas and points of view. A dialogue cannot be a series of monologues where all speak and disregard what others say. This would be merely a 'dialogue of the deaf'.
- There is an element of uncertainty, of still searching for answers, rather than a conviction that the answers are already known and simply require to be given to others.
- There are certain rules and conventions about the way in which the discussion should take place.

We need to be clear about what constitutes a dialogue and about the procedural rules that govern it, and we need to ensure that the young people we teach know what these are.

Equally with other concepts such as 'culture', 'values' or 'tolerance'. For dialogue to take place we need to be using a common language when use these concepts. But we need also to recognise that these are not static concepts, they are dynamic and their meaning will change over time.



*Ms Tatiana MILKO, Administrator, History Education Section, Council of Europe;  
Ms Feodosia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia and Ms  
Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department,  
Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.*

In considering what the conditions are that make dialogue possible, we were reminded that dialogue, participating in discussion with others, is a necessary part of the human condition. Human beings are social animals who need to engage with their fellows. Nevertheless, if that engagement is to be constructive, individuals need to be willing not only to participate but also to re-consider their own ideas. Unless teachers are themselves prepared to take part in a genuine dialogue they will not succeed in encouraging their pupils to do so. It is not possible to promote discussion by presenting oneself as an authority, as a guardian of the truth.

## **2.2 History teaching's particular contribution to promoting dialogue**

- History teaching is concerned about giving pupils such intellectual tools as the ability to deal with conflicting points of view, to analyse and evaluate evidence, and to question interpretations of past events, all of which are relevant to the process of taking part in a dialogue. Indeed, in a sense, history as a discipline could be described as a process of engaging in a dialogue with the record of the past. Without such a process there can be no historical knowledge.

- Our understanding of the past changes as new evidence is uncovered or existing evidence is looked at in a new way. Historical knowledge, therefore, is not static. It can never be presented in the form of an absolute truth but only in the form of the best judgment that can be made at the time based on the evidence available. In this way too, history is a form of dialogue.
- Similarly, the concepts that are central to intercultural dialogue, including the concept of 'culture' itself, are not static. Our understanding of them and the ways in which they have been interpreted shift over time. It is important to recognise these shifts in any dialogue between cultures and faiths and, in this sense, history brings a necessary perspective to such dialogue.
- The study of history focuses on the activities and beliefs of individual human beings who actually lived. It provides examples both of where dialogue between individuals or groups of peoples has been possible even in the most unpromising of circumstances, and of where dialogue has broken down, with terrible consequences. History provides pupils with a variety of contexts in which to consider intercultural dialogue.



*Promoting intercultural dialogue*

### **2.3 Practical approaches to promoting dialogue in the teaching of history**

However difficult it might be to effect, there was general agreement on the urgent necessity of involving young people in intercultural dialogue. There were considerable dangers in not doing so. In many countries, including Russia, there was disturbing evidence of a growing xenophobia amongst young people.

Amongst the approaches and activities that were suggested as means of furthering inter-cultural dialogue were:

- Foreign exchange visits and joint activities between pupils from different cultural backgrounds.
- The use of information technology, for example – using the internet to provide access to a wide range of resources and; e-mail discussion groups on historical issues between students from different cultures and countries.
- Using a variety of teaching materials, including textbooks and materials produced in other countries.
- Combined subject teaching.
- Teaching which broke away from undue reliance on the textbook and which focused on introducing different perspectives and points of view in interpreting the past.
- Exploring novel ways of introducing pupils to other cultures, for example, via food or music.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR**

#### **Wednesday, 18 May 2005**

08h30 – 10h00	Arrival of the participants. Accommodation at the Hotel Polar Star
10h00	Meeting with Ms Feodosia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education and Science of Yakutia (Sakha)
11h00	Formal opening
12h00	Visit to National Museum
13h00	Lunch
14h30	Visit to schools
17h00	Meeting with Mr Alexander AKYMOV, Vice-President of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)
20h00	Dinner

#### **Thursday, 19 May 2005**

9.30. - 11.30      **Plenary Session for all the participants**  
**venue: Hotel Polar Star**

Chair: Ms Feodocia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Mr Alexander AKYMOV, Vice-President of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)
- ii. Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- iii. Mr Gennadiy KOSYAK, Head, Targeted Co-operation and Assistance Activities Office, Directorate of Education, Council of Europe.



Presentation: “Intercultural dialogue through education: an overview of the Council of Europe”, by Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Programme Officer, Council of Europe.

Presentation: “Intercultural dialogue through education: main goals and mechanisms”, Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;

Presentation on “Teaching intercultural dialogue through education in multicultural environment of the Republic of Yakutia”, by Ms Feodocia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia.

11.30 - 12.00      Break

### **History Education Section**

12.00 - 13.30      **Plenary session**

Chair: Dr Sergey GOLUBEV, State Tver University

Key presentation on “How to teach intercultural dialogue through history”, by Mr Vladimir BATSYN, History Consultant, Moscow.

Presentation on “How to teach intercultural dialogue in present-day schools: an example of the United Kingdom”, by Mr John HAMER, Education consultant, United Kingdom.

Presentation on “How to teach intercultural dialogue in present-day schools: an example of Germany”, by Studienrat Martin SACHSE, Pedagogical Institute, Germany.

13.30 - 15.00      Lunch

15.00 - 16.30      **Round Table 1 on “What does it mean – intercultural dialogue in the context of history teaching?” (discussion issues appended)**

Chair: Mr Vladimir BATSYN, History Consultant, Moscow

Rapporteur: Mr John HAMER, United Kingdom

Discussion

16.00 – 16.30      Break

16.30 – 18.30      **Round table 2 on “Intercultural dialogue in the context of initial and in-service teacher training. Methods to be used when teaching history on the basis of diversity” (discussion issues appended)**

Chair: Mr Vladimir BATSYN, History Consultant, Moscow

Rapporteur: Mr John HAMER, United Kingdom

### **Language policies Section**

12.00 - 13.30      **Plenary session**

Chair: Professor Irina KHALEEVA, Rector, Moscow State Linguistic University, Moscow

Key presentation on “Development of language policies in present-day multicultural and multilinguistic environment”, by Professor Irina KHALEEVA, Rector, Moscow State Linguistic University, Moscow.

Presentation on “Development of language policies in present-day multicultural and multilinguistic environment: an example of Switzerland”, by Mr Ralf SCHARER, Switzerland

13.30 - 15.00      Lunch

15.00 - 16.30      **Round table 1 on “Language as a tool of intercultural communication” (discussion issues appended)**

Discussion.

16.30 – 17.00	Break
17.00 – 18.30	<b>Round Table 2 on “Methods to be used when teaching languages in multilinguistic environment” (discussion issues appended)</b>  Discussion

**Section on Teaching about historical and cultural basis of world religions**

12.00 - 13.30	<b>Plenary session</b>  <i>The experience of the Russian educators in enhancing inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue in schools</i>  Chair: Professor Dr Volodymyr EVTUKH, Ukraine  Key presentation by Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.  Presentation on “United Kingdom and European approaches to religious education and enhancing of inter-faith dialogue through education”, by Dr Anna HALSALL, United Kingdom.  Presentation on “Intercultural and interfaith dialogue in multicultural society: the role of education” by Professor Dr Volodymyr EVTUKH, Dean of the Sociology and Psychology Department, Kyiv State University, Ukraine.
13.30 - 15.00	Lunch
15.00 - 16.00	<b>Round table on “How to learn to live together?” (discussion issues appended)</b>  Chair: Professor Dr Volodymyr EVTUKH, Ukraine Rapporteur: Dr Anna HALSALL, United Kingdom  Discussion
16.30 – 17.00	Break

**9.30 – 12.30                  Plenary session for all the participants**

Chair: Ms Tatina MINKINA-MILKO, Council of Europe

- i. presentation by the Round Table Rapporteurs of the discussions in sections;
- ii. comments by the participants.

**Round table with all the participants on the main aims of teaching diversity through inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue in present-day schools**

Chair: Professor Irina KHALEEVA, Moscow Linguistic University

## Discussion

12.30 Lunch

**14.00 – 16.00      Closing speeches of the Seminar by:**

- i. Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Director of International Relations Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- ii. Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Programme Officer, Council of Europe;
- iii. Ms Feodocia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia.

16.30 Visit to a schools outside of Yakutsk

**Saturday, 21 May**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 08.30 – 11.00 | Meeting with local academic community (Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO);<br><br>Meeting with the RF and CoE language experts (Mr Vadim LYSIKOV);<br><br>Meeting with local administrators and organisers (Mr Gennadiy KOSYAK). |
| 12.00         | Departure of the participants   |

**PART II**  
**LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR**  
**DISCUSSION DURING THE ROUND TABLES**

1. Do current textbooks and teaching materials in the Russian Federation contain information on intercultural and interfaith dialogue? Please give examples.
2. Which kind of history course (local, regional, national or world) could best reflect topics on intercultural and interfaith dialogue and how could this be achieved? Please give examples.
3. Do young history teachers receive information on how to teach diversity on the basis of intercultural and interfaith dialogue during their training?
4. What interactive methods should be used when teaching history through intercultural and interfaith dialogue?
5. What should be improved in the initial and in-service training of history teachers to enable young specialists to teach history in its full complexity on the basis of new interactive methods?
6. Which pupils' skills and competences could be developed when teaching history on the basis of diversity reflecting intercultural and interfaith dialogue and how can they be assessed?
7. Education as a vehicle to facilitate sharing traditions and cultures. Multicultural learning and intercultural living.
8. Living diversity in the classroom: how to better understand and appreciate your neighbours' traditions and beliefs
9. Learning to live together: which is the best way to develop respect towards the others' beliefs (the role of the teacher)
10. State education policy as a mean to enhance intercultural learning in schools?

11. Inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue in the classroom: cultivating respect of the Other
12. A supplementary textbook on traditions and beliefs of different cultures: a possible facilitator of intercultural and interfaith dialogue at school?

<p><b>PART III</b> <b>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</b></p>
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**OFFICIALS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF YAKUTIA (SAKHA)**

Mr Alexander AKYMOV, Vice-President of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Ms Feodocia GABYSHEVA, Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Egor BORYSOV, Chair of the Government of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Ms Evgeniya MYKHAILOVA, Deputy Chair of the Government of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Alexander PAHOMOV, First Deputy of the Head of the Administration of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Alexander MYGALKIN, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Ms Elizaveta SYDOROVA, Co-Chair of the National Committee responsible for co-operation with UNESCO

Professor Vasily FILIPPOV, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Andrey KRYVOSHAPKIN, Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Gennady TOLSTYKH, Minister of Science and Professional Training of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Mr Vasily PETROV, Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Ms Olga CHOROSOVA, Rector of the In-service Teacher Training Institute of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)



Professor Trofim SAVYNOV, Rector of the State Pedagogical Institute of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

Ms Galina ALEKSEEVA, Director of the General Education Institute of the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

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(named after M.K. AMMOSOV)

Ms Elena ARGUNOVA, History Teacher, Yakutsk

Ms Sardana BOYAKOVA, Institute of Sociology

Ms Valentina BURNASHEVA, History teacher, Gymnasium of Tatinsky region

Dr Natalia BURNASHEVA, Associated Professor, the State Yakutsk University (named after M.K. AMMOSOV)

Dr Nikolay VASYLIEV, History Teacher, Yakutsk

Mr Alexander DYACHKOVSKY, History Teacher, School N° 31

Mr Alexander GYRKOV, Member of the Parliament, the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)

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Ms Anastasiya SLEPTSOVA, History Teacher, School N° 8 Yakutsk

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