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**Joint Programme of co-operation between the European
Commission and the Council of Europe to strengthen
democratic stability in North Caucasus**

History teaching in schools in the North Caucasus

2001-2002

Report

Strasbourg

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and the Council of Europe to strengthen
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History teaching in schools in the North Caucasus

2001-2002

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The views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of questions on history teaching in the secondary school in the Joint Programme of Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe aimed at strengthening democratic stability in the North Caucasus is of particular importance. Taking note of what and how the younger generation assimilates from the historical experience of their own country and of the world as a whole is evidence of a desire both to solve the problems that exist in this region today and to predetermine the prospect of future positive development. Thus the teaching of history is seen as a vital element linking past, present and future.

The contents for the cooperation programme on the teaching of history in secondary schools in the North Caucasus region was governed by the following priorities:

- the aims and tasks in studying history in the secondary school;
- the selection and study of material in school history courses: problems of interpretation and assessment, confirmation of democratic and humanist values;
- dialogue between teacher and pupil as entities of equal value in the teaching process;
- textbooks and other aids used in the study of history: present situation and prospects;
- modern teaching technologies and methods of instruction;
- the system for training and retraining of history teachers.

Joint work was carried out in 2001-2002 by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministries of Education of 10 republics and regions in the Russian Federation. The involvement in this work of specialists from a number of European countries at the invitation of the Council of Europe provided the opportunity for a comparative examination of the above issues, revealing common problems and possible ways of solving them.

II. SEMINARS IN HISTORY TEACHING: TOPICS, PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

Programme of seminars

Five seminars were held in cities in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation in 2001-2002:

23-24 April 2001 “History teaching in secondary schools: teacher training and history textbooks”, Dombay, Karachaevo-Cherkessya Republic.

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| 5-6 October 2001 | “How history can strengthen reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance in present-day society”, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkarya Republic. |
| 26-27 April 2002 | “Interpretation of historical facts when teaching history in secondary school”, Elista, Kalmykya Republic. |
| 18-19 November 2002 | Training seminar for history teachers from Chechnya, Kislovodsk, Stavropol Region. |
| 20-21 November 2002 | “New interactive methods in teaching history in secondary school”, Kislovodsk, Stavropol Region. |

Organisers and participants

The seminars were organised by the Council of Europe jointly with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministries of Education of republics and regions in the North Caucasus. The Council of Europe’s representatives, Ms Alison Cardwell and Ms Tatiana Milko, Russian Federation Ministry of Education representatives, Dr Vladimir Batsyn and Mr Efim Gelman, and senior officials from the Ministries of Education of the Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya Republic, the Kabardino-Balkarya Republic, the Kalmykya Republic, the Stavropol Region and the Russian Federation acted as seminar organisers and leaders.

The seminars were attended by researchers in the field of school education and authors of school textbooks, history teachers from urban and rural schools, specialists in initial and in-service teacher training, staff from publishing houses producing textbooks and teaching materials and editors of pedagogical journals. Among those attending were representatives of 11 republics and administrative regions¹: the Adygea Republic, the Republic of Dagestan, the Ingush Republic, the Kabardino-Balkarya Republic, the Kalmykya Republic, the Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya Republic, the Chechen Republic, the Krasnodar, the Rostov on Don and the Stavropol Regions.

In addition to Russian specialists, experts from a number of European countries invited by the Council of Europe – Mr Michael Riley, Ms Cheryl Stafford and Mr Benedict Walsh (United Kingdom), Ms Christina Del Moral (Spain), Ms Mette Molland and Mr Harald Frode Skram (Norway) and Ms Maria Luisa de Bivar Black (Portugal) – made a substantial contribution to the work of the seminars.

The numbers attending each seminar varied from 35 - 120.

Organisation of seminar work

At the first plenary sessions, the participants were welcomed by *Mr Vladimir Semenov*, President of the Karachaevo-Cherkessia Republic, *Mr Kirsan Ilyumzhinov*, President of the Kalmykya Republic, *Ms Khauti Shokhrokov*, Deputy Head of Government of the Kabardino-Balkarya Republic, and ministers and senior officials from Ministries of Education and Science in whose territory the seminars were held – *Alla Afanas’eva* (Karachaevo-Cherkessya Republic), *Professor Aleksandr Solov’ev*

¹ The Republic of North Osetiya-Alania

(Kalmykya Republic), and *Ms Valentina Vishnyakova*, Rector of the Stavropol Region Institute for in-service teacher training.

Dr Vladimir Batsyn and *Mr Efim Gelman*, representing the Federal Ministry of Education, spoke about urgent problems in history teaching in secondary schools in the Russian Federation, including such teaching in schools in the North Caucasus region, and about the work of the Ministry aimed at resolving these problems. Their contributions stressed the constructive role of the Joint Programme.

The contributions by *Ms Alison Cardwell* and *Ms Tatiana Milko* from the Council of Europe described the tasks, the principal trends and the results of the Council of Europe's work in history education in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st Century. They gave an account of the most important international (including regional) projects. One of the examples was experience in the preparation of a joint textbook on the history of the Caucasus by teams of authors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation. Particular attention was given to co-operation between the Council of Europe and educational institutions in the Russian Federation. It was emphasised that this was directed towards solving priority problems in present-day history education in schools in Russia – the improvement of textbooks, teacher training and the development of modern pedagogical technologies (methodologies). Thus, from the very beginning, the work of the seminars fitted into the broad context of international experience in teaching history in school.

The principal work of the seminars consisted in discussions in plenary sessions and round tables, as well as discussions in working groups. Presentations were made by specialists in history teaching and history teacher training from Moscow and the North Caucasus region, as well as by experts from other European countries. Their contributions examined general problems and specific pedagogical situations. Meetings in round-table form, for example for the discussion of modern school textbooks on history, made possible a wide-ranging exchange of views on selected problems. Examples from teaching practice were analysed and pedagogical planning situations were discussed in the working groups. All this made it possible to discuss important and urgent problems in the form of a dialogue with all the participants. Visits to history lessons and contact with pupils in secondary schools in Elista and Kislovodsk were useful.

Both the presentations and discussions in the plenary sessions and conclusions from the working groups were taken into account in summing up the results of each seminar. The general seminar recommendations were based on these.

The cultural programme, providing opportunities to discover the spiritual and artistic culture and traditions of the peoples living in the North Caucasus, was an integral part of the seminars.

III. PAPERS AND DISCUSSIONS AT THE SEMINARS

Seminar on “History teaching in secondary schools: teacher training and history textbooks” (23-24 April 2001, Dombay, Karachaevo-Cherkessya Republic).

The aims of the seminar were to:

- discuss teaching history, in particular, the training of history teachers and the preparation and publication of history textbooks in the republics and regions of the North Caucasus;
- analyse the most urgent needs in teaching history in secondary schools in the North Caucasus;
- look at the improvement of school history textbooks and the training of history teachers.

Topic: history textbooks

The following groups of problems were addressed in presentations and contributions by seminar participants:

- what should a modern history textbook be like?
- how can the existing history textbooks in use in schools in the North Caucasus be evaluated?
- how do textbooks and other teaching materials (source books, workbooks etc) correlate?

The presentation by **Mr Michael Riley** entitled “The preparation of history textbooks: criteria for the selection of contents and presentation of the materials, the role of the textbook in the classroom: an author’s view point” gave a complete description of a modern history textbook. The following important qualities of a textbook were referred to, on the basis of experience in producing school textbooks in the United Kingdom: conformity with the requirements of the National Curriculum and examination requirements; conformity with the age resources and tasks of development of pupils; the critical use of sources in the process of historical research; examination of historical interpretations; development of pupils’ intellectual activities and their capacity to set out historical material. The selection and presentation of the material in the textbook as well as the tasks are aimed at involving schoolchildren in active educative work.

The participants, while supporting the view of an ideal model for a school history textbook set out in the presentation, expressed a number of opinions of the history textbooks currently available to pupils and teachers in Russian schools. The fact that many different history textbooks are being published and there is an opportunity for choice was welcomed on the whole. In reality, however, it was sometimes difficult to make this choice because of the unsatisfactory quality of some textbooks, overloaded

with information and with insufficient pedagogical input etc. Rural schools were particularly limited in their opportunities for choice.

Unfortunately, in many textbooks, the issue of historical interpretation is not solved, because the authors confine themselves to one view of the problem only. Therefore, the controversial burden of comparing different views on complex and historical events is borne entirely by the teachers, and they do not always have the necessary documents and materials available.

In the participants' opinion, the relationship between world, national and local history is a particular problem for Russian history textbooks. It was proposed, in connection with the publication of regional history textbooks that began in the last decade, that a textbook on the history of the peoples of the North Caucasus should be produced.

It was observed that the renewal of history textbooks for Russian schools should be accompanied by the publication of new handbooks for teachers, as well as collections of documents and teaching materials for pupils. The opinion was expressed that history textbooks should combine the elements of a textbook, an anthology and a handbook for teachers.

Topic: training of history teachers

The presentation by *Ms Cheryl Stafford* entitled "New methods in history teaching: the example of Northern Ireland" gave an account of changes in the tasks and working methods of history teachers. Instead of the traditional exposition of historical events, the analysis of different interpretations of historical facts, a critical study of various historical sources (including presentations using modern technological resources), empathy, immersion in a historical situation, role-play, etc. were brought to centre stage. This imposes new requirements on the training of history teachers.

Communications by representatives of individual republics and regions stressed that, in recent years, when school history education was being reorganised, there was a great deal of active work by in-service training institutes and professional groups. However, the principal subject of attention was the renewal of the content of history courses, while equally important tasks in the application of new approaches in instruction were often overlooked.

It was pointed out in the recommendations adopted by the seminar participants that, in addition to general improvements to the history teacher training system, special attention should be given to solving such problems as:

- establishing continuity between initial and in-service training of history teachers;
- expanding the opportunities for professional contacts among teachers within the region (setting-up history teachers' associations, holding teachers' conferences).

Seminar on “How history can strengthen reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance in present-day society” (5-6 October 2001, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkarya Republic)

The aims of the seminar were to:

- discuss how history teaching in secondary schools can strengthen reconciliation and mutual understanding in present-day society;
- analyse how history teaching can help to develop such skills as tolerance;
- discuss what themes from the history of the North Caucasus can be used as examples of mutual understanding and co-operation among the peoples of this region.

The following presentations were made **at plenary sessions:**

Dr Lyudmila Aleksashkina (Moscow): “New concepts in history education in secondary schools in the Russian Federation”;

Mr Alim Tetuev (Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Kabardino-Balkarya Republic): “How history teaching in the regional context can help to strengthen reconciliation and promote tolerance in present-day society”;

Mr Benedict Walsh (United Kingdom): “Teaching history in present-day secondary schools for reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance: the example of the United Kingdom”;

Ms Christina del Moral (Spain): “How history can help to strengthen reconciliation and promote tolerance in present-day society: the example of Spain”.

The general content of the views expressed by the authors of the presentations on the problem was recognition that the special potential of history in reinforcing mutual understanding and tolerance in society lay in such elements of historical knowledge as:

- an introduction to systems of values that have developed in various historical communities; comparing them, showing features in common and specificities; explaining why people look at things in different ways;
- showing the various ways in which people and nations have interacted in the past and interact now; cooperation, trade and cultural contacts on the one hand, and conflicts, conquests and wars on the other; it was generally accepted that the latter tendency should not drive out the former, as is sometimes still the case in school textbooks;
- analysis of specific conflict situations and events that have arisen because of social-political, ethnic-national, religious or other confrontation (civil wars, the Northern Ireland problem, the Middle East crisis, etc.);

- reference to actual participants in events connected with cooperation, or conversely, with conflicts – revealing what these people were striving for, what they felt etc; these people may include both outstanding political or other figures and “ordinary people”;
- the use of different historical sources, comparing them and developing one’s own opinions and attitudes;
- analysis of specific regional or national events in the broad context of European and world history;
- showing the multicultural nature of present-day society.

It was emphasised that the real contribution of school history lessons to words strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance depends on the inclusion of the above-mentioned elements in history textbooks and in teacher training practices.

The presentations and discussions also referred to the most frequently encountered stereotypes preventing the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance among peoples (the predominant interest in the history of wars and conflicts, presentation of historical events from the viewpoint of only one of the parties involved, political commitments, reflection of the view prevailing at a particular time, etc.).

The following issues were discussed in the working group sessions:

- 1) What are the aims of teaching history in secondary schools in the 21st Century?
- 2) What values should be developed by history in present-day secondary schools?
- 3) How can history teaching strengthen mutual understanding in present-day society?
- 4) How can tolerance be taught through history in present-day secondary schools?
- 5) Which topics in the history of the North Caucasus can be used as examples of mutual understanding and co-operation among the peoples in this region?

The tasks of personality development and civic education of the pupils were considered as priorities when defining the aims of teaching history in secondary schools. In these circumstances, the points at issue were self-determination and the socialisation of pupils in relation to their region, the country as a whole and the world of today. Similarly, in the opinion of a number of participants, the system of values to be brought out in school courses should represent the values of the ethnic or regional community and the values common to the state and to all humankind (as proclaimed in United Nations’ documents).

Many of the examples of mutual understanding and co-operation among the peoples living in the North Caucasus contain information on trade, cultural and other contacts and mutual support during years of severe trial and war. “Oral” history, forming part of the history of the family, a native village or town, is an important source of such

information. The participants stressed that the pupils themselves could collect sources of this kind and carry out their own research.

Familiarisation with ethnic traditions, folklore and the history of cultural links (for example, Caucasian themes in the works of Russian writers, A.S. Pushkin, L.N. Tolstoy and others) has a special part to play in strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance in relations among the peoples of the North Caucasus.

Proposals were made in the conclusions and recommendations by seminar participants regarding the need to write a textbook on the history and culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus and for setting up a history teachers' association for the Southern Federal administrative region. A particular wish was that the Council of Europe should continue its work in helping to improve history teaching in secondary schools in the Russian Federation.

Seminar on “Interpretation of historical facts when teaching history in secondary schools” (26-27 April 2002, Elista, Kalmykya Republic)

The aims of the seminar were to:

- develop a shared understanding of the ways in which history is open to different interpretations;
- consider the ways in which textbooks can develop an understanding of different interpretations of history;
- develop approaches to teaching and learning which promote critical thinking and understanding.

The following presentations were made at the plenary sessions:

Dr Lyudmila Aleksashkina (Moscow) “New approaches in interpretation of historical facts in present-day textbooks: an author’s overview”;

Professor Aleksandr Solovov (Minister of Education and Science, Kalmykya Republic) “New approaches to history teaching in present-day secondary schools: examples of good practice in the Kalmykya Republic”;

Mr Michael Riley (United Kingdom) “The teaching of interpretations of history in secondary schools in the United Kingdom”;

Ms Mette Molland (Norway) “The interpretation of facts when teaching history in present-day secondary schools in Norway: a publisher’s overview”.

The contributors considered the question under discussion at the seminar from the viewpoints of a textbook author, a manager of an education system, a professor in a higher education institution and a publisher. A full and multi-faceted panorama of views was built up. The fact that a number of common propositions was stated, even with the natural diversity of viewpoints in the presentations, should be regarded as positive.

- Historical facts are sacred to historians because they are unique, unrepeatable and irreversible, but it is nevertheless subject to many interpretations even by participants in events and contemporaries, to say nothing of their numerous descendants, and historians in particular.
- In the present information society, it is undesirable and practically impossible to retain a monopoly on the interpretation of historical facts. The changes in school history courses in Russia that took place in the 1990s and culminated in the transition from the dominance of one doctrine to pluralism of approaches is one of the most striking confirmations of this process.
- There is a risk with a multiplicity of interpretations of historical events that real facts from the past become indistinguishable in pupils' minds from virtual facts derived from modern communication resources. Therefore, the vital tasks in the study of history in school include the comparison of various historical versions and interpretations of events and the choosing of the most convincing one. As a rule, this task forms part of the requirements of national curricula and standards.
- When examining various interpretations of historical facts it is important to draw the pupils' attention to the need for:
 - avoidance of a one-sided approach; representing a fact as a complex phenomenon, taking account of its place in the historical context;
 - comparison of interpretations, establishment of similarities and differences;
 - critical analysis of versions and evaluations;
 - showing how a particular interpretation of facts can be explained and which ideas, political, ethical or other motives may serve as a basis for it.
- The highest level of work with historical interpretations presupposes the pupils' ability to define, state and defend their approach to the events and phenomena being examined, and to put forward their own interpretations.

In addition to common approaches, the papers gave specific examples of presentation and examination of historical interpretations in textbooks and history lessons. Information from Mr Riley on experience of work by pupils in various age groups on interpretations of history caused considerable interest.

The following issues were discussed at the working group sessions:

- 1) What does "interpretation of historical facts" mean from the point of view of textbook authors and teachers?
- 2) Does the difference of interpretations of the same facts appear in school textbooks and lessons? Give examples.
- 3) What stereotypes from your point of view still exist in Russian school textbooks on world, national and regional history?
- 4) What kinds of stereotype should be rejected in history lessons in secondary schools in order to strengthen reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance in present-day society?

- 5) How should historical sources be presented in school history textbooks? What teaching methods can be used to develop pupils' interest in working with historical sources?
- 6) What is the role of alternative history textbooks in present-day secondary schools?
- 7) What is the role of pupils in the interpretation of facts when learning history? How should the three levels of interpretation of facts (authors – teachers – pupils) be linked in order to help pupils develop such skills as critical thinking, open-mindedness and the ability to argue (defend) points of view?

During the discussions, it was noted that favourable conditions for the free interpretation of historical facts had now developed in Russian schools: the old limitations had been overcome and new limitations had not been established. Textbook authors and teachers are able to select and interpret historical facts by virtue of the flexible form of teaching programmes. There is a wide range of history textbooks representing various historical views.

At the same time, stereotypical approaches and unresolved problems in the selection of historical material persist in textbooks. The most important of these lie in the following:

- a one-sided approach, an insufficient balance in the historical picture: predominance of political history with insufficient coverage of cultural history or social history; dominance of the history of the state with insufficient attention paid to the history of different peoples, etc.;
- poor co-ordination of material on the history of Russia and world history, emphasis on Russia's special place in the world historical process;
- overloading of textbooks with facts with insufficient attention being paid to their analysis and interpretation by the pupils.

The participants devised recommendations intended for textbook authors, teachers and institutions responsible for the in-service training of history teachers, with specific proposals for improvements in each area of activity. The recommendations also proposed that holding such seminars should continue.

Training seminar for history teachers from Chechnya (18-19 November 2002, Kislovodsk)

This seminar had a special place in the activities of the Council of Europe and the Russian Ministry of Education in the North Caucasus. It was organised for teachers from Chechnya, and also teachers from schools for the children of Chechen refugees in Ingushetia. It was attended by 20 Chechen teachers, senior officials from the Ministries of Education of the Russian Federation and the Stavropol Region, representatives and experts from the Council of Europe, Moscow and the Stavropol Region.

The aims of the seminar:

A **range of tasks** was decided upon at the seminar, on the basis of the special conditions under which Chechen teachers now work and they were to:

- discuss with teachers from Chechnya new approaches to teaching history in secondary schools;
- discuss issues in the interrelation of world, national and regional history in present-day history textbooks for secondary schools;
- examine modern methods of working with textbooks and other sources of historical information – documents, “oral history” materials, etc.;
- exchange views on how to teach controversial and sensitive issues;
- discuss the possibilities of using interactive methods in teaching that promote the development of cognitive activity by the pupils and their interest in history.

Addresses at the opening of the seminar.

Ms Valentina Vishnyakova (Rector of the Stavropol Institute for the initial and in-service training of teachers) welcomed those attending the seminar and wished them success in their work.

Dr Vladimir Batsyn (Deputy Head of Department, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) gave an account of the work of the Ministry of Education in contributing to the development of history education in the North Caucasus region. He made special reference to the importance of the Ministry of Education’s cooperation with the Council of Europe. The joint seminars gave an opportunity for discussing and solving the most urgent problems in history teaching in a modern school with a wide audience of teachers, lecturers in higher pedagogical education institutions and representatives of the staff of in-service training.

Ms Tatiana Milko (Programme Officer, History Education Section, Council of Europe Directorate General IV - Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport) welcomed the participants on behalf of the Council of Europe.

In her presentation, Ms Milko gave an account of the founding principles and democratic values which guide the Council of Europe in its work; the key trends in the work and programme of the Council of Europe in the study of history in secondary schools, from the creation of the Council to the present day. The consistent development of this work was illustrated by the example of history textbook preparation for secondary schools in the 1950s, 1960-1970s and 1990s.

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and institutions and organisations working in school education in Eastern Europe and Russia was the subject of special examination. In the joint Council of Europe – RF Education Ministry programmes in 1996-2000, most attention was devoted to problems in developing educational standards, the creation and use of school history textbooks and the initial and in-

service training of history teachers. Since 2001, methods of teaching history in secondary schools have been included in the cooperation programmes. It is not considered in isolation, but in the context of other issues that arise when teaching history in schools: What should we study? How should we study? Why should we study? These issues were also to be addressed at this seminar.

Presentations at the first plenary session

Dr Lyudmila Aleksashkina (Moscow) “New approaches in history teaching in secondary schools in the Russian Federation”. She gave an account of present-day approaches to the principal constituents of a teacher’s work, such as defining the aims of teaching, selection of historical material, organising pupils’ studies and evaluation of teaching results.

The new approaches presuppose:

- defining teaching tasks as the planned results of pupils’ work;
- establishing the continuity and sequence of tasks for the basic (classes 5-9) and senior (classes 10-11) stages in the school;
- taking account of requirements as to the level of pupil education prescribed by the educational standard (requirements are formulated according to the following groups: 1) chronological knowledge, ability to work with chronology; 2) knowledge of facts, working with facts; 3) working with sources; 4) description (reconstruction) of events; 5) analysis and explanation of events; 6) examination of historical versions and evaluations).

In choosing historical material, allowance is made for the fact that history courses in classes 5-6 are designed mainly as narrative courses and in classes 7-9 as systematic courses (all the principal areas of life of societies are described – economic development and social relations, domestic and foreign policy, spiritual and artistic culture) and in classes 10-11 as problem-based courses. Due to the separation of federal, regional-national and school components in all domestic Russian history courses, a substantial place is allotted to the study of the history of a native region and the peoples who live there.

Particular importance is attached to expanding the forms of lesson and educational work for pupils. This involves active forms of work with the textbook and the study of a wide variety of historical sources. It is recommended that more frequent use be made of forms of lesson providing for “immersion” in specific historical situations such as role-playing, etc.

The presentation described the system of unified final history examinations devised in 2000-2002 to be undertaken at the end of the full secondary school.

This is a written examination which includes various types of tasks:

- a) multiple-choice tasks;
- b) tasks with a short straightforward answer;
- c) a set of three tasks on a document and four tasks with a detailed straightforward answer.

The subsequent work of the seminar was in **sessions on specific topics**, in which the following issues were discussed:

- Planning and designing a history lesson;
- Working with textbooks when teaching history in present-day secondary schools;
- Methods of teaching history on the basis of various sources – oral history materials, documents, mass media, etc;
- The balance in teaching world, national and regional history;
- Different approaches to teaching controversial and sensitive issues;
- Development of historical thought patterns in the process of teaching history.

In accordance with the training mission of the seminar, the sessions were in the form of interactive dialogue, in which all those present participated.

Dr Yuriy Troitskiy (Moscow), *Ms Luisa de Bivar Black* (Portugal) and *Mr Harald Frode Skram* (Norway) gave presentations on the above topics. They also acted as animators in subsequent discussions. Discussions were held in plenary sessions and in the working groups.

In the course of the discussions, two groups of issues emerged as the principal areas of examination: a) the choice of historical material and how it is presented in history textbooks; b) methods of teaching history.

On each group of issues, the Chechen teachers spoke of the problems that were most important to them. How best should the history of the Chechen people be presented in federal Russian history textbooks? The information in modern textbooks seems to be insufficient and extremely debatable as regards interpretations and evaluations. The information on the present situation in the Republic given by television and other mass media is even more contradictory. How can the teacher help the pupils to understand this information? How is it to be related to what the children see all round them? The following question was also raised: why do we devote so much attention to wars and say so little about cultural contacts, links between peoples and about their values and traditions? Examples were given of how the image of a friend and the image of an enemy were created using various sources.

Those attending the seminar started the discussion on methods of teaching history in present-day schools with a description of existing textbooks. The shortage of modern textbooks in Chechen schools and the poor quality of the teaching aids available leads

some teachers to raise a paradoxical question: how can we work with pupils without a textbook? The solution to this problem apparently lies in bringing in the widest possible range of historical sources – documents, photographs, evidence of “oral history”, literary works, etc. In this connection, Dr Yu. Troitskiy gave an account of the system that he had developed for the study of history without a textbook, by reference to historical documents and texts. The paper generated lively interest and various opinions were expressed, ranging from support of the method to disagreement. At the same time, a constructive suggestion was made: the teachers themselves could initiate the collection of documentary history in their region.

Those attending the seminar visited history lessons in classes 6, 9 and 11 in a secondary schools in Kislovodsk. The school visit and contacts with the pupils were of particular interest and importance to the teachers from Chechnya.

The following points were made in the **conclusions** adopted by those attending the seminar:

- The training seminar organised by the Council of Europe jointly with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation provided considerable professional help and human support for the teachers from Chechnya, who work under difficult conditions;
- the Federal Ministry of Education should be asked to continue to organise such seminars;
- the teachers considered it desirable to raise the question of the preparation of a collection of documentary materials on the history of Chechnya in the 19th and 20th Centuries;
- it is desirable to expand professional contacts for teachers in the North Caucasus region and increase opportunities for exchanges of views.

Seminar on “New interactive methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools” (20-21 November 2002, Kislovodsk).

As in the case of the seminars held in Dombai, Nalchik and Elista, those attending this seminar were representatives of 11 Russian Federation territorial entities: the Adygea Republic, the Republic of North Osetiya-Alania, the Republic of Dagestan, the Ingush Republic, the Kabardino-Balkarya Republic, the Kalmykya Republic, the Karachaevo-Cherkessya Republic, the Chechen Republic, the Krasnodar, the Rostov on Don and the Stavropol Regions.

The aims of the seminar were to:

- discuss ways of using interactive methods in teaching history in secondary schools as a means of developing a pupil’s personality;
- examine opportunities for productive and creative work with textbooks and other sources of historical information, including the use of new technologies;

- define ways of using multi-perspective and comparative approaches in teaching history in present-day secondary schools.

At the **opening of the seminar**:

Dr Vadim Davanov (Vice-Rector of the Stavropol Institute for the initial and in-service training of teachers) welcomed those attending the seminar.

Dr Vladimir Batsyn (Deputy Head of Department, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) gave an account of the work of the Ministry of Education in contributing to the development of history education in the North Caucasus region and of co-operation between by the Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe.

Ms Tatiana Milko (Programme Officer, History Education Section, Council of Europe Directorate General IV - Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport) welcomed the participants on behalf of the Council of Europe. She gave an account of the work of the Council of Europe in history teaching in secondary schools, of its co-operation with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and of its achievements and future development.

Presentations at the plenary sessions

Dr Lyudmila Aleksashkina (Moscow) “New approaches in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation”.

The presentation emphasised that the basic element in teaching history in the present-day should be interactive methods. This approach had started to be developed in Russian pedagogy in 1970s. It is now used at all stages in teaching work – in defining the aims of teaching, the selection of historical material, organising pupils’ studies and evaluation of teaching results.

In addition to a description of the historical material to be studied, present-day school history standards and programmes include requirements to the skills which pupils should acquire. This involves skills in working with chronology and facts, study of historical sources, description (reconstruction) of events, classification and explanation of an event or phenomenon and an ability to evaluate events.

Accordingly, even at the lesson planning stage, the teacher asks not so much the traditional question “What shall I tell the pupils” as “What will the pupils be doing?” Co-ordination of the aims of the teacher with those of the pupil is a vital element in modern target-setting. When starting work on any period or topic, the teacher not only tells the pupils what the general tasks before them are, but also suggests that they decide together how best to do this and which task a pupil wishes to choose for individual work.

Priority is given in lessons to active forms of working with a textbook and to the study of a wide variety of historical sources. Recommendations on developing skills in working with documents were formulated. They provide for pupils who were able to accomplish the following:

- seeking the necessary information in a source;
- describing the views of the textbook author (compiler), authentication of the source;
- expressing an opinion on the purpose and value of the source;
- comparison of data from various sources, identifying similarities and differences, and expressing an opinion on how the differences can be explained;
- stating and justifying their own attitude to the information in the source.

A particular role in teaching is given to the analysis of historical versions and evaluations with interpretations. Here the pupils learn to:

- compare various historical versions and interpretations and identify similarities and differences;
- express an opinion on the extent to which particular versions can be proved and the approaches (criteria) on which they are based, and use elements of critical analysis;
- formulate and explain (prove) their own interpretation and evaluation of the most important events and personalities in history.

In conclusion, it was stressed that multilateral dialogue (teacher-pupil, textbook author-pupil, source author-pupil, pupil-pupil etc) provides fertile ground for modern methods of teaching history in school.

Dr Yuriy Troitskiy “The role of interactive methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation”. The author regards a **real teaching dialogue** as the key factor in the interactive method of studying history in secondary schools. For this to take place, the following conditions must be complied with:

- an interest in the pupils’ own opinion and their cognitive and life experience;
- selection of historical material in such a way that it can generate different but equivalent interpretations and versions;
- the creation of a communicative teaching situation in which every significant statement by the pupil is taken up and discussed.

The principal motto of present-day history teaching can be expressed in the slogan “from knowledge to understanding”.

The paper presented the author’s system of teaching history on the basis of documentary-historiographic sets (in this connection, the idea that a textbook as a teaching aid was becoming unnecessary was expressed). Each set includes documents and materials describing the same events from several viewpoints – a participant in the events, a historian, a foreigner. Provision is also made for a fourth position – the “jocking position”, i.e. a comical perception of an event or personality. The pupils are more interested in entering into dialogue with such sources than with the boring and colourless text of a textbook.

Ms Luisa de Bivar Black “The use of interactive methods in teaching history in secondary schools: the example of Portugal”.

It was observed in the paper that the most common criteria that can be used today to classify history teaching methods in secondary schools is “the teacher-oriented method” and “the pupil-oriented method”. One can also speak of “hard”– disciplined and dry – and “soft” – subjective and analytical – teaching.

The terms relating to the two teaching styles are listed below:

- terms open to interpretation (“soft”) – to know, to understand, to assume, to assess, to recognise the value of, to enjoy, to reflect, to explain, to analyse;
- terms not open to interpretation (“hard”) – to write, to quote, to define, to distinguish, to decide, to construct, to list, to compare, to contrast.

In present-day schools, active teaching strategies based on comprehensive study of the events of the past seem to be the most promising.

When these are used, the following skills vital to a knowledge of history are developed:

- empathy – the ability to understand how people thought in the past;
- establishment of historical links (causality) – analysis of events from the point of view of their changes and continuity, causes and consequences, prospects;
- explanation of facts and their evaluation;
- critical thinking.

The following are the constituents of interactive study:

- a clear perception of teaching tasks by a teacher;
- definition by a teacher of criteria for evaluation of achievements;
- special planning of pupils’ work;
- discussion of tasks and working rules in a classroom;
- a teacher’s supervision of pupils’ work;
- openness of teacher and pupils in their relations;
- the teaching aims are the starting point for the organisation of work and the criteria for evaluation of results.

Mr Harald Frode Skram “How to use interactive methods when teaching history in secondary schools: the example of Norway”.

The presentation noted that modern educational standards and programmes assume that, as a result of studying history, pupils should not only obtain a certain amount of knowledge but should also develop intellectual skills. The fundamental chain of development in this case may be expressed by the following proposals:

- I am interested in something;
- I carry out research;
- I come to a conclusion.

However, authoritative conclusions already reached by someone predominate in history textbooks, and it is proposed that pupils should learn established facts.

In an effort to overcome the determinist nature of the text in textbooks, the author proposed that problem questions should be used in teaching. Their basic forms are “questions for memory” (when the information could be found in various sources) and “questions for explanation” (when there is no answer and pupils should find their own answer to the question). The presentation stressed that a problem situation does not arise solely because the question “Why?” has been put or a discussion is scheduled. The problem situation arises when a pupil faces up to the task.

The speaker observed that practically all forms of text and graphics in history textbooks can be used as a subjects for discussions. Examples are given of typical tasks for discussions based on textbook materials. They propose:

- defining the essential nature of events described in a chapter or paragraph and explaining why this can be regarded as their essential nature;
- establishing the link between events that occurred earlier and later in one country (vertical link) or at one time but in different countries (horizontal link);
- revealing how events in one area of life in society have influenced another area;
- preparing tasks in writing (statements, letters, articles etc.), playing the role of a particular historical person, a participant in an event, etc.

The participants were active, in particular when discussing interactive methods in history teaching in the working group sessions. Information on practical experience in using these methods was received with great interest. Thus a communication on the experience of secondary school No. 10 “Lik” in Nevinnomyssk by **Dr A.A. Kalkaev**, Director, was much appreciated.

A substantial part of the joint activities was devoted to practical work on interactive methods. This work was directed by Dr Yu. Troitskiy, Ms L. de Bivar Black and Mr H. Frode Skram. Those attending the seminar worked with no less enthusiasm than pupils when discussing controversial and sensitive issues.

The following opinions and wishes were expressed in the **conclusions** adopted by participants of the seminar:

- it is desirable, when teaching history in secondary schools in the Russian Federation, to pay more attention to personality development in pupils, the competence constituent of their training and formation of the qualities of a citizen of their own region, country and the world;
- it is essential to promote the dissemination of experience in interactive teaching – through publications and the organisation of seminars;
- institutions responsible for teacher training and should pay more attention to the development of interactive methods in teaching history;
- the creation of a regional association of history teachers in the North Caucasus should be supported.

IV. SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations from the seminars held in 2001-2002 in the North Caucasus on various problems in teaching history in present-day secondary schools were complementary and developed each other to a considerable extent. The following proposals were common to all the seminars:

- Recognition of the importance and practical use of the seminars in 2001-2002. These seminars made it possible to bring authors of programmes and textbooks, history teachers, Education Ministry officials, publishers and teacher training specialists into the discussion of urgent problems in history teaching in secondary schools. The general wish was expressed that these seminars should continue.
- The participants of the seminar pointed out that the discussion of how history teaching in secondary schools can help to strengthen reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance was well-timed. This discussion prompted all the teachers to pay particular attention to the aims in teaching history and their humanistic orientation. Support for the use of modern teaching methods such as interactive teaching, working with a wide variety of historical sources, etc. was expressed in the seminars.
It was stressed that the ideas expressed at the seminars should be implemented in a classroom practice.
- The teachers made recommendations directed to the authors of modern Russian history textbooks for secondary schools. They included the following:
 - the elimination of stereotypes, an avoidance of one-sided historical versions and evaluations, awareness of the existence of various interpretations of events (taking into account here the age-related capabilities of pupils);
 - improvement of the didactic tools in textbooks, redirecting it from the reproduction of teaching materials to active cognitive work by students;

- respecting a balance when teaching world, national and local history;
- giving an important role to the history of the material and spiritual culture of the peoples that inhabit Russia.
- The participants of the seminars supported the proposals expressed in the sessions regarding expansion of the source base used in history lessons in secondary schools and the use of various types of sources in addition to textbooks. They regard this as an essential condition for the productive work of students and for the development of their personalities, and a means of increasing the younger generation's interest in history.
- Proposals were made regarding the creation of a common textbook and sets of documentary materials on the history and culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus.
- Those attending the seminars came to a unanimous conclusion on the desirability of setting up a regional association of history teachers.

V. RESULTS AND PROSPECTS

The following positive results can be mentioned when setting out the overall results of two years' work in history teaching in school as a part of the Joint Programme of co-operation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe to strengthen democratic stability in North Caucasus:

- 1) The most urgent problems in history teaching in secondary schools in Russia today, as a whole, and in the North Caucasus region, in particular, were selected for discussion. The issues of history textbooks and teacher training were examined first. The choice of questions of tolerance and interpretations of history was of particular importance to history teachers in this region. Interactive teaching essentially meant treating a pupil as the main element of the education process.
- 2) The problems of teaching history in schools in the North Caucasus region were examined in the context of general Russian educational practice and in comparison with the experience of a number of European countries (Spain, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom). This enabled the participants to see more clearly that many problems are common to all and also that different ways are used to solve them in this or that region.
- 3) Different forms of presentations and discussions were combined in the seminars, a substantial part of the time was spent on practical work and there were visits to lessons in schools. As a result, a high level of activity by the participants was a feature of the seminars.
- 4) It was noticeable during the seminars how participants' views on the teaching aids being used in schools were changing. The teachers took a more independent position in relation to history textbooks. Whereas previously passive criticism of the shortcomings of textbooks

predominated, the teachers have now ceased to regard a textbook as the only and exhaustive source of historical information. Interest in documents and graphic and historiographic materials has increased appreciably. A statement by one of the Chechen teachers is noteworthy: "Now I will not be as helpless as I was before because of the shortage of textbooks". It may be said that history texts in the broad sense of the term have come into their own as *primary sources* of historical knowledge. Attention to primary sources is particularly important where regional or local history is involved. The teachers observed that the pupils themselves could participate in work on searching for studying such sources.

- 5) The seminars helped to enrich the pedagogical potential of dozens of teachers, who discovered for themselves the possibilities of the practical use of modern teaching strategies, interactive teaching and a pedagogical dialogue.
- 6) The proposals initiated by the participants of the seminars on the preparation of a teaching pack on the history and culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus, and on setting up a regional history teachers' association, are worthy of recognition. True, these proposals should not just be confined to applications to a higher authority; they should be put into effect on the spot.
- 7) Thus the general conclusion may be drawn that the work of the seminars held in 2001-2002 in the North Caucasus were multi-faceted, dynamic and useful to many of those attending and to educational practice in the region as a whole.
- 8) The initial training of history teachers in higher educational institutions, the use of modern educational strategies and methods of studying historical sources should be numbered among the priorities for future work in history teaching in secondary schools in the Russian Federation. The final assessment (state examination) of pupils in history is also an urgent topic.

