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Seminar on

"History teaching in Croatia"

Zagreb, Croatia

4-5 April 2003

Report

Strasbourg

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"History teaching in Croatia"

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Report by

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Croatia

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

The seminar on teaching history in the Republic of Croatia was held at the Hotel International in Zagreb on 4-5 April 2003. It was jointly organised by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. The MATRA programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands helped to organise the event.

Approximately 80 participants took part in the seminar: history teachers from all parts of Croatia responsible for organising in-service training in their respective counties, authors and editors of textbooks and handbooks, scholars and university professors, members of the Commission for the Abolition of the Moratorium on Teaching Contemporary History in the Podunavlje Region, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports of Republic of Croatia and speakers invited by the Council of Europe.

The lead-in plenary session was chaired by Ivan VAVRA, Deputy Minister of Education and Sports, and the participants were greeted by the Minister Vladimir STRUGAR, Zdravko JELENOVIĆ, the Envoy of the president of Republic of Croatia, and Alison CARDWELL, Head of the History Education Section of the Directorate of Education of the Council of Europe.

Ivan VAVRA thanked everyone who was involved in the preparation of the seminar, participants of the seminar, and media representatives covering the event. He emphasised the fact that the Ministry of Education and Sports was aware of the enormous importance of history teaching in the education process since, through history, young people not only learn about the past but also form their opinions on the present. He expressed his hope that this meeting would help to put the overall Croatian teaching practice into perspective and, at the same time, inform the Croatian teachers of the work on history teaching being carried out in the neighbouring countries and other European countries.

The Minister of Education, Vladimir STRUGAR, and Zdravko JELENOVIĆ, the Envoy of the president of Republic of Croatia, addressed the assembly in a similar tone. They stressed the importance of history teaching and the willingness of the government to undertake all necessary steps to make history teaching a preparation for the future life in a united Europe and not for a life in the past.

Alison CARDWELL welcomed the participants and emphasised the Council of Europe's general aims, especially in education. One of the important activities of the Council of Europe is the reform of history teaching, its improvement and introduction of new, modern teaching methods, particularly in the transitional countries. She informed the participants of the Council of Europe's involvement in the Stability Pact projects and announced the final stage which is the publication of the booklet on Multiperspectivity in history teaching. The project on Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th Century has recently been completed and a new project on the European dimension in history teaching is starting. Ms CARDWELL expressed

her hope that Croatian cooperation in the projects of the Council of Europe will continue.

II. AIMS OF THE SEMINAR

The aims of the seminar were to:

- identify the state of history teaching, teaching resources and aids (primarily textbooks), initial and in-service training courses for history teachers;
- familiarise themselves with the situation in some other European countries, especially the neighbouring ones;
- listen to other experiences and discuss how to teach sensitive and controversial issues, especially in the light of the abolition of the moratorium on teaching contemporary history in the Podunavlje region;
- define proposals for changes and improvements in history teaching in Croatia.

III. SUMMARIES OF PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

1. Teaching history in Croatia

The introductory presentation on teaching history in Croatia was given by Damir AGIČIĆ from the History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. He described how history is taught in the Republic of Croatia - in two educational cycles: in senior grades of elementary school (grades 5-8) and in secondary school. In grammar schools (age 11-14), it is taught for four years, while in secondary vocational schools (age 15-18) during the first two or three years (four-year vocational schools), or only in the first year (three-year vocational schools). During the whole course of teaching history, the students have two lessons per week. The exception is the fourth grade of general grammar school where they have three lessons per week. The syllabus in both educational cycles foresees teaching the general history of humanity - from prehistory to contemporary times, divided in approximately similar periods. The demand for secondary schools is to approach the material on the so-called "higher level". Unfortunately, the syllabus is made in such a way that it is very difficult to see the essence of the "higher level", except for piling up information in grammar schools. Considering that, in the vocational secondary schools, the whole of history has to be taught in only two years, the programme is in fact more reduced than in elementary schools. An additional problem is teaching history in the three-year vocational schools where the syllabus foresees one year of teaching exclusively Croatian history.

It needs to be said that the syllabus in the Republic of Croatia was created after the break-up of Yugoslavia according to the demands of the Ministry of Education and Sports. First, in 1992, a group of scholars and teachers made temporary changes in the existing textbooks. They mainly extracted the Marxist ideology and Yugoslav

framework, but it was not always done consistently. In the mid-90s, a syllabus was created and the textbooks changed accordingly. Croatian history dominates the syllabus (the ratio is 60 : 40 %). Studying political history is the main objective, so there is very little space devoted to social history. The history of everyday life is almost non-existent, there is no women's history, history of the minorities, while contemporary history is marginalised. In accordance with such a syllabus, the first officially approved textbooks were created in 1996 with a legal validity deadline of five years. The same year, parallel textbooks were approved. Since 2000, there have been several textbooks for each grade in all schools. The practice that allows the teachers in different schools to choose the textbook they wish to use is good, since it eliminates the possibility of manipulation and choosing "politically acceptable" authors.

Because of considerable public criticism regarding the history textbooks, the new Minister of Education set up a Commission for the evaluation of history textbooks in 2000, which included a group of scholars and several history teachers from schools. None of the textbooks was withdrawn, although some of them did not satisfy the basic methodology-didactical criteria from the beginning of their publishing and are now out-of-date. At the end of 2001, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Law on Textbooks. The law foresees creating a Council for Textbooks, which should provide suggestions for the so-called "textbook standards". During the spring of 2002, this Council was set up and, in the spring of 2003, the standards were accepted.

In his conclusion, Damir AGIČIĆ asserted that it would be difficult to forecast what may be expected in the near future. For quite a long period of time, public discussions on the complete reform of the Croatian school system are on-going. The concepts offered are mutually opposed. However, when it comes to the question of teaching history, one thing is certain: in any kind of school system, this subject will continue to play an important role. It is important that the future curriculum catches up with European standards, to avoid stereotyped perceptions and to direct teaching towards teaching for democracy and an open society. Also, one of the main problems in the future is the initial and in-service training courses for history teachers. It is important to intensify the training of students who study history at university, as well as the in-service training of teachers so that they are able to implement modern teaching techniques.

2. Plenary session on syllabus and curriculum

Two introductory presentations were made at the plenary session. Snježana KOREN from Eugen Kumičić Primary School in Velika Gorica talked about the syllabus in Croatia and Peter BIHARI from Főv. Fazekas Mihály Gyakorló Iskola in Budapest spoke about the Hungarian curriculum and its changes in the last decade.

2.1 History Curricula in Croatia

Snježana KOREN referred to the three changes which the primary school history syllabus for 11-14 year old pupils underwent in the last decade. Every syllabus was over-detailed and over-prescriptive in defining themes, as well as teaching units. All the syllabuses are chronologically structured and focus on political history which makes up to 85% of the overall themes of certain classes. Snježana KOREN pointed out the evident content-rich syllabus that completely neglects the development of students' skills. This suggests that the main aim of history teaching in Croatia is still memorising a lot of data, which gives the illusion of broad knowledge. Nevertheless, in reality, it is rather inefficient, since such knowledge has no practical purpose due to the students' lack of skills and the students quickly forget such information. Over-extensive syllabuses, long-neglected history methodology and in-service training brought about a crisis in history teaching and turned history into one of the most difficult and least favourite school subjects in schools in Croatia.

Snježana KOREN gave an in-depth analysis of some syllabuses and pointed out their numerous flaws. In her presentation, she spoke in favour of introducing multiperspectivity and studying different interpretations in history teaching, as well as introducing themes such as environmental study, migrations, population growth, globalisation, changes in family structure, the changing roles of women, developments in art and culture, in everyday life and similar topics.

She listed the main flaws of the current syllabus, designed in 1995. Apart from being over-prescriptive, the syllabus is full of political history, whereas relations with the neighbouring nations are presented mainly through political and military conflicts. The focus of the current syllabus is national history. When talking about national history, authors mostly refer to the history of Croats, not only those living in Croatia, but also Croats living in other neighbouring countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Damir AGIČIĆ, she named the syllabus as one of the main obstacles in modernising history teaching in Croatia, and described the syllabus as giving students a 19th Century view of the world. She pointed out that the syllabus does not include themes dealing with Euro-integration processes.

Snježana KOREN devoted part of her presentation to the so-called "disencumberment", an arbitrary abolition of some topics, implemented by a decision of the Institute of Education Improvement in 2002. She referred to it as a reflection of the misunderstanding of the problem. She emphasised that pupils should not be burdened by studying, they should be allowed to enjoy it. However, some new textbooks have been introduced which share that view, despite the syllabus. Ms KOREN spoke in favour of a quick but well-planned syllabus reform: What calls for serious discussion are the aims of history teaching: what we actually want to achieve by history teaching and how it can help develop the students' overall personality, their talents and creative potential.

2.2 History Curricula in Hungary

Peter BIHARI illustrated the way history teaching and curriculum changed in Hungary between 1993 and 2003. Initial hopes and numerous attempts in that period brought no results. He briefly described the reforms of the National Core Curriculum (NAT; 1990-1995 and 1995-1998), explained the problems which led to its eventual removal and its replacement with the Framework-Curricula (1998-2002), reformed in 2002. The Hungarian NAT anticipated decentralisation. It presented teachers with a thematic framework and minimum requirements, expecting their involvement. However, it did not happen, the curriculum was abandoned and recentralisation was enforced. The Framework-Curricula did not last long either and a new reform was carried out which anticipates the reintroduction of the NAT.

Mr BIHARI believes that the Hungarian experience may serve as a lesson on how difficult it is to reorganise history teaching in a country in transition. History as a subject depends on the educational as well as the political climate in a country. It reflects the position of the teacher whose role is extremely important in the whole process. He also questioned the degree of centralisation or decentralisation in history teaching. It has been shown that a certain amount of government control and consultation is required otherwise the opposite effects occur.

He stressed the concerns that have been lingering among Hungarian curriculum experts and history teachers in the last decade: whether to teach history in accordance with a canon or all history (from Plato to NATO); whether to choose two levels, one in primary and the other in secondary school or to opt for concentrated teaching; what is more important - present the student with set topics and ask them to memorise or try to develop their abilities ... Finally, it all rests on students' willingness to study history or their dislike of history.

3. Plenary session on history textbooks

Two presentations were again made at this session.

3.1 History textbooks in Croatia

In his presentation, Mario STRECHA, History Department at the Faculty of Philosophy, talked about how to get involved in the process of shaping new intellectual and cultural geography of Europe through textbooks and history teaching. He was critical of certain phenomena showing intolerance, particularly in older textbooks, and expressed his hope that this seminar would, among other things, influence the public to pay more attention to the problem of history teaching. He believed that the solution to the problems mentioned should be sought by changing the understanding of the social role of historiography and stressed the importance of a wide public discussion on the subject of what historiography is and its role in society, and accordingly, the role of teaching history in schools.

Mario STRECHA suggested founding an independent institution which would, similarly to the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany, work on analysing the history syllabus and history textbooks in particular, and which would follow up on the results achieved in history teaching. Apart from this, such an institution could provide the services of professional in-service training for teachers.

Mr STRECHA also stressed the importance of abandoning the 12-year education model which still largely exists in Croatian schools. He suggested that the new history syllabus should be organised thematically, not chronologically, and that it should not be over prescriptive. He, like other introductory speakers from Croatia, mentioned that the existing syllabus is not good and that it should be changed as soon as possible.

3.2 History Textbooks – the Georg Eckert Institute

Ms Heike KARGE of the European University Institute in Florence (Italy), formerly of the Georg Eckert Institute for International textbook research in Braunschweig (Germany) and the Head of the Project South East European Textbook Network, conducted in cooperation with the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, talked about what makes a good history textbook. She indicated the criteria that a modern textbook should meet, how it should open a wide perspective to students and not place them in a narrow national perspective. She stressed that the Council of Europe has been paid considerable attention to the question of strategy in making quality textbooks for quite some time. Good results had been achieved in this area and, as a result, in many countries the textbooks are improving content-wise, methodology-wise and graphics-wise.

4. Plenary session on in-service teacher training and teaching sensitive and controversial issues

4.1 The training of history teachers

The Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Neven BUDAK, spoke about the initial and in-service training of history teachers. He stressed that the formal level of history teachers' initial training is not properly organised and he considered the state of history teaching methodology poor. He was critical of university history teaching and its methodology which was, until recently, a completely unknown term in academic circles. He believes the Ministry of Education and the Institute for Education Improvement are not sufficiently active in organising seminars to inform teachers of new developments in historiography and teaching methods. In addition to the contributions to the poor situation of history teaching Neven BUDAK also mentioned the negative legacy of the past - a long life in authoritarian regimes, primarily during the Socialist period, centralised education system and the removal of teachers' initiatives which had thrived in those times.

The situation is difficult, Neven BUDAK claims, but it could be worse. He offered a series of suggestions with the aim of improving the situation; to introduce methodologies for university professors, in particular the younger ones; to pay attention to staffing improvements and the development of the methodology for history teaching in universities; to initiate good quality study for history teachers according to the harmonisation of higher education in Europe; to conduct permanent in-service training for teachers at schools, and to introduce some kind of a licence for teachers, with which they could renew their employment at schools; to equip school libraries with sufficient books and to computerise teachers' cabinets at the least; to strengthen the newly founded association of history teachers and to spread subscription to the journal for history teachers (*Povijest u nastavi*; History in the classroom), as well as other historiography journals; to start making the new syllabus and new textbooks; to increase the number of advisors for history teaching, or rather employees of the Ministry of Education in charge of improving history teaching.

Even though he was aware that this “wide-ranging” operation is not an easy task without the support of state institutions as well as the support of teachers themselves, Neven BUDAK argued for the provision of funds and appealed to all the participants who would be involved in such a wide-ranging reform. He believes that the investment is relatively small, while the gain would be considerable, not only for the students, but also for their parents, as well as history teachers. He concluded that the timeframe for such a reform would be five years.

4.2 Teaching controversial and sensitive issues in Croatia

Mirko MARKOVIĆ of Druga srednja škola in Beli Manastir gave a presentation on teaching controversial issues in history in Croatia. He gave a short review of the legal basis for teaching in the language and script of national minorities, raised the problem of the issue of the use of the moratorium on studying contemporary national history, and then gave several examples from his practice on how a student of the Serbian national minority reacts to certain topics from Croatian and Serbian national history and the history of Yugoslavia.

Mr MARKOVIĆ spoke in favour of abolishing the moratorium, which proved to be dysfunctional and encumbering, both for students and their teachers. He pointed out that the controversial issues should not be avoided and pushed to one side nor should anyone else be given the task of talking or writing about them to the professional historians. He also believes that the students should be able to have an insight into the arguments of both sides, and not just given a one-dimensional picture. As with other seminar participants, he suggested organising similar seminars and workshops to exchange experience on teaching sensitive and controversial issues. In that sense, Mr MARKOVIĆ believes, that it would be good to have a meeting of history teachers from both banks of the Danube River in the near future.

4.3 Teaching controversial and sensitive issues in Northern Ireland

In the last plenary session, Professor Alan McCULLY, University of Ulster, shared some of the Northern Ireland experiences in teaching sensitive and controversial issues with the participants, especially regarding the conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholics. After he had briefly explained the origins of the conflict, he told the participants about the basic elements of the functioning of the education system in Northern Ireland. It is difficult to work in schools in Northern Ireland, since the students come to school burdened with stereotypical notions from their families, and are often full of hatred towards the members of the other community. Teaching is organised thematically, but it is not easy to overcome strong stereotypes and prejudices of history discussed at home.

Alan McCULLY explained the functioning and aims of the Northern Ireland History Curriculum in detail, described the teaching materials available and listed the obstacles teachers encounter in everyday teaching practice. He also presented the most recent developments in the curriculum.

IV. FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation of Minister Vladimir STRUGAR, his deputy, Ivan VAVRA, and his assistant for international cooperation, Ratimir KVATERNIK, who was present throughout the seminar and led several plenary sessions, indicates that the Ministry of Education paid great attention to this seminar, which is commendable. However, it was unfortunate that the seminar was not attended by the Assistant Minister and the Head of the Institute for Educational Improvement, i.e. the head of that part of the state administration directly responsible for the situation in the school system and for matters related to the in-service training of teachers. Also, the seminar was not attended by the advisor for history teaching from the Institute for Educational Improvement in Zagreb, who is directly responsible for the organisation of history teaching and in-service training of history teachers in Croatia.

Following the plenary sessions, all four working groups discussed various problems of history teaching, initial and in-service teacher training. There was insufficient time for discussion and the working groups were too big. Some participants did not have enough background information on the topics discussed and there was a feeling of a lack of common ground among the participants. The discussion was quite heated at times but remained academic. Some opposing ideas were heard which reflect the lack of mutual understanding and inability to reach a quick compromise on many important issues. Various opinions on certain questions, especially regarding the model of history teaching, could be heard - whether to keep the present two-level cycle (primary school, secondary school) or to design a completely different curriculum based on a thematic, rather than a chronological approach.

Certain discussion topics were so intertwined that it was impossible to discuss one without a prior discussion on the other. Some future seminar should focus on one or two topics at the most, for instance following the suggested sequence:

1. Aims of history teaching;
2. Syllabus (curriculum);
3. Textbooks;
4. Initial and in-service training.

It was obvious that some of the participants had not realised the size of the problem. The analysis of history teaching should be researched further and a case study on the feasibility of the reform should be prepared. Special attention should be paid to promoting awareness of the need for reform and the introduction of new teaching methods, in accordance with the Council of Europe guidelines on history teaching in the 21st Century. Certain teachers lack such awareness, while some others are opposed to change for various reasons.

This seminar serves as a good starting point for an overall and long-term process of history teaching reform.

The initial and in-service training of teachers should certainly continue. It is not to be expected that teachers should use new methods unless they are trained. This is also a prerequisite for developing and disseminating new and modern history textbooks. In that sense, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Council of Europe should be asked to support the publication of a journal on history teaching, the first issue of such a journal was presented at the seminar, and also to promote translations and publication of books and texts on history teaching methods.

APPENDIX I

GROUP WORK - REPORTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

There were several working groups at the seminar:

1. working group on syllabus;
2. working group on history textbooks;
3. working group on the initial and in-service training of history teachers;
4. working group on teaching sensitive and controversial issues.

At the end of their work, the rapporteurs from each working group gave in-depth reports summarising their main discussions and making suggestions on the further development of history teaching in Croatia. Here are the slightly abridged reports of the working groups.

WORKING GROUP ON THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

Moderator: Damir AGIČIĆ

Rapporteur: Snježana KOREN

The discussion on the history syllabus was primarily interesting because it provided an opportunity for teachers' opinions on curriculum reform. Different opinions were voiced but most agreed on the need for reform. The participants described the current syllabus as content-rich and over-detailed, which limits the creative possibilities of those who are guided by it - teachers and textbook authors, and consequently students themselves. Such an over-detailed syllabus results in superficially covering the material, prevents the consolidation of the material through applying different active learning methods that encourage developing students' skills. The consequence is students' poor knowledge as well as history being regarded as a difficult subject.

The following recommendations were agreed upon on the basis of the discussions and the participants' suggestions:

- History teaching reform is necessary, both in the sense of syllabus reform and the reform of teaching methods. Students and their needs should be the focus of the reform.
- However, the reform should not be carried out too quickly. It should follow a wide discussion on the purpose of the new syllabus, its contents and its aims, ie the aims of history teaching. The recommendation is to establish a working group that would include various experts, teaching specialists, former school teachers and others. In the first stage, the working group would draw up a proposal which could be discussed by anyone interested in history teaching.

- Since the participants of the discussion believe that the experience of other European countries can help with the design of the new syllabus (especially with avoiding mistakes), further cooperation with the Council of Europe is recommended. The experience in such processes can be offered through their experts, the materials developed, etc.
- All future changes should be well planned and accompanied by the extensive initial and in-service training of teachers as well as the development of teaching resources (textbooks, facsimiles, maps, CDs, video tapes, etc.). Such resources, complemented by in-service teacher training, would play an important role in terms of the quality of history teaching, and the Ministry of Education and Sports should subsidise the publishing companies that are producing these resources.
- These and other recommendations and conclusions should be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sports and every educational and scholastic institution that could and should help improve history teaching in Croatia.

WORKING GROUP ON HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Moderator: Magdalena NAJBAR-AGIČIĆ

Rapporteur: Julijana JAHN

The discussion was not long enough for all group members to give their opinion and point out all the arguments underpinning their viewpoints since the topic was pressing and individual opinions somewhat different.

Textbook pluralism was discussed. Nobody spoke in favour of choosing only one textbook, but some suggested limiting the number of textbooks on the market. The consensus was that the free market will decide which textbooks are the best and the most attractive and, consequently, their number will automatically be reduced.

The working group participants managed to agree upon the following points:

- The conclusion was that there is no ideal history textbook and that it cannot be compiled in the present circumstances; besides, textbook assessment is individual and depends on teachers' preferences and the aims they are trying to achieve in their teaching.
- All participants agreed that the decision on the quality and improvement of history textbooks cannot be discussed prior to defining the aims of history teaching and the principles of the new syllabus (plan and programme).
- It is impossible to implement significant improvements without progress in other areas connected with history textbooks (for instance, developments of methodology of history teaching, the initial and in-service training of history teachers and the improvement of the general financial conditions in schools).

- Certain qualities of what a “good textbook” should contain were mentioned in the discussion, for instance:
 - It should be suitable to the student age group targeted, content-wise fully understandable to them, so that they could use it in their work with the teacher as well as individually;
 - It should have appropriate pictorial and textual history sources and illustrative appendices: maps, graphs, a detailed glossary and all the necessary contents to facilitate finding the way through the textbook;
 - It should elaborate didactical aids with appropriate questions for revising the material while teaching and developing an overview of each lesson, topic or unit.

- It was pointed out that the a notion of a “good textbook” is undermined by the regulations of the recently adopted textbook standards, which define (and substantially limit) the number of pages per teaching unit, font, format and other details. It was also indicated that textbook standards contain contradictory and completely incompatible regulations.

WORKING GROUP ON THE INITIAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF HISTORY TEACHERS

Moderator: Neven BUDAK

Rapporteur: Margita MADUNIĆ

The participants tackled several important issues, including financial problems, insufficient school equipment, insufficient number of professional groups of history teachers organised by counties (which organise teachers’ meetings during a school year, in-service training, lectures and learning about new teaching methods), teacher traineeship, teacher certification examinations, poor methodological teacher training for university students.

Due to low salaries, the teachers tend to become unmotivated and lose interest in teaching and in-service training. Some sort of financial incentive for teachers should therefore be introduced to reward their efforts and encourage them to achieve better results in their work. The Ministry is supporting the initiative to provide schools with computers and train teachers to use them, which is ongoing, although, slowly.

A big issue is the lack of competent teaching advisors in Croatia. A good example is Rijeka, ie Primorsko-Goranska County, where many professional groups are organised for teachers to gain insight into new teaching methods, new literature, etc. Professional groups’ supervisors, appointed by the Institute of Educational Improvement, are often not trained adequately in methodology and are inactive. The conclusion would be that it is necessary to appoint people to such posts who are, willing to educate themselves in methodologies first of all.

The participants also tackled the issue of teacher traineeship and taking teacher certification examinations. It is often the case that traineeship is merely a formality. It was especially pointed out that quality history teacher training in methodology should begin at university since there is no proper preparation for students for their future jobs. It was suggested that the subject of methodology should be organised in such a way as to introduce students to every aspect of teaching.

It would also be a good idea to do something regarding literature on history teaching methodology since all available books on the subject are more or less obsolete. It was suggested that the Ministry should help schools acquire new books on the subject by sending them 10 different books annually for individual in-service training.

A proposal was made to introduce a history teacher's licence which would have to be renewed every five years. This would make teachers work more on their skills and try harder to become better teachers.

The Institute for Educational Improvement should play a key role in this.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should systematically organise the in-service training of history teachers in Croatia. Due to the lack of methodology experts in Croatia, the proposal is that the Ministry should bring foreign experts to such seminars. In this way, we are hopeful about the ongoing cooperation with the Council of Europe.

WORKING GROUP ON TEACHING SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Moderator: Mario STRECHA

Rapporteur: Mirko MARKOVIĆ

This working group discussed various aspects of teaching sensitive and controversial issues. It was emphasised that history teaching should not avoid such issues. If so, the students would only be influenced by media, politicians and "home history". History teachers should be trained in how to teach sensitive issues in general, not only the sensitive and controversial issues of modern history.

It was also concluded that, in the future curriculum, much more attention should be paid to teaching 20th Century history, which is important in the context of the modern world. The new curriculum should be flexible matching the needs of certain regions, student age groups, while the interest of the pupils themselves should be taken into consideration. The appropriate preparation of history materials, which were excluded from teaching for political reasons, should be carefully done so that teaching sensitive issues would not cause more harm than good.

The agreement of this working group was also that regular annual seminars should be organised, if necessary even more frequently, especially when it comes to topics which had been avoided for political reasons until now.

APPENDIX II

PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Thursday 3 April 2003

Arrival of the participants

Friday 4 April 2003

08h45–09h30 Briefing and preparatory meeting with all speakers and organisers

09h30–11h00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Mr Ivan VAVRA, Deputy Minister of Education and Sports of Croatia

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Mr Vladimir STRUGAR Ph.D., Minister of Education and Sports of Croatia
- ii. Mr Ante SIMONIĆ Ph.D., Vice-Prime Minister of Croatian Government
- iii. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Head of History Education Section, Council of Europe

Keynote presentations on:

History teaching in Croatia by Mr Damir AGIČIĆ Ph.D., Faculty of Arts University of Zagreb

11h00-11h30 Coffee break

11h30–13h00 **Plenary Session on history curricula:**

- *The example of Croatia* by Ms Snježana KOREN, Primary school Eugen Kumičić, Velika Gorica
- *The example of Hungary* by Mr Peter BIHARI, Föv. Fazckas Mihály Gyakorló Iskola, Budapest

Discussion

13h00-14h30	Lunch
14h30–16h00	Plenary Session on the development of new history textbooks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The example of Croatia</i> by Mr Mario STRECHA Ph.D., Faculty of Arts University of Zagreb - <i>A good history textbook</i> by Dr Heike KARGE, European University Institute, Italy
16h00-16h30	Coffee break
16h30-18h00	Working groups on curricula and textbooks
Around 18h30	Reception

Saturday 5 April 2003

09h30–11h00	Plenary Session on the training of history teachers and on how to teach controversial and sensitive issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The example of Croatia in teacher training</i> by Mr Neven BUDAK Ph.D., Faculty of Arts University of Zagreb - <i>The example of Croatia in teaching controversial and sensitive issues</i> by Mr Mirko MARKOVIĆ, II. Secondary school Beli Manastir - <i>The experience of Northern Ireland</i> by Mr Alan McCULLY, School of Education, University of Ulster, Coleraine <p>Discussion</p>
11h00–11h30	Coffee break
11h30–13h00	Working groups on the training of history teachers and on how to teach controversial and sensitive issues
13h00–14h30	Lunch
14h30–16h00	Plenary Session <p>Summing up of the results of the group discussions by the rapporteurs of each working groups</p>
Around 16h30	Closing of the seminar

APPENDIX III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL RAPPORTEUR

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