



**HISTORY EDUCATION IN EUROPE:**

**TEN YEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**Strasbourg**



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**Preface by**  
**Mr Gabriele Mazza**  
**Director of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education**  
**Council of Europe**

This publication analyses the experience and results achieved over ten years of co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in history teaching in schools.

As early as March 1996, when the Russian Federation became a member of the Council of Europe, issues connected with history teaching were already being considered a priority. Indeed, much attention had been given to this subject ever since the Council of Europe had been founded, and an expression of the importance of learning about the past in order to build the future of our continent can be found in such a fundamental document as the text of the European Cultural Convention of 1954.

The Council of Europe has always considered history teaching as a subject with unique value and one which cannot be replaced by any other discipline. But just what makes history teaching essential? Firstly, it gives the young generation an opportunity to travel in a historical space while learning a great deal from previous experience, which results in an ability to better understand and evaluate present-day political and social processes. Historical knowledge, and not least an understanding of history, helps to develop such important skills as critical thinking, open-mindedness, an ability to reach independent conclusions and tolerance. As a result, young people are better prepared to cope with life in present-day society, to understand the value of cultural diversity, and to be willing to communicate with representatives of different cultures, religions and linguistic groups. Furthermore, historical knowledge can help young people to feel that they are not only citizens of their own countries, but also representatives of the European continent and even of the world as a whole. These are essential competences for citizens of democratic societies; they are essential elements of the democratic culture without which democratic societies cannot function and thrive.

The views of the Council of Europe on history teaching are reflected in such documents as the Recommendation on history teaching adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in 1996, and the Recommendation Rec (2001) 15 on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2001.

Both of these Recommendations reflected the changes that had taken place in the late 1990s, when many European countries were going through a period of transition. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the notion of Europe changed, as it marked the starting point for the creation of a so-called Greater Europe.

The first Recommendation stresses that history teaching should be free of political and ideological influences; politicians have their own interpretation of history and history should not be used as an instrument for political manipulation. Learning about history is one of several ways of gaining knowledge of one's roots, as well as being a gateway to the experiences and richness of the past of other cultures.

The second Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe further highlights the need to understand differences, realise the value of diversity, respect others, develop intercultural dialogue and build relations on the basis of mutual understanding and tolerance.

Furthermore, the importance of history teaching was clearly affirmed, at the highest political level, at the Council of Europe's Summits of Heads of State and Government. In Vienna in 1993 and again in Strasbourg in 1997, it was recalled that the main challenges facing Europe lay in the spheres of education and culture. Finally, the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit in Warsaw in May 2005 included history-teaching in its list of priorities for the Council of Europe in the coming years.

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation has been unfolding as a response to the declared needs of the Russian Federation and in conformity with the Organisation's standards and principles relating to education as a whole and history teaching in particular. During a decade of collaboration, the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation established a solid partnership at all levels: the Federal Ministry of Education and Science and regional administrations, non-governmental organisations, a wide audience of history teachers and, more importantly, their pupils who were involved in the discussions on the most significant issues of present-day history teaching.

Activities organised within the framework of this co-operation took place in different regions of the Russian Federation and always met with great support at all levels, including those of high political importance. The seminars were opened in Ekaterinburg in 1998 by Mr Eduard Rossel (Governor of the Sverdlovsk region) and in Karachevo-Cherkessiya in 2001 by Mr Vladimir Semenov (at that time President of the Republic of Karachevo-Cherkessiya). The participants in the seminars were welcomed by Mr Kirsan Illumdjinov (President of the Republic of Kalmikiya) in Elista in 2002, Mr Leonid Potapov (President of the Republic of Buryatiya in Ulan-Ude) in 2003, and Mr Alexander Akimov (Vice President of the Republic Saha Yakutiya) in 2005. Practically all activities were attended by the regional Ministers of Education and were widely covered by the mass media including television, major newspapers and specialised journals dealing with history education.

When preparing the activities, the Secretariat was engaged in permanent consultations with the officials of the Federal Ministry and, more recently, held regular meetings with Mr Andrey Fursenko, Minister of Education and Science



of the Russian Federation, who provided much guidance and assistance in the development and extension of our co-operation.

Some of the activities organised in the Russian Federation during this period involved representatives from other international organisations: long-term partners of the Council of Europe, such as UNESCO, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Germany), as well as EUROCLIO, a non-governmental European organisation of history educators.

From the beginning, the Council of Europe aimed to accumulate the experience in history education gained by different countries and to make it accessible to all member states and, primarily, to European history educators. The ten-year cooperation with the Russian Federation made it possible to amass different experiences from almost every region in Russia and build up a vivid picture of cultural diversity. This will now be very valuable in the development of future Council of Europe projects, particularly the new intergovernmental project “The Image of the Other in History Teaching”, which will be launched in 2007 and will involve all 49 States party to the European Cultural Convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in this exciting decade of cooperation for their highly professional work and commitment. I am convinced that the results achieved, which are in many ways exemplary, have had, and will continue to have, an important impact on the lives of many young citizens of the Russian Federation.

**Preface by**  
**Professor Andrey Fursenko**  
**Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation**

This publication was prepared during the Russian Federation's Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, and sets out to describe for the first time the ten-year co-operation between educational institutions in the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe in the field of history education. This co-operation was two-fold: the preparation of history-education standards for schools in the Russian Federation, and the assessment of knowledge and skills acquired by pupils when learning history.

I strongly believe that such international programmes help countries to acquire unbiased views of both their past and the present-day situation through a prism of history teaching in schools. They also help to eliminate deep-rooted problems and stereotypes, develop tolerant and respectful attitudes among children and teenagers towards the traditions and customs of other peoples, and to preserve a common historical and cultural heritage.

Hundreds of people have contributed to this co-operation: school teachers, methodologists, scholars, textbook authors and publishers, as well as experts in the Russian Federation and international experts, who have interacted and shared their creative ideas.

I would especially like to mention the contribution of our colleagues from the Council of Europe, whose professionalism has helped reform history education in the schools of the new democratic Russia. This co-operation took place in many regions of the Russian Federation, from Petrozavodsk to Vladivostok, from Moscow and St Petersburg to Ulan-Ude and Yakutsk.

I also wish to point out that our co-operation with the Council of Europe took place at both bilateral and multilateral levels, and included such projects as the Black Sea Initiative, the Tbilisi Initiative and the Programme of Co-operation with Japan.

Our country lies at the crossroads of the historical destinies of peoples, cultures and civilisations. I would like to believe that this co-operation has contributed to developing intercultural dialogue and promoting peace, well-being and mutual respect.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this work and look forward to further fruitful collaboration with the Council of Europe.

**Preface by**  
**Academician Alexander Chubaryan**  
**Director of the Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Science**

History education is attracting special attention in all countries today. There are a number of reasons for this renewed interest, but the prime concern is how to face the global challenges of the 21st Century.

These challenges require a fusion of efforts from the international community to produce a whole new method of historical and critical thinking for the younger generation. Education is therefore seen as a vital priority in the social, economic and cultural development of all countries.

Society understands that history education is something more than just a school discipline. History allows children and teenagers to enter a world where real people lived before them and makes them aware that others continue to share this planet with them today. History helps them to understand their cultural context and shows them the titanic efforts that have been made to create the modern world.

To achieve such an understanding is not an easy task, as the processes and phenomena that exist and develop at every point in the historical space are derived from various religious and ethno-psychological patterns and stereotypes, sometimes even prejudices.

History education should help to bring together the peoples of the world by creating a basis for their consolidation; however, such consolidation should be conscious and understood in all its complexity and contradictions as regards the historical destinies of peoples living in a common home. I would like to hope that the ten-year co-operation between the Russian Federation and international experts in teaching history in multi-ethnic countries will be useful for further work on new history textbooks in Russia.

The key task of history teaching is to educate citizens and patriots living in a democratic society who know their past, can analyse facts of history, have a good knowledge of law, politics and economics, and respect the historical and cultural traditions of other peoples.

In this context we welcome the efforts of the Council of Europe to implement the project on integration of intercultural dialogue mechanisms in teaching history in schools, and this publication is another step in this direction.

This publication aims to analyse the most important current problems in school history education and determine possible trends in future cooperation in this area.

I believe that this publication could lay the foundations for creating and developing innovative methods and approaches in improvement of school history teaching in the European space.

**Introduction by Ms Tatiana Milko  
Programme Manager  
History Education Division  
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Ten years have passed since the Russian Federation joined the Council of Europe and started to take an active role in history teaching programmes. During this time, Russia has been involved in projects at all levels: bilateral cooperation, which was primarily aimed at providing assistance on practical aspects of history education reform; regional, which united the efforts of history educators from different geographical areas such as the Black Sea and the Caucasus; and intergovernmental projects bringing together all 49 states party to the European Cultural Convention.

Over the ten years, history educators from the Russian Federation participated in more than 50 activities organised by the Council of Europe, many of which took place in Russia. It should be emphasised that the Russian Federation hosted the Final Conference on the five-year regional project on the Black Sea Initiative, which took place in Sochi in September 2004. It was there that the main outcome of this project was launched: the first supplementary teaching pack on the history of the Black Sea region prepared by teams of authors from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

Throughout the ten years of cooperation, more than 40 activities were organised in Russia itself covering almost all regions of this vast country, from Arkangelsk in the North, throughout Central Russia and North Caucasus, further on through the Urals and Siberia, and up to Khabarovsk and Vladivostok in the Far East. They brought together about 2,500 history educators from Russia and their colleagues from Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, providing a wide forum for an exchange of views.

*Bilateral cooperation*

Activities organised within bilateral cooperation programmes were aimed at discussing questions covering three main areas: preparation of new programmes and standards; elaboration of new textbooks and teaching materials on regional, national and world history; and development of in-service teacher training system. This cooperation comprised the organisation of seminars, conferences, consultations, meetings of experts, and round tables with history teachers and their pupils. The Conference in Suzdal in December 1996 on “The reform of school history teaching” paved the way for the series of activities for the following decade.

In terms of content, the bilateral cooperation programme with the Russian Federation went through several stages in its development.

*The first stage covers the period from 1997 to 1999.*

This period focused on discussions on the preparation of new programmes, standards, new textbooks and teaching materials as well as on key issues of history teaching reform such as: what are the goals of history teaching in schools today? What is the role of standards in the teaching process? What role does a regional component play and how can it be integrated into the learning process? How can a balance be created in teaching regional, national and world history? What is the role of history textbooks in the learning process? What criteria constitute an efficient present-day in-service teacher training system?

It is important to mention that each period was followed by a Stocktaking Conference, bringing together history educators from all regions of Russia as well as their European colleagues involved in the programme. This helped to analyse the results achieved and to plan further steps. During the ten-year period, three Stocktaking Conferences were organised in St. Petersburg in 1999, 2003 and 2006.

*The second stage covers the period from 2000 to 2003.*

At this time issues connected with in-service teacher training became of paramount importance.

The discussions showed that teachers play a unique role in present-day schools and that the teaching process requires a high level of responsibility in terms of the knowledge they pass on to their pupils, which allows them to gain the skills and competences needed to live in a today's society. Therefore, teachers should be highly professional and find a delicate way to teach about historical processes and, particularly, those of a controversial or sensitive nature.

Special mention should be given to the Joint Programme of Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe to Strengthen Democratic Stability in North Caucasus, which was developed from 2001-2002. During this period, seminars were organised in Dombay, Kislovodsk, Nalchik, Elista and, in each of these places, the participants showed great interest in the work. Particular emphasis was given to history educators from the Chechen Republic. The workshops organised in Kislovodsk in 2002 brought together history teachers, not only from almost all parts of this Republic, but also from the refugee camps which were located at the time in Ingushetia.

Seminars and workshops for Chechen teachers launched in the framework of the joint programme were continued in 2005-2006, this time within the Programme of Cooperation Activities between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic (Pyatigorsk June 2005, Moscow November 2006).

In addition, at the Stocktaking Conference in St. Petersburg in March 2003, the delegation from Chechnya expressed their wish to be involved in future activities of the Council of Europe on history education organised in Russia. Following this proposal, delegations of Chechen history educators participated in all seminars and conferences organised in different regions of the Russian Federation. This meant that Chechen history teachers could be provided with information on new methods in teaching history such as multiperspectivity, and could also have the opportunity to exchange their views with colleagues coming from different parts of the Russian Federation as well as with European educators. When activities were organised in areas where the Chechen Diaspora is living, meetings with its representatives, as well as visits to Chechen schools, were organised for participants.

*The third stage covers the period from 2004 to 2006.*

This stage focused primarily on developing methods which could help to present cultural diversity as an enriching factor, as well as finding ways in which intercultural dialogue could be integrated into the teaching and learning process, including the preparation of school textbooks and teaching materials as well as programmes for initial and in-service teacher training institutions.

It is not by chance that questions about integrating mechanisms of intercultural dialogue appear at the epicentre of the Council of Europe's current programmes as it could become one of the main tools to help pupils better understand cultural diversity.

This created a basis for seminars organised within the Joint Programme of Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation (Russia VIII). The activities took place in Astrakhan, Yakutsk, Tomsk, Moscow and St. Petersburg. The choice of places was determined by the respective multicultural environment. Discussions during the seminars showed that education in general, and history teaching in particular, could contribute greatly to the development of skills and competences which are needed to live in a multicultural society, as well as helping pupils to analyse and understand complicated and controversial issues, and find peaceful solutions in potentially conflictual situations.

### Regional cooperation

In parallel with bilateral cooperation, the Russian Federation took part in regional projects such as the Black Sea and Tbilisi Initiatives.

It is interesting to note that different countries simultaneously initiated the development of two long-term regional projects on history teaching under the auspices of the Council of Europe: the "Black Sea Initiative on History" and the "Tbilisi Initiative".

In 1997 the Ministry of Education of Georgia proposed to start preparing a supplementary textbook on “A History of the Caucasus” for secondary and upper-secondary schools. This was supported by the educational authorities of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation. The “Black Sea Initiative on History” was initiated by the Romanian authorities in 1999 and involved seven countries bordering the Black Sea: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

Many countries expressed their interest in regional cooperation at almost the same time due to: a general lack of information on the history of neighbouring countries in curricula for secondary and upper-secondary schools; the fact that the image of “others”, in particular, neighbours, was mainly presented in “dark” colours, namely, in the context of political and military issues; and a lack of pedagogical materials which could help to teach history in interactive ways.

The Council of Europe supported these initiatives as they were completely consistent with its main policy guidelines. This interest in regional cooperation was confirmed at the highest political level at the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States in Strasbourg in 1997, where the importance of regional cooperation in strengthening stability and security in Europe was highlighted.

These projects were not only aimed at the preparation of publications, but also at creating a favourable climate for the development of cooperation between history educators of neighbouring states. This would allow the history of these regions to be viewed in a new way, and primarily through the prism of social, cultural, economic and everyday history, and also to better understand particularities and common features in the shared histories of the countries belonging to the same geographical area.

For quite a long time, the work of these projects allowed all the actors involved in history teaching to join efforts: ministry officials, academic circles, in-service teacher training specialists, textbook authors, publishers, history teachers and their pupils. These joint efforts brought history educators to the conclusion that history teaching in the world today should be aimed, first and foremost, at strengthening the reconciliation process, promoting principles of mutual respect, and opening additional doors for cooperation.

These projects showed the importance of a balanced presentation of history topics, which should not only concentrate on political themes but should also include cultural, economic, social and everyday history. Only in this way will pupils be able to see the full historical picture. The inclusion of these topics will enable teachers and their pupils to discuss such important issues as interaction in history and their role in creating a favourable climate for the establishment of good relations between peoples and, in particular, between neighbours. The experience gained from these projects showed that such approaches in teaching history could serve as a basis for a new concept in



teaching history, firstly introduced through interaction between different cultures and countries and consequently preventing the creation of new dividing lines. In addition, psychologists confirmed that by concentrating mainly on political issues, particularly on conflicts, one could provoke hostility and violence in pupils.

The Black Sea Teaching Pack, the initial outcome of the regional cooperation programme, was published and launched in 2004. Work within the “Tbilisi Initiative” project is on-going.

The Russian-Japanese project can also be included in this group. It was developed under the auspices, and with the active participation, of the Council of Europe from 1999-2001. This work started with the seminar on “The teaching of history in multicultural societies and border areas”, organised in Khabarovsk in September 1998, and during which the question was raised on how to teach the history of neighbouring countries, including Japan.

Following a proposal from Japan, which is an observer in the Council of Europe, a follow-up meeting between historians from Russia and Japan was organised in St. Petersburg in June 1999. For the first time, this meeting gave an opportunity to discuss the past, present and future of history teaching in these countries. More specifically, formal presentations and discussions focused on the way in which Japan is presented in history teaching in the Russian Federation and the way in which Russia is introduced in Japanese history curricula and textbooks. The discussions on these topics were continued in Tokyo in 2000 and in Vladivostok in 2001. The main partners of the Council of Europe in this project were the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the International Society for Educational Information (ISEI), a non-governmental body directed by Ms Michiko Kaya.

Discussions within this project raised a number of key questions such as: What are the main goals in teaching history in present-day schools? How can history be presented in a balanced way in textbooks? Special emphasis was given to the role of history of fine arts and culture in school courses.

The recommendations of these meetings suggested a frequent use of examples from everyday life when teaching history which can in turn help to teach this subject in a more interesting and colourful way. A history course, which includes diverse information on culture and everyday life, provides an opportunity to teach more about human values, as well as creating positive images of countries, in particular, neighbouring states.

One of the outcomes of this project was the preparation of a supplementary teaching tool on the “History and Culture of Japan in Documents and in Illustrations”, prepared by history educators from the Russian Federation in cooperation with their Japanese colleagues, which was published in Vladivostok in 2003.

The Council of Europe gained much experience when supporting and participating in the above-mentioned regional projects. Thus, the role of an international organisation could be determined by providing:

- continuity in the work;
- an equal footing for all participants involved;
- transparency in cooperation;
- a wide forum for discussion on the basis of multiperspectivity; and
- a climate of confidence and trust.

### Multilateral cooperation

During the last ten years, the Russian Federation has participated in several activities organised within the framework of multilateral cooperation, such as the projects on “Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” and the “European Dimension in History Teaching”. These projects brought together all States which signed the European Cultural Convention to discuss questions of common interest connected with the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The first project came to an end in 2001 and resulted in the publication of a series of booklets, the majority of which were translated into different languages, including Russian. Such publications as “Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: a Guide for Teachers” and “Teaching 20<sup>th</sup> Century European History”, both by Dr Robert Stradling, were distributed at the seminars organised by the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation and received positive feedback from practising teachers.

The Project on the “European Dimension in History Teaching” will end in 2006 with the production of a CD-ROM, which will be accompanied by a booklet consisting of texts of key presentations made during the conferences and symposia. The CD-ROM will contain historical sources, which became accessible thanks to the opening up of archives in recent years, in particular, in Eastern European countries. These sources were provided by all countries participating in the project and will be arranged around the following five key dates from the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: 1848, 1912-1913, 1919, 1945 and 1989. This project is aimed at providing European history teachers with additional source information which could be used in classroom practice to achieve a deeper understanding of the historical processes of the last century.

In 2007 the new intergovernmental project will be launched under the title “The Image of the Other in History Teaching”. On the one hand, this project will comprise the experience already gained within the framework of the multilateral, bilateral and regional cooperation programmes; on the other hand, it will try to respond to challenges of the new globalisation era. It will aim to promote, through educational policy, proposed strategies and methods; create an approach to teaching and learning history that reflects the increasing cultural and religious diversity of European societies; and contribute to reconciliation, acknowledgement, understanding and mutual trust between different cultures

by endorsing the values of tolerance, openness to others, human rights and democracy.

The project will consist of three main blocks: the first is entitled “Multiple images, shared destiny? – Learning about History in a Multicultural Society”, and will include such important issues as the “European World and the Muslim World: Contact and Interaction”; the second will be on “Images of Others and Ourselves in the Context of Globalisation”; and the third on “The Image of the Other in Conflict Situations: Learning Different Histories as a Means of Rebuilding Trust”. The project will last three years and will foresee the organisation of seminars, conferences and symposia. The expected outcomes of the project will be the drafting of a proposed Recommendation by the Committee of Ministers on “The Image of the Other in Teaching and Learning History in a Multicultural Society”; preparation of a manual for teachers; creation of a website showcasing examples of innovative practice; and networking of in-service teacher training institutions. History educators from the Russian Federation will be involved in this project and will be able to make their input in its development.

This publication constitutes the analysis of the results achieved during the ten-year cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in history teaching, as well as reflections on possible future perspectives. We hope that it will be met with interest by all those who are involved in the history teaching process, as well as by those wishing to make a contribution to the future development of present-day educational systems aimed at strengthening peace and stability in the world.



## **CHAPTER 1**

**Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of  
Europe in the preparation of the standards in  
history teaching for schools in Russia.  
Assessment of skills acquired by pupils when learning history.**

**By Professor Ludmila ALEKSASHKINA  
Institute of Content and Methods in Education  
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## Introduction

Cooperation in the preparation of new standards is so important today because standards became a key element of educational process in many countries in the 1990s. Standards have been developed in the countries with decentralised, pluralistic school systems (the United Kingdom, the United States of America) as well as in the states that used to favour unified education. Russia had to define common education content in the process of transition from a rigidly centralised school system to a diversified model of secondary school education. Early versions of standards in history teaching were published in 1993-1994. In the middle of the 1990s, after sets of educational standards were selected through a competition, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation validated packages of curricula and other regulatory documents setting out the requirements defined by the educational standards of history teaching at secondary school (1998-1999). In 2001-2003 an attempt to develop new standards was made, but the task so far has not been completed.

Educational standards have been a particular focus of attention for fifteen years now. Their nature and content have been widely discussed by school teachers, as well as by the general public. Standards in history, literature and other humanities became the subject of special concern. The most debatable issue for journalists and the general public was which historical personalities, events and interpretations should be included in the standards. This emphasis on the content can be explained by the “knowledge-oriented” approach typical of Russian educational tradition as well as by history teaching standards. However, history teaching requirements, students’ ability to process information and apply it in the new social environment have proved to be an equally complex issue.

Cooperation with the Council of Europe on these issues became very appropriate at the stage of development of educational standards and was supposed to play a crucial role in their improvement.

Even as the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation was mapped out, a systematic and multiperspective approach to the subject matter of educational standards in history teaching was taken. It is evident in the aims of the seminars held in 1996-2005 which, among other things, intended to:

- promote comparative research of educational standards of the Russian Federation and other European countries;
- discuss materials for educational standards in history teaching published in 1998-1999;
- consider a balance of federal, regional and school components of educational standards;

- develop approaches towards a system of students' performance assessment in history on the basis of the requirements stated in the educational standards.

What was especially significant in this list of aims was that it set out methodological priorities which included: (i) elements of comparative approach; (ii) analysis of current practice combined with determining new methods; and (iii) integrated approach to target acquisition, requirements for educational process, and performance assessment. The cooperation, therefore, held considerable promise.

## Schedule

The issues in question were the main items on the agenda of the following seminars:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Sites and dates</i>	<i>Subject</i>
1999	Irkutsk, 16-18 September	Standards for history teaching for secondary schools: present situation and future development
2002	Samara, 28-30 June	New approaches for the assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in history at secondary level in the Russian Federation

The seminars were organised by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and regional educational authorities.

Participants included authors of the standards, historians, university professors and secondary school teachers from Central Russia, the Volga region, the Ural region, Siberia, the Far East, Republics of Buryatia, Mari El, Mordovia, Tatarstan, and Chuvashia. The seminars were attended by observers from the State Duma of the Russian Federation and regional legislative bodies. Experts Mr Arild Thornbjørnsen (Norway), Mr Alan Midgeley and Ms Liz Ogilvy (United Kingdom) and educators from Kazakhstan and Latvia invited by the Council of Europe also took an active part in the seminars.

Keynote presentations by the Council of Europe representatives, Ms Alison Cardwell and Ms Tatiana Minkina-Milko set the tone for the seminars. They outlined the guidelines and activities within the framework of multilateral cooperation in history teaching developed by the Council of Europe, and gave a detailed account of the implementation of the programmes within bilateral cooperation with educators from the Russian Federation, as well as of the implementation of regional international projects including the "Tbilisi Initiative", the "Black Sea Initiative" and others. Their reports contributed to better coordination and helped to provide continuity. This was particularly important since the seminars were held throughout the whole country and involved an ever-increasing number of participants.

The work at the seminars took a variety of forms including presentations, round tables and working groups, which provided an opportunity to single out issues of current



importance for active discussions and work out recommendations. The seminars were aimed at promoting dialogue and interactive discussions.

## **Development and results**

### **Topic: “History teaching standards for secondary schools”**

Several groups of questions were discussed. Participants from various countries as well as educators from Russia shared different views on the standards. In particular, there were active debates between the authors of the standards and practising teachers. The discussions led to a number of agreed opinions and allowed participants to single out some aspects of the standards which needed to be improved. The contents and results of discussions over the key issues were the following:

*What is an educational standard? What and how does it regulate?*

Professor Ludmila Aleksashkina (Russian Academy of Education) gave a presentation on approaches to developing the first Russian history teaching standards. She said that the idea of ‘standards’ should refer not only to students’ knowledge but also to their skills in processing historical information. In particular, she stressed that standards should contribute to universal concepts of the past and the present, analytical thinking, research skills, and the ability to discuss historical and current issues, which is crucial for today’s democracy.

In this connection, the requirements for teaching students in history were given as set out in the Russian standards of the 1990s. Such requirements had included a range of achievements and skills, such as:

- chronological attainments and skills;
- knowledge of facts and ability to put them in an historical context;
- use of historical sources (search, analysis and processing of information in the context of history);
- description and reconstruction of historical developments and phenomena;
- analysis and interpretation of events and actions of people in history;
- assessment of historical versions and judgments, development and reasoning of personal attitude towards historical events and personalities.

The European experts Mr Arild Thornbjørnsen (Norway) and Ms Liz Ogilvy (United Kingdom) shared the experience of their countries in the area of working out and applying standards of history teaching at schools. Their presentations allowed participants to see some “common ground”, as well as particular differences. For

example, everybody agreed that standards should determine, above all, the character and level of reasoning, modelling and creative activity of students rather than the actual content of history curricula.

Where various countries differ as regards standards is in their structure. For example, the Norwegian history teaching standards for secondary schools are based on a complex of competences, such as social, reasoning, communicative, and creative. These general categories underlie both training targets and requirements. On the other hand, Scottish educational standards are reflected in: (a) curricula which set out particular courses and determine an approximate number of hours required to master every course; (b) the so-called levels of attainment for students of different ages. Knowledge, understanding and analytical skills are considered the basics of training, while special attention is paid to the use of primary and secondary historical sources, fact analysis, detection of cause and effect, etc. Specific requirements of the standards are contained in typical questions and tasks, and applicable assessment tools.

Comparative research of several countries' experience in working out and using history standards for secondary schools was presented during the seminars. The following tendencies can be noted:

- the most marked differences between the national standards consist in how course contents are described. Sometimes such descriptions are overly detailed (as in Russia and other countries where history courses have been radically renewed), sometimes there are none (as in Norway);
- experts from different countries, for the most part, agreed on the structure and essence of the basic reasoning skills to be developed by students in history courses, such as using historical sources, describing (reconstructing, modelling) events of the past, explaining their causes and consequences, evaluating their significance, etc.;
- the competence approach, through which a number of countries have found their educational standards, appears promising as a means of declaring the common, socially significant, "suprasubject" priorities of school education as a whole. At the same time, the issue of content of social, reasoning, communicative, creative and other competences with regards to the specific subject of history, remains pending.

*Educational standards in history for secondary schools in the 1990s in the Russian Federation: achievements and difficulties.*

Seminar participants examined the existing versions of history standards for schools in the Russian Federation and, in particular, their advantages and weaknesses. The research involved task force discussions and questionnaires. Teachers from Russia could broaden their vision through an opportunity to compare their knowledge with the experience of other countries, which was further reflected in recommendations and proposals.

The participants approved most of the structure and content of the history standards which were established in the 1990s for schools in the Russian Federation. At the same time, proposals were made to shorten the descriptive part of the standards, while focusing more on assessing students' achievements in knowledge and analysis, as well as the development of value systems and attitudes to events of the past and phenomena of the present. Quite a few participants also expressed a wish to differentiate between achievement levels, so that the testing and assessing of documents could reflect the actual quality of the student's training and his/her individual progress. The teachers expressed the idea that the standards should not be limited to "professional-only" use by educators and the Ministry, but rather that textbook authors, students and parents should also be familiar with them.

*Educational standards and history textbooks for schools.*

The discussion of issues related to working out and using educational standards prompted the Russian educators to consider and assess the existing history textbooks in a more challenging and methodical way. The seminar participants noted that most of the textbooks used by schools at the time the seminars were held did not comply with the standards, with a few exceptions. The participants also pointed out two major tendencies. The first was in relation to the content of textbooks, and quantity and complexity of historical material; the authors of textbooks significantly exceeded the recommendations of basic programmes in this respect. On the other hand, an evident delay was incurred in providing students with opportunities to actively work with diversified historical sources. Questions and tasks for students turned out to be clearly non-compliant with the requirements of the standards. The recommendations adopted at the seminars included proposals to improve the above-mentioned non-conformance.

*Balance between federal, regional and school components of educational standards in history; aims and principles of selecting a regional content of history standards.*

The seminar participants were unanimous in the opinion that a regional component in history standards should help to improve students' social skills and contribute to the progress of their value systems and intellect by motivating them to study and analyse local, accessible material, rather than merely adding to the federal content.

The foreign experts referred to the significance of considering events of the past by moving from a country level to a regional level (for example, Scandinavia), then onto the history of Europe, and finally to world history. It was emphasised that such a multi-level approach to teaching, i.e. when you proceed from local to national and world history starting from some current and understandable events, and moving on gradually "into the depths of time", could make study more accessible and exciting to students.

The participants from the Russian Federation stressed that regional components of history courses helped students to establish a universal view of life in their region, and to see links between the generations that live there. As Russia is a multinational, polycultural society, special attention should be devoted to the history of the different

peoples that inhabit it, and their cultural interaction; both among themselves and with peoples of neighbouring countries.

At the same time, participants noted that history was never the sole element of regional components as, apart from historical aspects, the latter should also employ cultural, environmental, geographical, social, economic and civil elements. Such diversity of content helps set and solve a wide range of tasks relative to the education, development and socialisation of students. In this connection it is crucial to select the most telling materials about the history of a region. The speakers emphasised that, while earlier it had been political history that dominated local courses, as was the case with the federal history curriculum, today's regional studies focus more on describing the habitat and living conditions of people in the past, facts about their household, economy and society, ethics, customs and traditions.

The participants proposed a number of important guidelines with regard to regional components of the educational standards, including:

- the description of functions and tasks of regional components, such as:
  - (a) to drive home historical events and processes to students by using local materials that are fulfilling and have a resonance, and to develop interest in history;
  - (b) create the understanding of civil responsibility by making students realise that their lives, as well as those of their families, village, town or region, are a part of history;
  - (c) to promote students' creativity through searching and study of various sources on the history of the region;
  - (d) to instil respect for the history and culture of all peoples living in a region, as well as tolerance to convictions different from your own (it was stressed that teaching regional history should not encourage ideas that any nation or ethnic group is superior to another);
- proposals about how to combine the common federal and regional materials at different stages of education; at the initial stage of studying history it is advisable to start with the current, local and observable things, and then move on gradually to the history of the country; at the basic and senior levels of secondary school regional history can be studied in the context of the history of Russia or world history, or as a part of specialised courses;
- the recommendation that a regional course should cover the history and culture of the neighbouring states and peoples in a more detailed way than the common course.

The following *priority targets* for further elaboration of the history teaching standards for Russian secondary schools were outlined:

- to find an optimal balance between the content of the standards and the intellectual and value-forming components. It was emphasised that the standards should focus more on assessing student's awareness, research activity and progress in developing value systems and relations. It is desirable to introduce levels of attainment (such as elementary or advanced);
- to create new history textbooks that are fully compliant with the requirements of the current standards;
- to work out new regional components of the history teaching standards by, in particular, setting aims in a systematic manner (that would allow for interaction between the federal and regional components); promoting organisation of creative teams and centres in charge of working out regional components of the history teaching standards and introducing them into school practice; coordinating the development of history teaching standards on regional, inter-regional and national levels;
- to substantiate and implement a system of on-going assessment of students' competence against the standard requirements in history. Sets of mid-term and final tests, as well as the criteria for assessing knowledge and skills achieved should be attached to the standards.

**Topic: “Quality assessment of training students in history”**

The issue of assessing the achievements of students is logically linked with the topic of standards. It is impossible to introduce any standards without a system of measuring the actual results of teaching, in this case, students' knowledge and skills while learning history. The education authorities of the Russian Federation had acknowledged the connection between the two issues from the very start of the reform process in school education. From the year 2000, a new Unified State Exam (USE) was introduced in secondary schools as a pilot scheme. Such form of final assessment had never been used in Russia before and, in this respect, the seminar on “New approaches for the assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in history at secondary level in the Russian Federation” organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Education and held in Samara in 2002, turned out to be an event of crucial importance.

The following major tasks were set:

- to discuss common approaches to assessing the results of studying history at school;

- to analyse the structure, content and results of using the USE to assess school-leavers' abilities in history;
- to make proposals concerning the further development of the system of on-going control and assessment of students' knowledge and skills in history.

The first task was fulfilled through comparing the experience of teachers from different countries when assessing students' competences in history. The foreign seminar participants, Mr Arild Thornbjørnsen, Mr Alan Midgeley and Mr Serik Irsaliev characterised the key points and practice of final competence assessment (state exams) in history at schools in Norway, the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan. They spoke about multiple assessment forms, such as oral exams, written tests, combined oral and written testing, practical and theoretical tests, and research papers. The differences in the assessment procedures of the three countries were discussed. For example, in the United Kingdom, the school assessment system is based on accumulating, or adding, marks that students receive at different stages (when they are 5, 8, 11, 14, 16 and 18 years old), and subsequently attributing the sum obtained to a certain level of ability (there are three such levels – A, B and C). Conversely, Kazakhstan uses simultaneous assessment, which is a complex final test in four subjects at one time: language (Kazakh or Russian), mathematics, the history of Kazakhstan, and another major subject, the results of which provide a basis for entering higher education establishments.

It also became clear, whilst comparing the exam styles of different countries, that the significant questions relevant to each topic by no means depended on the actual method of assessment. Such “timeless” questions as: What should be assessed? How can we improve on knowledge and skill so as to analyse and build up a unique system of arguments and reasoning? How should so-called free answers be assessed?

Professor Ludmila Aleksashkina (Russian Academy of Education) gave a presentation on current approaches towards testing school-leavers in history at upper secondary schools in Russia. She paid special attention to the needs and methods of assessing not only a student's knowledge of dates, facts, notions and so forth, but also activity- and value-related components of training, e.g. information processing, judgement grounding, problem-solving skills, etc. The following basic features of written testing in Russian history which had been given to secondary school-leavers within the USE framework since 2001 were pointed out:

- a dual purpose (characteristic of the Unified State Exam as a whole): to assess school-leavers' abilities while determining the level of their readiness to enter higher education establishments;
- a style of examination which allows all kinds of achievements and skills gained by pupils to be verified; providing a combination of multiple choice and free answer tasks;

- tasks that involve analysis of historical sources make up a significant share (about one third of all tasks in the test);
- free answer tasks are aimed at checking skills of analysing historical information, providing descriptions and explanations of events, comparing different versions and interpreting historical facts.

Along with the USE method of assessment in history, educators in Russia use the so-called Centralised Testing of students and school-leavers. Ms Olga Yurkina, a spokesperson for the Testing Centre under the auspices of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, characterised the CT system which had been implemented since 1999. CT is given to students at the age of 10, 15 and 17; the same testing technique is also used for university admission examinations. The speaker highlighted the main advantages of CT as being assessment objectivity and efficiency. At the same time, Ms Yurkina mentioned the USE method of written testing in history. She was especially critical of free answer tasks and tasks involving analysis of sources. In her opinion, objective expert examination of free answers is impossible.

After such radically distinct approaches to assessing students' competence in history were presented, a sharp dispute broke out. Opinions were exchanged with regard to the following issues:

- (1) which results do we want to check: formal knowledge or skills of working with historical material and research ability? What can be assessed through written testing? Is the USE the sole objective assessment mode?
- (2) how does the USE contribute to managing quality of teaching?
- (3) which problems related to the content and procedure of USE testing have been detected in the course of the experiment?

The participants' views on these issues were split. Some insisted on checking only factual knowledge of school-leavers; others said that such pedagogical approach had a few drawbacks and they reiterated the necessity to assess activity- and competence-related elements of training. In the context of the debate, an opportunity to compare and sum up the expertise of teachers from other countries in solving the above controversies proved to be invaluable. Hence, experts from Russia listened keenly to the presentations made by their European colleagues.

Mr Alan Midgeley, education consultant, (United Kingdom) pointed out that, in British schools, skills are more important than knowledge, as far as the balance between the two is concerned. Accordingly, testing is used to assess the skills of working with historical sources, reasoning, presenting views and facts with logical consistency and so on, rather than to check knowledge of specific facts. Examinations in history can be managed in two forms, either as written class work or a final paper. When students' tests and papers are checked, particular attention is paid to creative use of knowledge, analysis of sources, and compilation and presentation of historical

material. Expert assessment is performed on the basis of specially developed indicators.

Mr Arild Thornbjørnsen (Norway), Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Education and Research, spoke about differences in views on “why and how” one should assess students’ progress, and recent controversy regarding this in Norway. He explained that the assessment which Norwegian students have to undergo in history was currently focused on competence-related qualities, rather than on testing their knowledge. Various competences are checked such as understanding historical phenomena and processes, research of sources, the ability to obtain and present knowledge, and the skill to interact constructively when solving training tasks.

Ms Ligita Straube (Latvia), Head of the Curriculum Department of School N°85, Riga, and Ms Sarmite Goldmane, history teacher of School N°84, Riga, reported on the Latvian system of testing students’ progress and assessing the competences of school-leavers. They attached the utmost importance to pilot history exams based on tasks involving research of sources and free answer tasks.

A group of educators from Russia and foreign experts made a case for not limiting assessment in history to merely checking students’ formal knowledge, but rather to include, in some form or other, free answers and creative tasks in state tests. At the end of the seminar, most participants admitted that a balance between checking knowledge and activity-related elements could only be reached using “and-and”, rather than “or-or” formulas.

The participants concluded that the materials employed during USE testing generally complied with the task of the complex assessment of school-leavers. At the same time the officials who attended the seminar confirmed that the requirements and procedure of state examinations directly correlated with the goals, content and techniques of teaching. For instance, how is it possible to focus training on personality development and gaining competences, if only facts are checked during examinations? On the other hand, it was stressed that testing within the USE framework sets stricter requirements for the teaching process, as well as for the training of future teachers at teacher training colleges, and encouraged them to apply the most up-to-date techniques. It was also noted that more attention should be paid to teaching students to research sources; at the same time, it was pointed out that schools often do not have enough materials for such training.

The participants pointed out the following *positive results* of introducing Unified State Examinations into schools in Russia:

- improved common educational space, increased openness, further democratisation of the educational system;
- constructive interaction of students’ knowledge assessment with other elements of the educational system, such as the setting of objectives, educational content, and the teaching process;



- a possibility of experimental checking with regards to complex assessment materials and tests in history aimed both at students' knowledge and skills;
- establishing a common ground between secondary school and university educators concerning the requirements for the competences of school-leavers in history;
- access to broad, multifaceted and comparable information about the results of the teaching process across the country;
- an opportunity to analyse and self-assess the proposed final testing by comparing it to international experience.

As to the shortcomings of the USE, the participants mentioned: (a) the absence of properly qualified experts who can check and assess written tests; and (b) a lack of experience on the students' part when working on general tasks included in the state examination.

In order to improve the practice and methodology of state testing and assessment of school training results, the following recommendations were put forward:

- to shift the focus of state tests to free answer tasks (source research, writing essays); to pay close attention to the form and selection of such tasks, as well as assessing/marking of students' answers (in this connection it is advisable to continue an exchange of views with foreign colleagues);
- to use the materials from the State Examinations in history given in 2001 and 2002 in the system of initial and in-service training of history teachers.

### **Results of cooperation in the context of developing history teaching**

Before evaluating the results of the joint work done by the Council of Europe and the Russian education authorities with regard to the two above-mentioned topics, one should note the irrelevancy of applying the term 'reform' to the accomplishments discussed here. In fact, the issues of working out history teaching standards for schools and competence assessment of students in history turned out to be a completely innovative step in the educational practice of the Russian Federation. It should be stressed that this was the first time that such issues had been raised on such a grand scale. This gave a special reason to appreciate this opportunity for history educators from Russia to analyse the experience of other countries, to introspect and self-assess, and to map out prospects for future efforts.

The positive value of the cooperation in this could be presented as follows:

- for the past few years, issues referring to standards-setting and assessment of students' achievements in history have been tackled in many countries on the levels of pedagogical theory and educational practice; this provides a basis for productive comparisons and exchange of example of best practice;

- the seminars helped to elaborate the consistent analysis of goals and results, of standards which are regulatory documents by nature to a system of assessing students' achievements;
- a broad range of participants involved in the discussions; the systematic problem to be considered: from theory to practice, and from the object of assessment to its criteria and methods; involvement of all the players in the educational process (teachers, students, Ministry officials, parents, historians and educators); wide use of interactive discussions as a means of problem-solving; the focus on practical data, even when working on the most general issues, are all among the indisputable advantages of the seminars;
- all the recommendations proposed by the participants were both practice-oriented and based on a complex academic review of the situation. Most of them were taken into account during further work on history standards and the system of assessing school-leavers in Russia (see below);
- articles on the results of the discussions have been written and published in the leading Russian magazines *Pedagogika* (Pedagogy) and *Teaching History and Social Science at School*.

One of the key results of the seminars was that the debates the participants took part in, as well as the exchange of experience, have allowed the educators in Russia to significantly advance in solving the issues raised. For example, in the period between 2000 and 2002, when the educational standards had to undergo a regular revision, an attempt was made to shift the focus to competence in the requirements for students' training at secondary and upper secondary school. As for the USE, the following positive changes can be noted, both in terms of materials and the actual procedure of the examinations in 2002-2005:

- the number of source-research and free answer tasks in the tests was increased (including tasks aimed at systemisation, comparison, consideration of historical alternatives, description of different versions and evaluation of historical events);
- the system of measuring and assessing free answers was improved;
- from 2002 onwards, pan-Russian and regional seminars were held for experts in charge of checking free answers in tests;
- a large increase has been observed in the number of publications for teachers and students which explain the structure and content of the State Examination, and offer advice on how to prepare for it.

## **General conclusions, recommendations and prospects**

Prospects for future cooperation in the areas mentioned can be described at best with such “eternal” questions of education as: What shall be taught? How shall we teach? How shall we assess the results of teaching? Although international teaching projects have often grappled with the first two questions, the latter still remain open for wider circles of educators and will, therefore, deserve special attention in future cooperation projects.

The development of the cooperation between the Council of Europe and educational authorities in the Russian Federation in the area of school history teaching could also hinge on the way Russia will implement its own educational projects in the future. As far as the topics of this report are concerned, it should be kept in mind that it is intended that new teaching standards for secondary schools in Russia be worked out (as the 2000-2003 project was not approved). The task to create a new generation of such standards has been put on the agenda. The USE practice will of course also be continued, while both the content of tests and the assessment system will need further improvement.

The following steps for future cooperation should be noted:

- preparation of educational standards in history: from curricula to teaching practice;
- development of activity- and knowledge-based approach in history education: working with various sources;
- improvement in the assessment of students’ knowledge and skills in history: from lessons to examinations.

## **CHAPTER 2**

**Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of  
Europe in the preparation of new history textbooks**

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## Introduction

The preparation and use of history textbooks for secondary schools in the Russian Federation have been on the agenda of a number of seminars co-organised in 1996-2005 by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and regional educational authorities. In 1996-1999, it was a major topic for discussion in connection with the implementation of the New Initiative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe as a part of the programme “Reform of History Teaching and Preparation of New History Textbooks in the Russian Federation”.

The issue gained new importance after the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe issued its Recommendation Rec (2001) 15 on *History Teaching in twenty-first-century Europe*. The document stressed the need for stronger mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples, so as to promote better awareness of European historical and cultural heritage which, in turn, would provide a context to improve the understanding of one’s cultural identity, the promotion of fundamental values such as democracy, human rights, tolerance, etc. All this gave a new dimension to discussions on history textbooks, encouraged the exchange of experience on the subject, and paved the way for further progress in one of the most significant areas of education.

What makes this sphere of cooperation so vital is the fact that the school reform of the 1990s brought forth a new generation of history textbooks, with entirely different methodological approaches and considerable differences as far as facts and concepts were concerned. A standard compulsory textbook for each course was replaced by 5 or 6 alternative textbooks, and teachers and students were faced with a problem: how to choose the most interesting and up-to-date textbook.

New textbooks for secondary schools in Russia were published and discussed between 1995-2005, so the seminars held by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation provided assistance in this process. The discussions moved from the general concept of an up-to-date history textbook to practical issues of preparing regional textbooks. Moreover, the agenda of the seminars were broadened to include new initiatives that appeared as a part of the educational programmes of the Council of Europe. Therefore, the aims of cooperation were defined on the basis of three groups of criteria:

- (a) urgent needs and priorities of international cooperation in education within the framework of the programme with the Council of Europe;
- (b) education needs in the Russian Federation;
- (c) logic of general educational projects that combine theoretical and practical aspects.

The development of the cooperation can be described in the following way:

The priorities set for discussions in 1996-1999 were to:

- define the role of a history textbook in the educational process with regard to new targets of history teaching;
- analyse the evolution of history textbooks for schools in the Russian Federation with regards to improvements and problems to be addressed;
- discuss the role of new educational technologies, including new information technologies.

New priorities introduced in 2000-2005 were to:

- discuss ways of reviewing and assessing history textbooks for secondary schools;
- analyse textbooks on history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century;
- discuss approaches to be used when presenting cultural diversity, interactions, and intercultural dialogue in regional history textbooks;
- work out new approaches when preparing textbooks on regional history (an example of the North Caucasus).

Joined efforts in this area have been based on the following general approaches:

- comparative analyses of the practices of the Russian Federation and of Europe, discussions on general types of textbooks for various target groups, sharing information on a more efficient use of textbooks;
- multiperspective approach to analyses and preparation of history textbooks with a view to developing a dialogue between “author-publisher-teacher-student”;
- preparation and use of history textbooks: evaluation of the present situation, results achieved, existing difficulties and the ways of their improvement.

These approaches have secured the integrity and consistency of the project and provided a basis for constructive results.

### Schedule (1996-2005)

Issues of preparation, publication and use of textbooks and teaching resources were discussed at the following seminars:

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Seminar's Themes and Questions Discussed</b>
1996 December	Suzdal	One of the questions discussed: preparation of school history books in the Russian Federation.
1998 June	Arkangelsk	Preparation, publication and use of new history textbooks and teaching resources.
1999 June	Petrozavodsk	New history textbooks and teaching resources: aims, preparation and use in the classroom.
1999 March	St. Petersburg	One of the issues discussed: preparation and publication of new history textbooks and teaching materials in the Russian Federation.
2000 April	Yaroslavl	Preparing a new generation of history textbooks for secondary schools: approaches, prospects and systems of evaluation.
2001 April	Moscow	Meeting of experts on history education and the information and communications technology (ICT).
2001 May	Vladivostok	New approaches in the preparation and publication of history textbooks in the Russian Federation.
2002 September	Kaluga	New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on the history of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century for secondary schools in the Russian Federation.
2004 December	Moscow	Preparation of new history textbooks in the Russian Federation.
2005 April	Astrakhan	How to reflect diversity and inter-cultural dialogue in textbooks on regional history.

The seminars were jointly organised by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, and regional education authorities.

On the Russian Federation side, the seminar participants included historian scholars, authors of school textbooks, Ministry officials from various publishing houses producing educational books (Prosvescheniye, Drofa, Mnemosyne), staff members of the journal *Prepodavaniye Istorii v Shkole* (History Teaching in Schools), university professors, college and school teachers from different parts of the country, including



the North-West region, Central Russia, the Volga region and the Far East. The seminars were attended by representatives of the Russian Federation State Duma and local regional legislative assemblies.

The experts invited by the Council of Europe included Mr Heintz Strotzka (Austria), Dr Joachim Weiss, Dr Robert Maier (Germany), Ms Mette Molland, Mr Asle Sveen, Mr Arild Thorbjørnsen (Norway), Mr Andrzej Chrzanowski (Poland), Mr Brian Carvell, Mr Alan Midgeley, Mr Richard Morris, Ms Liz Ogilvy, Mr Michael Riley, Ms Cheryl Stafford (United Kingdom), and Ms Erika Pratschner, member of the KulturKontakt organisation (Austria). The Vladivostok seminar was also attended by a Japanese delegation – Mr Takamatsu Akira, Japan's Consul General in Vladivostok and Mr Komatsu Edzi, Mr Tatano Yoshihisa, Mr Matsumura Masayoshi and Mr Toriumi Yasushi, members of the International Society for Educational Information (ISEI).

The seminars began with introductory plenary reports delivered by Ms Alison Cardwell and Ms Tatiana Minkina-Milko, representatives of the Council of Europe, who described the major trends and specific events of the Council of Europe's work in history teaching. Much attention was focused on the work carried out within the bilateral cooperation programmes between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation, as well as on the regional international projects (the Tbilisi and the Black Sea initiatives). This information encouraged better coordination and ensured continuity which was especially important given the wide geographical spread of the seminars and the fact that they attracted a greater number of new participants.

The seminars included presentations, round tables, discussions in working groups enabling the participants to analyse topical questions, and to work out consistent recommendations. One of the specific features of these seminars has been the use of interactive discussions during the working groups.

### **Development and results (1996-2005)**

The variety of issues discussed in 1996-2005 could be categorised into several thematic groups:

- history textbooks in an educational context: purposes, teaching methods, links with other teaching resources;
- requirements for modern history textbooks: content selection, a didactic system. Evaluation of school textbooks;
- history textbooks in a polycultural society. Preparation of regional history textbooks.

It should be mentioned that all the discussions shared common positive and constructive features characterised by:

- revealing similar dialogues and comparative approaches, as well as alternative situations in the experience of various countries;
- mutual respect for the conceptual and methodological basis and national historiographic traditions, which form the historical contents in textbooks in different countries;
- similarities in the views of teachers' didactics from different countries which appear to stem from the fact that it involves the most traditional teaching resources.

The seminars were marked by constructive discussions and dialogues between professionals on the most urgent issues. Their recommendations and conclusions form the subject of this analysis.

***A history textbook in an educational context: the main goals, teaching methods and links with other teaching resources.***

*Dialogue 1 - A textbook as a reflection of the educational system. Evolution of history textbooks.*

In the presentation on “History textbooks and teaching resources in European schools: old problems and new opportunities” made by Mr Maitland Stobart, a Council of Europe expert (United Kingdom) at the first seminar in the series under examination, summed up the experience so far of the Council of Europe and presented his views on the prospects of developing history textbooks for modern schools. One of the main ideas was that a textbook cannot be viewed separately from teaching goals, syllabus content and teaching methods.

Dr Robert Maier, from the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Germany), gave a very interesting presentation on “A good history textbook: as viewed by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research” in which he compared two textbooks: one which was published in 1960 and the other in the late 1990s. The first textbook appeared to be focused on getting a pupil to memorise information about historical events. The second textbook was designed to encourage pupils to think and to develop their ability for critical thinking and for taking independent decisions. The evolution of these textbooks showed changes in the requirements of modern society and its understanding of the functions of education.

Comparative and historical analysis of textbooks is widely used by British teachers. Mr Chris Culpin, an educational consultant (United Kingdom) presented two textbooks on modern history, the first of which (very thick and with almost no illustrations) was published 20 years ago, and the other (in the form of a richly illustrated booklet) at the beginning of this Century. He emphasised that a textbook should portray not only what should be studied but also how it should be studied.

Against the background of numerous studies about European textbooks over the past few decades, one can clearly see the evolution of school history textbooks for schools

in Russia in the 1990s. The report by Professor Ludmila Aleksashkina, Institute of Content and Methods in Education, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow, analysed changes in the conceptual and methodological basis of textbooks, content selection and didactic components. The following features of the new generation textbooks were singled out:

- well-balanced historical depictions and evaluation of facts, a shift from mono-conceptuality to pluralism, a desire to rise “above the events”, to stay unbiased; the authors tend to avoid ideologised evaluations by often offering their own alternative views on events and facts;
- improvement of the didactic level: textbooks (in particular, those intended for general school audiences) have a better structured texts and display diverse illustrative materials; there have been changes for the better in the selection of questions and tasks which have been compiled by history teaching specialists.

In their discussions on the evolution of history textbooks, the seminar participants paid special attention to the need to overcome ideological and other stereotypes. As we know, teachers in some European countries were confronted with this problem in the 1990s. The issue of preparing and publishing new history textbooks which are free of stereotypes was dealt with by Mr Andrzej Krzanovski, a publisher of history textbooks from Poland. He noted that historians tend to be subjective in their interpretation of facts but that textbook authors should not follow political or other biases.

In the light of these problems, much attention was given to the presentation by Ms Heike Maetzing, from the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Germany on “How German history textbooks for high schools published in 1949-2000 reflect the history of national socialism (1933-1945)”. In her opinion, the concept of national history in modern Germany is dominated to such a degree by the Third Reich and the Holocaust that many students are amazed to learn that German history actually begins in the Middle Ages. In order to address the above-mentioned topics, the textbooks singled out the following periods in the second half of the 20th Century. In the 1940s-1950s they mostly dealt with history up to 1939: terror, the prosecution of the Jews and the Holocaust were mentioned only briefly; all the responsibility for it was put on Hitler; Germans were shown to be people who knew nothing about the Holocaust and were unable to resist the regime of terror. In the 1960s-1970s, those who were born after the war wanted to know about the generation that had lived under the Nazis. From the 1970s onwards, the dictatorship period is portrayed differently in history textbooks. The renewed interest was largely connected with the persecution of Jews and the Holocaust. The textbooks provided a more complete picture of various forms of resistance 50 years after the Nazi dictatorship; their grandchildren were now in a position to experience collective and personal guilt for the actions of their predecessors.

To sum up, it should be noted that the ideas expressed in these presentations were shared by the majority of the participants, including:

- a contextual approach to the analysis and evaluation of school history textbooks;
- experience of the analysis of school history textbooks during the period of changing historical paradigm, the creation of a new generation of textbooks.

*Dialogue 2 - A new educational paradigm.*

Mr Maitland Stobart (United Kingdom) pointed out that current textbooks cannot be limited to the authors' text; they should include sources, illustrations, tasks for pupils and other components which complement one another. Traditional history textbooks are facing challenges from new information technologies.

Mr Heintz Strotzka (Austria) emphasised the connection between the publication of new history textbooks and a change in the didactic paradigm which is widely accepted in history teaching. The traditional concept of "knowledge transfer" is being replaced by a modern approach which allows schoolchildren to be actively involved in the learning process. New approaches called for new qualities in textbooks; they should be multipurpose and have a diverse range of historical sources and different interpretations of such sources. Pedagogical aspects of textbooks should be more focused on motivating pupils and awakening their interest in events described. The use of a textbook in a classroom cannot be reduced to merely reading and learning texts. Pupils are expected to understand and interpret the information contained in textbooks.

Professor Andrey Sokolov, Dean of the History Faculty at the Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University, drew everybody's attention to the fact that the preparation of history textbooks is closely linked with the issue of defining ways and purposes of teaching history in schools. Critical thinking, independent judgement and, finally, civic responsibility tend to be created not by an individual's historical knowledge but by the way this knowledge is acquired. It was important that these questions were discussed with European experts. Their experience was valuable, not so much in the form of ready-made recipes but, more importantly, in terms of analysis about the ways in which the concept and practice of school history teaching has evolved in different countries.

The question was whether the textbooks that have appeared in Russia in the past decade could indeed be referred to as a new generation of textbooks. Despite being less politicised, more interesting and variable they were still based on what largely reflected the traditional educational paradigm, for example, the belief that the study of history was necessary in order "to learn lessons from the past", and that it was possible to obtain objective historical knowledge.

Summing up the ideas expressed in the presentations, it was possible to see a common understanding of the challenges and requirements which history textbooks were expected to meet. Undoubtedly the seminar participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to discuss current issues and to try and find efficient solutions. They believed that further improvement of the quality of textbooks was important.

### *Dialogue 3 - Textbooks and New Information Technologies*

The discussions of this issue was more like a “chorus” than a dialogue. The majority of the speakers focused on the problem of the relationship between traditional and new sources of educational information and the new challenges that textbooks have to meet today. It was stressed that schoolchildren’s fascination with computers and the Internet means that a structure should be developed which would bring together various information blocks into one single entity; a teacher should accept the fact that he/she is no longer the main source of information and should learn to evaluate and use various available tools.

In connection with the above-mentioned questions, Dr Robert Maier's presentation (Germany) was of great interest as it showed the results of a poll conducted in 27 European countries in 1994-1995 and involving 32,000 pupils. It was aimed at finding out what role a textbook played in history lessons and what school children thought about history textbooks.

These polls and other researches enabled the author to come up with the following conclusions:

- a textbook still remains one of the main educational tools despite attempts to claim that it is a vestige of the old school;
- present-day history textbooks are a comprehensive aid that contain, in addition to authors’ texts: primary sources; fragments from literary works, memoirs; paintings; maps; chronological tables; literature references; terminological dictionaries; tasks and recommendations for better ways of learning history;
- in addition to textbooks, it is advisable to use other educational resources during history lessons such as: (a) source materials that are aimed at students gaining knowledge in a rational and argumentative way; (b) audio and video materials for greater emotional effect; (c) films; and (d) Internet as a source of diverse and extensive additional and illustrative information.

Mr Chris Culpin (United Kingdom) also described the sources from which modern British schoolchildren receive information on history. Besides school textbooks, television programmes, guidebooks for museums and heritage sites are widely used as well as theatre plays for schools and, more recently, website resources.

When asked if textbooks would be replaced by website resources in ten years’ time, he answered that this was not very likely, but textbooks themselves would need to change in order to provide the kind of tools and educational opportunities that could not be provided by electronic media.

It should be noted that the question of combining traditional textbooks and electronic manuals was discussed in detail during a meeting of experts and workshops on “History Education and the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)”

(Moscow, 5-7 April 2001). The view of the publisher was presented by Mr Brian Carvell (United Kingdom), who pointed out that the creation of electronic manuals largely increases the opportunity of using the information both in the United Kingdom and in Europe. In this connection, and of significant interest, were experts' assessments of the opportunities which the use of new ICT technologies offered to different states, e.g. the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova. Much attention was given to the technologies used to create new manuals in the CD-ROM format. Mr Vasily Sukhov (Moscow State Pedagogical University) noted that the practice of simply "transferring" successful history textbooks into CD-ROM format has proved to be rather ineffective. It obviously requires a different logic to structure the learning and teaching process so as to make maximum use of the opportunities that new information technologies offer today.

The discussions throughout the whole cycle of seminars helped to analyse textbooks in an educational context and stated the following:

- the issue of what makes a good textbook is of social and civil significance. The priorities and values of modern textbooks are to map out the road for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. What matters most is that a history textbook should be concentrated on the democratic values of civil society; it should be free of political and ideological approaches;
- a great variety of teaching resources are required which corresponds to modern school needs, including reflection of such important factors as cultural diversity;
- it is important to make a textbook structure multifunctional so that, in addition to an author's text, it should include documents, illustrations with different views on history, as well as methodological information and practical tasks for pupils to help them develop critical thinking and the ability to reach independent conclusions;
- a textbook should be linked to educational standards and school curricula;
- continuity of textbooks should be ensured at different levels of teaching;
- a textbook should provide links between events and processes in national, European and world history;
- a modern textbook ought to provide a dialogue between its authors and pupils enabling them to bridge the generation gap, to strengthen the respect of the young generation for their historical and cultural heritage, and to promote tolerance for intercultural communication among pupils.

The participants' general conclusions and recommendations were as follows:

- at present, textbooks take a lead in the educational process. However, their role and place are slowly but steadily changing. Instead of being a unique

teaching source, they are becoming one of many teaching tools. In the long run, the textbook is likely to be used together with other additional materials or as a multimedia package;

- despite some clearly positive changes, both in textbooks and the design and content of teaching materials, there is still the problem of selecting materials and adapting them to pupils' age groups, as well as to the specific features of different types of schools. In this connection, textbook authors should ideally be familiar with age-specific psychology and pedagogy, or invite experts to assist them in this work;
- textbooks would be more practical if the teachers themselves were better prepared to work with them. Transition from a monologue style of textbook to a culture of dialogue cannot occur overnight; teachers need training. Therefore, the in-service training system should be changed substantially; in addition, the efforts of colleges, universities and methodological associations of teachers of different subjects, including history, should be consolidated;
- there is a lack of teaching resources for upper school students in the Russian Federation. The existing textbooks disregard the specifics of the history course structure and content at this stage of education.

***Requirements for present-day history textbooks: selection of content, the didactical system and the evaluation of school textbooks.***

*Dialogue 1 - Requirements for modern textbooks.*

Discussion of this group of questions was based on comparing:

- a “good” textbook model and manuals currently in use in schools;
- approaches taken by textbooks authors and those of teachers.

The participants considered history textbooks from the following positions:

- theoretical substantiation of the functions of a textbook: (a) as a universal source of historical information which forms the core of the educational system; (b) as a means to develop reasoning skills as well as pupils' personalities;
- the analysis of the contents of existing history textbooks which revealed oversights or poorly explained material (very often on ethnonational or cultural history).

Professor Ludmila Aleksashkina (Russian Academy of Education) singled out the following major qualities of modern textbooks on history: presentation of history at different levels from the history of civilisations and states to that of an individual; use of different sources of historical information (documents, illustrations, etc.) alongside

an author's text; inclusion of information on different forms of historical perception; dialogue between pupils and those who participated in the events under discussion and the historians who wrote about them, etc.; use of more emotive information which enables pupils to form their own attitudes to peoples and events portrayed in their history textbooks.

Dr Robert Maier (Germany) focused on the need for a balanced presentation of historical information in a textbook: incorporation of such elements as primary sources; extracts from books, memoirs; pictures; maps; chronological tables; source books; terminological dictionaries; tasks and methodological recommendations, etc. in addition to an author's text.

Mr Heintz Strotzka (Austria) emphasised that an important condition for streamlining present-day history textbooks is to determine their typology. Thus, it is possible to single out the following types of manuals:

- a traditional textbook containing mostly the author's text and a little additional material;
- a textbook which combines the traditional author's text (accounting for about half of its content) with figures, diagrams, maps, sources, etc. The ratio between the text and additional materials can vary. In some textbooks materials illustrate a text while, in others, they have a life of their own;
- a textbook containing "stories" for junior schoolchildren;
- a textbook for junior schoolchildren oriented towards pupils' individual work; such textbooks contain games, quizzes, challenging tasks; such textbook involves game activities and attempts to motivate the learning process.

The "profile" of a good history textbook was also outlined by those participating in the working groups. This profile included the following qualities needed for a present-day history textbooks:

- objective presentation of historical material;
- orientation towards universal values, absence of national, racial, religious and other stereotypes;
- reflection of controversial historical issues, inclusion of documents and materials offering different views;
- accessibility, clarity, adaptation to pupils' age groups;
- inclusion of a well-elaborated system of questions and tasks for pupils which motivates the development of their skills;
- a modern design, good printing quality.



Comparison of the approaches taken by authors of textbooks and practising teachers allows us to make some important observations. Many of the requirements overlap. The first group, however, takes a largely general didactic and systematic approach. Teachers follow the pupils and, starting from a particular image of the past, they can elaborate further by working with a textbook. Thus, it is worthwhile recognising the advantages of a joint discussion between “authors” and “teachers”, “creators” and “consumers” on the requirements for modern textbooks. The seminars provided a rare opportunity to discuss these different views.

As a result of the discussions involving the participation of teachers, the following conclusions and recommendations were made:

- in the 1990s some teachers in Russia refused to use textbooks in their lessons as these textbooks failed to meet modern school requirements. Therefore, teachers had to replace the views of textbook authors with their own and build their work in a classroom on the basis of historical sources. At the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the situation changed and the problem became one of how to choose the textbook which would help teachers best meet the educational challenges they now faced;
- one of the advantages which the new history textbooks offered was their updated contents and expanded additional and illustrative material;
- new textbooks are not without imperfections; many of them tend to be rather unshakable. The recurring errors which appear in the new textbooks are: complicated text; information overload; questions and tasks for pupils directed toward sheer reproduction of knowledge; and poor treatment of everyday history and cultural issues.

#### *Dialogue 2 - What should evaluation of textbooks be like?*

In her presentation on criteria for selecting and evaluation of history school textbooks, Ms Larissa Sokolova (Head of the Editorial Board of the Prosvescheniy publishing house), described the system of preparation, internal and external evaluation of history school textbooks, stages of work by the publishing house, and the evaluation provided by the Federal Expert Council, and teachers’ feedback once they begin to use the textbooks in the classroom. It was stressed that teachers should have a free choice of textbooks to be used in a classroom. It was also suggested that we should return to a system of trial textbooks. This could shift the emphasis from treating a textbook as a commercial entity to understanding its pedagogical value.

Mr Michael Riley (United Kingdom) noted that the production of textbooks for British schools is based on free market principles. Each year publishers issue a wide range of new history textbooks and teachers are free to choose.

Mr Arild Thorbjørnsen (Norway) described the system of selecting and assessing history textbooks in Norwegian secondary schools in general and, in particular, in

upper secondary schools. He pointed out that textbooks are prepared and published by private publishing houses and sold on a free market. At the same time, authors should be familiar with the curriculum and define the general structure of a textbook: topics to be considered in more detail; methodological ideas or proposals for teachers and pupils; a level of complexity; and linguistic style.

To obtain Government approval, a manuscript is sent to the National Centre for streamlining teaching materials whose independent advisers examine the manuscript according to their standards, which include among others, a pedagogical presentation of its contents, factual accuracy, clarity and relevancy of the language used to the pupils' age group. The Norwegian Ministry of Education initiated a project called "Selection, evaluation and quality improvement of textbooks and other types of educational literature" aimed at finding out how schools select their textbooks and other teaching materials; to analyse reasons which determine the choice of a particular edition (including the question of who influences the decision-making process of teachers, school principals, local boards of trustees, parents, pupils); to develop criteria and quality evaluation methods for textbooks. Norway also has another ongoing project "Survey of textbooks" aimed at improving public awareness of the importance of textbooks.

In conclusion it was said that each country should find its own way of evaluating and selecting textbooks to suit its needs, situation and traditions. Development of democratic processes in society can help in this work.

Mr Heintz Strotzka (Austria) focused on the didactic aspects in history textbook selection by pointing out that selection criteria depend on a teaching style. One possible approach is that of a teacher who carefully plans his activity, and the pupil in turn receives well-presented information. There is a kind of competition between a teacher and a textbook as sources of information. Another approach is that the basic work is done by pupils, and a textbook is used as just one of many sources of information. In this case a teacher acts as an adviser to his/her pupils in the learning process, while a textbook is a tool in the educational process.

During the discussions in the working groups the participants expressed their views on the evaluation of history textbooks. Most participants believed that textbook evaluation should be professional. Some of the speakers emphasised that it was not necessary to encourage public discussions on textbooks which are of an ideological or PR nature. It is necessary to provide systematic and complete information on new textbooks and teaching materials to be published. New textbooks should firstly be sent to methodological centres to be used in pilot schools. It was recommended to the editorial board of the journal "School History Teaching" that it publish regular reviews on new textbooks, as well as on their use in different regions.

To sum up the major results of the discussions, it should be noted that today the questions of history textbook evaluation have been studied very little. This can be explained by both the complexity of overcoming the subjective preferences and likes and dislikes, and an inadequate procedure of public evaluation in education in Russia.

It is believed that these issues should become the target of international cooperation in history teaching in the short-term.

***History textbooks in a multicultural society. Manuals on regional history.***

Common work on this range of questions was given a substantial impetus. During the seminar on “Preparation of new textbooks on regional history in the Russian Federation” (Moscow, 8-9 December 2004), Professor Andrey Fursenko, the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, met with the representatives of the Council of Europe and the regional Education Ministers of the South Federal region of Russia, which also includes the republics of the North Caucasus. During the meeting, the Minister stressed the importance of continuing the history teaching projects of the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation. The Minister supported the choice of the North Caucasus as a pilot region for developing a regional textbook model. He believed that this could provide another step towards achieving peace and stability in this region, promoting tolerance, preventing extremism and discrimination, and fostering respect among the young generation for other peoples’ cultural and religious traditions.

During the seminar the following views were presented.

Mr Arild Thorbjørnsen (Norway) noted that Norwegian schools teach world, national, regional and local history. He specified the qualities which are important for history textbooks including regional ones: basic chronology; identity; historical thinking based on understanding the relationship between causes and effects; understanding other cultures; and self-reflection and historical competence.

Dr Joachim Weiss (Germany) emphasised that historical education should be focused on positive attitudes and values including tolerance, respect for diversity and open-mindedness. History education should not only include interpretation of facts, but should also help to analyse controversial issues on the basis of historical experience and a multiperspective approach. As a case study of local history, the theme “My city has its own history” was introduced which allowed pupils to work independently in museums, memorial sites, libraries, municipal and local archives.

Ms Cheryl Stafford (United Kingdom) analysed the issue of historical diversity in teaching history in a multicultural state based on the example of the United Kingdom. Particular attention was given to teaching the history of Northern Ireland in Irish, British and European contexts. A multiperspectivity approach is borne out of a wide range of historical sources. This makes it possible to establish and interpret the diverse nature of the past, promote active study of history, critical thinking, and an ability to argue and solve problems that arise. One can successfully teach diversity in the perception of history by using a wide range of methods such as: drama; presentations; discussion of a painting; debates; inviting to lessons those people who participated in historical events; use of Internet resources for independent research; and visits to historical places and sights.

Dr Alexey Krugov's presentation, Stavropol State University, on “The Caucasus in federal history textbooks” sparked great interest on the part of the participants, as it had a direct bearing on the opportunities for creating a regional textbook based on materials from the history of the North Caucasus. It was underlined that the Caucasus can be called “a crossroads of civilisations”, “Eurasia’s solar plexus” where the interests of many peoples and countries come together. It could also be called Russia’s most painful point. The North Caucasus is now living through a system crisis, and this calls for the creation of regional teaching and a methodological pack. At present, some historians appear to have developed "a fear syndrome" of the Caucasian theme. Since the publication of “A History of Peoples of the North Caucasus” (Books 1-2. M., 1988, a scientific edition which is now completely out-of-date), no one has attempted to write a modern manual, especially a teaching and methodological pack for school pupils on a history of the North Caucasian region. It is only possible to create such a manual by studying all the previous experience of national historical science, including that of writing textbooks for schools and universities.

The speaker considered in detail a number of the most urgent questions for the treatment of Caucasian history in school textbooks and tried to provide some answers. He pointed out that the Caucasus is currently seen more as a geographical concept rather than a historical one in recent educational literature in Russia. School and high school textbooks and manuals fail to consider the ethnic, social and economic contacts of the peoples that inhabit the region. The history of the North Caucasus in the Soviet period is a subject that requires serious analysis. What lessons from the past can be used for a present-day textbook? He suggested to use the notion of the Caucasus as a common cultural and historical treasure trove to which each community have contributed and will continue to do so. Today there is a great need to write a teaching and methodological pack on history or, to start with, on the culture of the North Caucasus, possibly to be studied as part of an optional course.

It was proposed that a group of well-known scholars, methodologists and experienced teachers, engaged in writing and working on such textbooks, hold a scientific and practical seminar to develop a concept and a framework for a future manual; to develop a textbook and at a later stage a methodological pack reflecting on updated methodological and pedagogical approaches. It is necessary to use the experience of both the Russian Federation and foreign historians, including that of creating such teaching tools as ones on the history of the Black Sea and Caucasian countries that were prepared with the participation of the Council of Europe.

Conclusions and recommendations made during the discussions:

- the participants emphasised the importance of preparing regional history textbooks and drew everybody’s attention to the important question of the interrelation between regional and federal teaching materials;
- it was noted that the North Caucasian region already had some experience in creating regional textbooks which have a number of errors including those of a factual nature. The task is to elaborate general approaches towards writing

such regional textbooks. If authors succeed in creating such a textbook on the history of this region, this experience could be shared with the rest of the country;

- when working on a manual on a history of the North Caucasus it is important to bear in mind the following major aspects: historical evolution of relations between the Caucasus, the Russian Federation and Europe; ethnonational history and the problem of shaping a political nation; a conflict of various interests in the Caucasus;
- when discussing historical and current problems in the Caucasus in their full complexity, the participants emphasised that, taking into account the multinational factor and the controversial assessment of political history, particular attention should be paid to those facts and events that contribute to the reconciliation process and mutual understanding;
- curricula should form the basis of the teaching process. It is advisable to carry out a contest of curricula. It was proposed that a working group be set up to develop a teaching pack as well as a concept for the preparation of regional history teaching materials;
- taking into account the experience of preparing supplementary regional teaching materials, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, it is important to make creative use of the available experience while focusing in particular on cultural themes;
- development of regional textbooks should contribute to the development of a federal component. In this context, a regional textbook on the North Caucasus (which is now being prepared) is expected to become an important teaching and methodological tool in addition to the existing federal and regional textbooks;
- the participants noted that the creation of a textbook on a history of the North Caucasus should contribute to a change in public opinion, and in negative stereotypes that exist today in Russian society about the Caucasian peoples. This textbook is expected to establish harmonious approaches towards general history in the context of multinational and multiconfessional Russian society, to create tolerance among children and adolescents, and prevent racial and religious discrimination.

### **Results achieved in the context of history education**

Work on the issues of school history textbook preparation, publication and use from 1996-2005 has obviously become one of the most significant goals of the joint efforts of the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation's central and regional educational authorities.

Its significance was determined by:

- the character of the educational situation - the reform of the history education system and, in particular, a shift in history textbook creation, which took place in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- the continued importance of a textbook as a basic universal teaching tool even in today's world, with its inherent domination of information technology in every aspect of life;
- the efficiency of the cooperation project itself which allowed textbooks to be considered from the standpoint of its creators (authors and publishers), and also from that of its often critical and numerous consumers (pupils and teachers);
- widely used opportunities of a comparative analysis of concepts and practices of school history textbook publication and use in different European countries, which made it possible to identify common approaches and specific features;
- the geographical scope of the seminars (covering a significant part of the regions of the Russian Federation, both in the north and the south, the west and the east); the professional scope, involving active participation of not only numerous experts on textbook writing, but also hundreds of teachers from towns and villages in Russia.

The cooperation dynamics had a logic of its own and were simultaneously linked to the creation of new generation of textbooks for schools in Russia.

The themes of the seminars marked a transition from the general questions relating to the school textbook to the controversial and sensitive issues. Their agenda also included such specific topics as:

- textbooks on the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century;
- approaches towards the creation of regional textbooks;
- implementation of intercultural dialogue and interactions between peoples in textbooks.

One cannot fail to note how the activity of the participants evolved. They began by characterising new textbooks in terms of the old and new paradigm. After simply listing these or other innovations, they embarked upon a detailed analysis of textbooks. In doing so, the participants followed the whole process of creating and improving new textbooks which occurred in Russia during that period. The joint activity culminated in the development of projects for the creation of a regional textbook.

To assess the results of the work on the creation and use of school history textbooks by the Council of Europe and representatives of educational establishments in the Russian

Federation, it is important to take into account the real changes in the existing history textbooks. The positive changes that occurred in history textbooks that have been published since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century include the following:

- consideration of events and peoples in the form of an historical dialogue;
- improvement of historical contents and, most importantly, the methodological aspects of history textbooks for upper secondary schools (forms 10-11, for 16-17 year-old pupils); these textbooks provide wider historical sources and illustrative materials, and offer a wide range of questions and tasks which motivate an interactive style in learning history in upper secondary schools.

There is reason to believe that the above-mentioned changes also reflect the experience gained in the discussions on textbook preparation during the seminars of 1996-2005 which involved the active participation of textbook authors and publishers.

All this makes it possible to evaluate the collaboration in this area as a well-planned, professionally valid, dynamic and efficient work. Today, historians and history teachers in Russia speak with a certain sense of satisfaction about the long and difficult path they have trodden in the past few decades without "losing" history as a major school subject, which remains so much in demand among individuals and in society. We believe that cooperation with the Council of Europe has contributed greatly to this.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

An ideal wish which every participant would most probably make in summing up the results of this ten year cooperation would be "let there be another ten years!"

The practical wish would be to continue work on the issues of school textbook preparation, publication and use, which are still high on the agenda in Russian education. The most promising topics could include the following:

- preparation of textbooks for upper-secondary schools and specialised schools;
- elaboration of regional textbooks;
- a discussion of such global question as how textbooks could create a basis for dialogue between epochs, peoples, generations, authors and pupils.





## **CHAPTER 3**

**Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe in the initial and in-service training of history teachers**

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## **Introduction**

Many reforms in history education in schools of the Russian Federation have occurred during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These reforms, together with a whole range of social factors, changed the role and status of a school teacher in Russia. Teachers, including history teachers, gained more freedom, while their responsibility for choosing an effective educational strategy also grew (this included professional goals and approaches) as well as the quality of education. School reform obliged teachers to start looking for answers to philosophical issues and formulate their social stand in a more clear-cut way<sup>1</sup>.

These developments involved history school teachers, college professors, scientists from research institutes and educators. In 1996 the Council of Europe joined this process, which in turn, helped to accelerate history education reforms in Russia comparing national experience in this field with that of its foreign counterparts.

The development of democratic reforms highlighted the problem of initial and in-service training of history teachers. In 1996 the conference in Suzdal identified the training of history teachers and upgrading of their skills as one of the priorities of the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation. Different issues pertaining to this problem were put on the agendas of practically all seminars held by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

### **Ten seminars for history teachers from the Russian Federation**

In total, ten seminars have been held on this subject over the past decade. The most informative among them were:

- “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation” (Ekaterinburg, 30 March-1 April 1998);
- “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation and their evaluation” (Nizhny Novgorod, 15-17 April 1999);
- “New methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation” (Volgograd, 19-21 June 2000);
- “History teaching in secondary schools: teacher training and history textbooks” (Dombay, Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya Republic, 23-24 April 2001);
- Training seminar for history teachers from Chechnya (Kislovodsk, 18-19 November 2002);
- “New interactive methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools” (Kislovodsk, 20-21 November 2002);

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<sup>1</sup> Vyazemsky E.E. Strelova, O.Y., “Theory and methods of teaching history”, Moscow, 2003, pp. 24-25.

- “The initial training of history teachers in the Russian Federation” (Ulan-Ude, 20-22 October 2003);
- “New interactive methods in teaching world and national history in multicultural context” (Pyatigorsk, 23-25 June 2005);
- “How initial training of history teachers should prepare them to work in a multicultural context” (Tomsk, 25 September–1 October 2005).

Almost all of the above-mentioned seminars were of an innovative nature. Their aims were to examine initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation.

### **Reports and speakers**

The seminars brought together European educators who shared their experience with specialists from Russia on training history teachers and helped them map out ways of solving this problem in the Russian Federation. The following presentations were made:

- Dr Julieta Savova (Bulgaria) “The conclusions and recommendations of the multilateral seminar on the initial and in-service training of history teachers in European countries in democratic transition”;
- Dr Alois Ecker (Austria) “The ideal profile of a history teacher”;
- Ms Luisa De Bivar Black (Portugal) “The initial and in-service training of history teachers: an example of Portugal”;
- Ms Cheryl Stafford (United Kingdom) “The use of multiperspectivity in teaching history in present-day schools, including controversial and sensitive issues: an example of Northern Ireland”.
- Mr John Hamer (United Kingdom) “History teachers’ initial training, targets and achievements: an example of the United Kingdom”;
- Dr Martin Sachse (Germany) “Training history teachers: challenges and achievements: an example of Germany”.

Among the most impressive presentations made by the participants from Russia were the following:

- Professor Ludmila Andrukhina “Results achieved in training and retraining history teachers in the Russian Federation since 1996 and further steps to be taken”;
- Professor Ludmila Aleksashkina “New approaches in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation”;

- Dr Ludmila Razbegaeva “New approaches to teaching history: new trends and challenges”.

### **In-service training of history teachers: past and present**

The seminars analysed initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Soviet Union. In the opinion of Professor Ludmila Andrukhina the main features of this system could be summed up as follows<sup>2</sup>:

- political history and history of the Communist party prevailing in teaching which hindered the development of ethnocultural and regional histories;
- a unified system of training history teachers which excluded analysis of different positions, evaluations and opinions;
- limitation in the use of historical sources, restrictive character of teaching materials (ideologically censored national curricula, textbooks, materials for students and teachers);
- a high degree of academism in university education limiting teachers’ functions to simply passing on an ideologically biased interpretation of historical facts onto students;
- a closed initial and in-service teacher training system with its ideological and political barriers which made it practically impossible for history teachers to take part in international activities;
- a lack of systematic research of issues concerning initial and in-service teacher training as these areas were considered to be purely organisational;
- a lack of conceptual evaluation of educational issues as a whole and of the role of history teachers in particular.

At the same time, the participants of the seminar stressed that the achievements of the Soviet system of initial and in-service training of history teachers should not be ignored. The research occasionally resulted in the discovery of new types of training schemes which fostered the development of education. Today, we feel the need to re-evaluate the achievements of pre-Revolutionary years and the humanistic ideals of the 1920s and 1960s. Unlike the Soviet system, the present-day one is more flexible and could be easily adjusted and integrated into an international educational environment.

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<sup>2</sup> Documents of the seminar “New methods of teaching history in contemporary secondary school in the Russian Federation”, Volgograd, 2000, p. 9.

## **The teacher as a key figure**

At school, a key figure is a teacher entrusted with the task of educating children on whom the future of any country depends. The Council of Europe analytical materials stress that:

- one of the central roles in contemporary education belongs to a teacher;
- there is a growing need to give history teachers better training and support;
- educational changes open up greater possibilities for creative activity of a teacher. Today, “life-long education” is seen in many countries as a new strategy;
- social, cultural and political changes in present-day society affect the work of a teacher in many ways by generating new challenges;
- history education and teaching history at school are most sensitive to social and educational changes;
- the aims, content and instruments of history education are changing. New changes should be introduced in initial and in-service teacher training to enable teachers to meet present-day challenges;
- a history teacher today is not just a professional who is well-versed in history and child psychology but also one who is responsible for harmonising human relations;
- the system of initial and in-service teacher training should be reformed in such a way that it meets the needs of school teachers;
- a comparative study of aims, structures and norms of initial and in-service training of history teachers should be encouraged. This could contribute to inter-agency cooperation and exchange of information on the changes needed to reform the system of initial and in-service history teacher training;
- particular attention should be paid to training professors of pedagogical institutes who, in turn, are responsible for raising the professional level of school history teachers.<sup>3</sup>

## **Joint activities**

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe jointly organised the seminar on “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation” (Ekaterinburg, 30 March - 1 April 1998). Its

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<sup>3</sup> Recommendation Rec (2001) 15 on History Teaching in Twenty-First-Century Europe, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2001, p. 10.

comprehensive agenda embraced many issues linked to present-day initial and in-service training of history teachers. The educational needs of teachers and up-to-date teacher retraining modules were discussed.

The participants underlined that, with the educational system reforms which are already underway, history teachers are facing many challenges. New trends in history research have occurred and the place of history in the system of social sciences is now more clearly defined. In this context, history teachers from Russia should get a clearer picture of scientific approaches and achievements used when teaching history in different European countries.

The seminar “The preparation, publication and use of new textbooks and teaching resources” (Arkhangelsk, 29 June – 1 July 1998) revealed a close link between the changing goals in teaching history, textbooks, new standards and cultural development of teachers. The participants of the seminar pointed out that new textbooks, a wider range of sources, and the use of IT in teaching history motivated the development of new teaching methods. To provide a modern technological base for history teaching, in-service teacher training courses set up new multimedia laboratories equipped with interactive educational resources and access to the Internet which raises standards of teaching. Teaching technologies are shifting more towards Internet information searches, illustrative materials, and electronic extracts of lessons.

The seminars introduced teachers new ways of using multimedia resources as well as ways of applying multimedia technologies in teaching.

The participants greatly appreciated the new generation of curricula for in-service training of history teachers. They include new subjects, such as “The use of computer technologies in history teaching”, “Active participation of teachers in project work”, “The development of critical thinking”, and “Methods of using texts and other resources”. The important feature of these curricula is that they are of a practical nature, which makes it possible to use them to promote a competence-based approach in teaching history. This, in turn, generated new methodology trends and principles in building a post-college education in-service training system of teachers as a whole.

It should be stressed that the in-service training curricula created for history teachers have proved to be useful for teachers of literature, geography, natural sciences and other subjects because of their interdisciplinary approach. They help the young generation of teachers to develop the different competences needed in the world today.

Both history teachers and education methodologists are aware of the fact that an in-service teacher training system is now becoming a priority. It foresees the retraining of teachers in subjects which have been included in the general curricula (economics, law, sociology, political science).

Education methodologists are becoming key figures in the in-service training of history teachers. A number of the Council of Europe documents stress the need for a

more effective teacher training system.<sup>4</sup> Often regional bodies responsible for improving the skills of teachers and their retraining cannot give a teacher full support. Therefore, participants proposed to create a federal methodology agency managed by skilled staff. Contemporary schools are in need of methodologist-teachers who can:

- assess the situation in teaching social sciences;
- propose the best ways of overcoming difficulties with which teachers may be faced;
- keep teachers informed on the latest developments in teaching methods as well as providing a basis for an exchange of opinions;
- consult teachers on issues of self-education;
- provide theoretical as well as practical assistance to young teachers.

The participants of the seminars pointed out that up-to-date in-service training programmes for methodologists should be worked out, and that their salaries should depend on the level of competence and professional achievements. Such a system should allow for an adequate evaluation of professional competences of methodologists. Proper training of methodologists in history and social sciences is of great importance as these subjects have high educational significance.

The situation in history education today can be regarded as a professional test for a teacher. The participants of the seminar stressed that the constant influx of information, which is not being properly structured, hampers the work of teachers and methodologists; moreover, methodology tools often do not meet with modern standards.

Thus, some textbooks claiming to be “a new generation of textbooks” are not suited for developing education. More recent teaching materials demand a higher level of competence as well as a creative approach on the part of teachers. However, too much work and not enough training, amongst other factors, make it practically impossible for a history teacher to achieve such competence.

One of the most important seminars on in-service training of history teachers took place in Ulan-Ude (October 2003). It raised key issues of history teachers’ initial training in the Russian Federation and analysed different models of training teachers in Europe and Asia.

The participants of the seminar stressed the need for training and retraining of history teachers which could bring them up-to-date on how to use information resources and switch to new methods of using textbooks. Most of the teachers find it difficult to free themselves from the unified education authoritarian patterns and the domination of

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<sup>4</sup> The Secretary General’s New Initiative: “Reforms in history education and preparation of new history textbooks”, Strasbourg, 1999, pp. 70-71.

state and communist party ideology. Breaking stereotypes is a crucial part of a history teacher's training.

The seminars focused mainly on training young history teachers. Unfortunately, a lack of methodology in their training can hinder their professional growth in contemporary schools. Often, neither future teachers nor their trainers are aware of alternative history textbooks and the ways they can be used.<sup>5</sup>

The participants pointed out that more emphasis should be given to tutorship, workshops, master-classes and "schools for future teachers". Methodology centres and school administrations could work together to coordinate these activities.

A student teacher should be trained in such a way as to prepare pupils for living in a democratic society. Material incentives should be provided to make young people see teaching history in schools as an attractive job.

### **Main goals of teachers' evaluation**

The seminar in Nizhny Novgorod (April 1999) examined in-service training of history teachers in the context of expert evaluation of the school teaching process.

The participants of the seminar noted that one of the main aims of evaluation is assessing the competence level of history teachers by mapping out the guidelines for their professional growth over five years. It helps determine the potential growth of each teacher and individual ways of upgrading professional skills.

In the participants' opinion, assessment should result in an unbiased evaluation of teacher's work made by comparing modern standards with the results achieved.

Methodologists admit that an objective assessment of history teachers' work is hard to achieve; all the more so, since some of them teach lower grades, others intermediate grades, while others still only teach senior grades or students of varying grades. Some of the teachers to be assessed are doing experimental work in creating programmes and courses; there are teachers who achieve considerable results with students who are obliged to take extra classes in a subject.

A lack of definite assessment criteria makes it difficult to analyse and evaluate the professional activity of teachers. This often prevents objective evaluation and causes dissatisfaction among teachers.

The participants stressed that those teachers eligible for assessment should:

- monitor the trends and innovations in pedagogy and develop teaching techniques using such trends;

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the seminar on "How initial training of history teachers should prepare them to work in a multicultural context", Tomsk, 2005, pp. 103-104.



- respect a balance when teaching political, cultural, ethnocultural and other values with an emphasis on national values;
- help each student acquire knowledge and understanding of ethnocultural, national and human values;
- use the latest methodological achievements;
- apply a systematic approach to lesson planning;
- make creative use of innovative teaching resources including computer and multimedia technologies;
- creatively apply concepts, principles, methods, and organisational forms of a chosen pedagogical system;
- establish links between different subjects so as to expand and deepen students' knowledge of the subject;
- be able to give inter-disciplinary lessons to help students form a universal picture of the world.

### **Teachers' point of view**

The participants of the seminars gave an outline of the changing content of history education. In particular, they stated that:

- at present the re-evaluation of European, national and regional aspects of history is underway with a regional component of education developing rapidly;
- educational programmes and courses in regional history are included in initial and in-service teacher training;
- teachers are becoming more interested in the humanistic interpretation of history and the new vision of world and European events;
- a universal approach towards history is being developed;
- schools, universities and in-service teacher training institutions feel an ongoing need for integrated courses of historical/geographical, geographical/economic, economic/historical and cultural/historical character;
- the significance of the upbringing process in schools and its integration in all subjects, including history teaching, is becoming evident;

- there is still a large element of academic education in the initial training of history teachers;
- the content of history teacher training is now undergoing a change. It no longer merely sums up facts and theories but aims at interpreting and applying a universal approach to historical facts.

The participants of the seminar underlined that, with the assistance of the Council of Europe, the following changes in teacher training systems in the Russian Federation are taking place:

- multi-tiered and module approaches to history education are being developed;
- professional skills and experience of teachers determine types and forms of education;
- international exchange in initial and in-service teacher training is becoming usual practice;
- international projects and programmes are being carried out with active involvement of history educators from European countries;
- initial training of teachers is designed by taking into consideration both the new model of professional pedagogical competence and the diverse educational fields, needs and teachers' professional levels. This explains the search for optimal models in the structure of educational content and processes.<sup>6</sup>

### **Critical remarks**

Retraining of history teachers has been provided by in-service training institutes. Speaking at the seminars, teachers stressed the need for such institutes to find a common ground that could unite them into an integral system which would help to introduce changes in history teachers' retraining.

It is no secret that there are teachers in Russia who are far from happy about their retraining system. Thus, much criticism was voiced about the heads of the in-service training institutes. The list of drawbacks in the retraining of history teachers includes the dogmatic choice of some of the new courses, their irrelevance to everyday issues brought forth by democratic changes in Russia, and disregard of the realities of life.

The speakers stressed that such institutes need a new type of relations allowing partners to show readiness in recognising one another as equal participants in the same process. Such attitudes would encourage each institute to not only offer their services

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the seminar on "New methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation", Volgograd, 2000, pp. 10-11.

to teachers, but also give due regard to the needs, interests and requirements of both individual teachers and their staff.

The following partnership principles were discussed:

- coordinated action;
- mutual responsibility;
- equality in the choice of ways and methods in achieving goals;
- retaining independence in the obligatory fulfilment of the agreements achieved.

In order to make these types of relationship feasible, a decision was made to set up teams that could provide retraining in local institutions, such as, leading schools, experimental centres and methodology associations.

However, a problem of discrepancy could arise between the needs of education practice today, and those of history teachers and staff at in-service training institutes. In view of the gaps between those needs, the courses offered at such institutes are often inadequate and ineffective.

University professors fail to make extensive use of the methods which deal with personal and professional growth of school teachers. For instance, outdated methods and instruction techniques are used. Therefore, university staff has to improve its own qualifications and so as to be able to provide effective teacher training.

The existing in-service training system does not provide proper training for:

- teachers from rural and isolated areas;
- history teachers involved in providing extra classes for pupils;
- teachers engaged in the development of innovative teaching methods.

One way to improve in-service training is to analyse its content, to develop new methods and to apply them widely in the retraining process, and in assessing the results achieved.

The main emphasis today should be on individual in-service training programmes, which would take into consideration the needs and capabilities of teachers, since their own practices and experience can also be useful to their colleagues.

## **Principles, priorities and models**

Discussions at the seminars were focused on the lines along which initial and in-service training of history teachers could develop. For this purpose, the needs of teachers' education were determined and its various models and forms were analysed.

The following subjects were discussed and specified:

- principles;
- priorities;
- models and forms of education for teachers;
- factors defining the key trends in initial and in-service training of history teachers.

The following principles were outlined:

*General:*

- democratisation of professional relations in education;
- development of dialogue approaches in education;
- orientation of education to humane values.

*General didactics:*

- cultural relevance of history education, interpreted in several ways: 1) it should be in conformity with the rapid cultural changes; 2) it should reflect what is special about modern culture, for instance, its ability to integrate and to maintain dialogue approaches; and 3) teaching history in the context of a multicultural and multinational society;
- personality-oriented and civic nature of history teaching;
- scientific basis of education, i.e. the need for research into the forms and processes of education, the need to develop ways and methods of research and investigation;
- universal and integral character of education combined with its diverse and flexible forms;
- self-analysis for teachers as an assessment of their readiness to define their needs in education at any stage of their professional career and ways to implement them by means of education and self-education.

The following principles were pointed out as being essential in determining the content of education:

- respect of a balance in teaching local, regional, national, European and world history;
- projection of goals, tasks and content of school education in the content of university and in-service training courses;
- sufficient substantive grounds for an integral and multi-dimensional reconstruction of a historical situation, environment or epoch.

Priorities in initial and in-service training for history teachers are as follows:

- a need to develop psychological and pedagogical components;
- a growing role of methodology in the training and retraining of history teachers;
- a need to develop the information culture of school teachers.

The seminars organised by the Council of Europe outlined the following promising forms and models of education:

- distance training for teachers: forms of initial and in-service training brought closer to teachers' places of work are becoming widespread over several regions;
- developing new didactic systems of initial and in-service training for history teachers. Great interest was shown in "social didactics" worked out at the Vienna University, on which education is organised as a "social event", and not just as a purely reasoning process (Dr Alois Ecker);
- elaborating educational support systems for teachers on a municipal level, providing systematic control of the stages in individual teachers' professional growth, their personal needs and interests, stimulating their self-education, making reliable forecasts and analysis of the results of history teachers' in-service training;
- development of differential and individual education for teachers, which can embrace multi-level university training, poly-module educational processes, as well as individual courses and retraining projects created by and for students and teachers;
- development of education methods which facilitate integration of history teaching as a subject into the sociocultural environment, including museum pedagogics;

- a broader use of information technologies in education, for instance: information centres and data supply systems for teachers; development of innovative projects; installing new computer systems and introducing new teaching aids as was done at the “Centroconcept” - a centre set up at Lomonosov University in Pomorye; and at the pedagogical research laboratory “Volot” in the University in Ekaterinburg;
- involvement of publishing houses responsible for producing teaching materials in the process of in-service teacher training, as this can help to motivate teachers to take part in the preparation of new textbooks. To organise a series of seminars to help teachers in their work with new textbooks;
- development of international exchanges in initial and in-service training of teachers, involvement of history teachers in international projects and programmes to be implemented throughout the Russian Federation;
- creation of associations which would bring together all partners involved in the history teaching process, providing a basis for exchange of views.

### **Cooperation in North Caucasus**

Throughout 2001 and 2002 a number of seminars, within the framework of the Joint Programme of Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe aimed at strengthening democratic stability in North Caucasus, were held in the Russian Federation.

These seminars were attended by participants from ten administrative territories of the Russian Federation, such as, the Republics of Adygeya, Daghestan, Ingushetiya, Kabardino-Balkariya, Kalmykia, Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya and Chechnya, the Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories and Rostov region.

It is well known that North Caucasus is one of the world’s most multinational areas with its own specific history and ethnography and encompassing more than 100 nations and ethnic groups. A great deal of people representing different cultures passed through the region for trading reasons. Some of them settled there permanently and have lived as a close-knit community, forming a unique ethnic enclave and putting down roots in this way.

Regrettably, acute ethnic conflicts are a serious problem which the region confronts today. The lack of a positive model of ethnic relations, especially among a younger generation, can be viewed as a barrier to their stability.

Meanwhile, this kind of a model is vital for any multicultural society. As seminar participants stated, the development of multicultural principles could help to overcome existing difficulties:

- recognition of other cultures;

- recognition of the right of different peoples to their own ways of life;
- free expression of one's own views and values;
- positive attitude to other cultures; strong resistance to any signs of cultural discrimination, and ability to identify common elements in different cultures;

There are more and more adherents to these principles in the region because they go along the lines of the integration process. Currently, the education system in North Caucasus is radically changing. New education units appear, new forms and methods are used in training and upbringing and modern equipment and technologies are being introduced in schools.

The following key issues were defined as the main lines of cooperation in history teaching:

- goals and tasks of history learning in secondary schools;
- selection of material to be included in history textbooks: interpretation and assessment, reflection of democratic and humanitarian values;
- use of dialogue between teachers and students acting as equal partners in the learning and teaching process;
- textbooks and other teaching tools used in history teaching: present-day situation and prospects;
- present-day teaching techniques and methods;
- training and retraining systems for history teachers.

Comparative analysis of the above-mentioned issues has revealed general problems and indicated ways to cope with them thanks to such experts as Mr Michael Riley and Ms Cheryl Stafford from the United Kingdom, Ms Mette Molland and Mr Harald Frode Skram from Norway and Ms Luisa De Bivar Black from Portugal, who attended the seminars as experts of the Council of Europe.

### **Conclusions and recommendations of the Seminars**

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

- Recognition of the importance and practical use of the seminars held 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 timely. 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 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 accounts and evaluations, and an awareness of the existence of various interpretations of events (taking into account the age-related capabilities of pupils);
- improvement of didactic tools in textbooks by redirecting them from the reproduction of teaching materials to active reasoning 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 sources used in history lessons in secondary schools, and the use of various types of sources in addition to textbooks. They regard this as essential for the productive work of students and the development of their personalities, as well as being a means of boosting the younger generation's interest in history.

## **Results and prospects**

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

- 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 regarding tolerance and interpretation of history was of particular importance to history teachers in this



region. Interactive teaching essentially meant treating a pupil as the main factor of the whole education process.

- The problems of teaching history in schools in the North Caucasus region were examined both in the context of general Russian educational practice, and in relation to the experience of a number of European countries (Spain, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom). This enabled participants to see more clearly that many problems are common to all and that different ways are used to solve them in a particular region.
- Different forms of presentations and discussions were combined in the seminars, and a substantial amount of the time was spent on practical work with visits to lessons in schools. As a result, a high level of activity by participants was a feature of the seminars.
- 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, there was a more passive criticism of the shortcomings of textbooks, teachers now ceased to regard a textbook as the sole source of historical information. Interest in documents and graphic and historiographic materials has significantly increased. It is worth mentioning a statement by one of the Chechen teachers: "Now I will not be as helpless as I was before because of the shortage of textbooks". It could 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 search for such sources.
- 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.
- The proposals put forward by the participants of the seminars on the preparation of a teaching pack on the history and culture of the peoples of North Caucasus, and on establishing a regional history teachers' association, are worthy of recognition. True, these proposals should not just be confined to applications to higher authorities, but should be put into effect on the spot.
- Thus, the general conclusion may be drawn that the work of the seminars held in 2001-2002 in North Caucasus were multi-faceted, dynamic and useful to many of those attending and to educational practice in the region as a whole.
- 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 a topic for urgent consideration.

## **Seminars for history teachers from the Republic of Chechnya**

One of the important elements in the cooperation programme in North Caucasus was given to seminars on in-service training of history teachers. These seminars were attended by over 200 researchers, specialists in methods and history teachers from the Republic of Chechnya. In 2005-2006 these activities were continued within the programme of cooperation activities between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in the Chechen Republic.

A special strategy was put in place for the preparation of such seminars so that history teachers could cope with the difficulties they encounter in their work. In fact, for many years, Chechnya has had no possibilities to provide in-service teacher training. During the war, hundreds of teachers and educators had to flee the Republic, and today they cannot use its libraries, museums theatres, archives and other facilities that are in a state of neglect. Therefore, the teachers find themselves in a difficult situation, since all these facilities are indispensable to their work.

When preparing the seminars for Chechen teachers, the basic principles of in-service training were taken into account:

- in-service training should be multi-level; it should consider all fields of specialisation, and offer varied forms, and should be integral and personalised;
- a systematic approach is essential in training Chechen teachers and it should also be motivating and individual;
- a problem-oriented approach and creative professional thinking should be developed to provide professional growth of teachers;
- use of a dialogue as a way of teaching; organising the training process on the basis of humanistic approaches.

The seminars were organised taking into consideration participants' lives and professional experiences, and their motivation to improve their skills. Different forms of work were suggested, such as:

- presentations made by educators from the Russian Federation and from European countries on world and national history;
- interactive practical courses conducted to discuss contemporary teaching methods;
- master-classes by leading history teachers;
- individual consultations.

The participants put particular emphasis on development of such pupils' skills as tolerance. Cultivating ethnic tolerance means a positive perception of one's own ethnic culture, as well as of other ethnic cultures. It is essential for the Chechen Republic, therefore, to seek new approaches to organising training and education, to choosing forms and methods to develop students' spiritual potential and fostering tolerance of other nations and religions.

Today, we are witnessing different national cultures, economies and states influencing one another. Since people in Europe nowadays tend to travel and move around more, many of its states are turning into multicultural societies. Such communities can develop in harmony only by respecting the principle of equality, cultural diversity and tolerance.

As the participants observed, the world today comprises around 3,000 ethnic groups. Each multi-ethnic state is faced with the problem of facilitating the existence and functioning of every cultural tradition in a structure of society. Thus, a mere 20 countries out of 200 are considered to be homogeneous societies, with less than 5% of ethnic minorities.

According to the participants, this is why multi-ethnic states should pursue the policy of multiculturalism and tolerance; a policy which is rooted in a positive attitude toward ethnic groups constituting a society, and in which social institutions are adapted to the needs and interests of diverse socio-cultural communities. Consequently, one of the main goals and moral aspects of social and pedagogical activity is to establish humane and tolerant relations in a society.

What is essential today, as the Chechen history teachers stated, is:

- to use specific materials on ethnic cultures in history classes which inform students about different cultures and allow them to discuss the new information in detail;
- to introduce students to the traditions of friendship, mutual assistance and good relations between people representing all races, nations and religions;
- to enlighten students about human rights and freedoms and cultural pluralism as norms of a contemporary democratic and pluralist society.

The following recommendations were made:

- to use situations where children can meet people representing other cultures, for instance, during trips and expeditions to study local history and nature. Such trips enable teachers to establish contacts between students from different family environments, and make such contacts more easy and natural. This is something that cannot be done in a classroom. Such contacts help students to break down stereotypes about their own and other cultures;
- to use role play as an opportunity to model such situations;

- to help to develop such skills as critical thinking, ability to communicate through dialogue, and capacity to reach independent conclusions.

Chechen teachers discussed their practices, plans, programmes, and materials. For instance, one teacher, Mr Said-Ahmet Suleimanov, spoke about ways of humanising the process of training and education through teaching history and cultures on a larger scale and through local history studies. He believed that one way to achieve humanisation was to use more information about local traditions, history and economy. Primary knowledge of Chechen culture could be obtained through organising trips to school museums and carrying out research to collect materials on local culture and history. He said that school should be regarded as a vital factor in humanising social and economic relations in the Republic and in the development of positive views and principles among the younger generation.

Mr Suleimanov went on to say that today, more than ever, we are in need of new textbooks and other tools that would provide true information about the Chechens' cultural achievements. What is needed are tools that would help ease the tensions among ethnic groups in the region, expand cultural exchanges and get rid of ethnic stereotypes, with respect to Chechens and other peoples in the Caucasus. In the opinion of Chechen teachers, the historical education potential should be exploited in full in order to: consolidate society; preserve the common socio-cultural space; ease tensions between peoples; and eliminate social conflicts with due regard to human rights and equal respect to all cultures and religions. In the long run, the new education process will play a key role in preserving the nation and its gene pool, and facilitate a stable, dynamic development of the Chechen Republic.

The seminars laid down the basis for innovative methodology and self-education of Chechen teachers and received public acclaim in the Republic and in North Caucasus as a whole.

### **Regional experience**

All this brings about changes in the content of history taught as a school subject and in the teaching methods. In the Urals, for instance, this is evident in the wide-ranging research carried out on the methodology of history. Correlation and inter-connection between theory and methodology of history and didactics was viewed by the participants at the Ekaterinburg seminar in 1998 as an issue to be examined.

They were considered to be miles apart from one another as history courses failed to prepare the students for practical work at schools; not enough hours were set aside in the history faculty curriculum for teaching methods. Currently, courses on the methodology of history and history research were being taught at many of the regional universities.

Future history teachers were being trained in the universities of the Urals region on the basis of the following ideas and principles:

- fundamental character of university training;
- contemporary history and education practice should be fully covered in the curriculum.

The principle of sufficient education in its complete form is designed to ensure social security for young graduates in the context of market economy, through a competitive university education, as well as to protect the consumers' right by a guaranteed quality of training<sup>7</sup>.

The seminar participants stated that, for instance, in North Caucasus, an integral systems approach has been worked out when training teachers. This was a result achieved over several decades; an integration of different bodies and departments combining their efforts along the same lines and coordinating their interests. In this way, a good example was set in creating an integral system of motivating, preparing and supporting the professional growth of history teachers.

In the Republic of Karelia, there are conditions to developing a clear-cut system of continuous education, with regular in-service training of history teachers. Recommendations of the Council of Europe on methods have helped the Education Innovation Centre, headed by Ms Tatiana Agarkova, to improve the efficiency of in-service training through up-to-date methods and technologies. The most advanced education institutions of the region share their experience with the rest of the universities, and the best lecturers in local history are invited to give classes. At the same time, equal possibilities to undergo in-service training have been offered to many history teachers from urban and rural schools.

### **Teachers' standpoints**

As seminar participants noted, the main aims of history education in the Russian Federation are to:

- acquaint students with information on historical developments of humankind;
- teach history by considering different viewpoints and assessments using numerous facts for analysis, or diverse points of view on historical events, and leaving aside political and ideological bias in historical education;
- encourage students' ability to understand the diversity of reflection and interpretation of historical and present-day events, and teach them how to use historical sources in their studies;
- teach students how to work independently, search for information, be able to compare facts, versions, evaluations, alternative ways of development, and the sources of information, and express their own arguments in assessing the past.

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<sup>7</sup> Reform of History Education in the Urals region "European Dimension" / Regional models of General and Professional History Education. Selected Research Articles. Andryukina L. M., Guznenko Z. I., Komilov G. Ye., Nadeeva E. P., Ogonovskaya I. S. Part I. Yekaterinburg, 2004, p. 21.

Special attention was drawn to the phrase “History does not like the subjunctive mood”, popular among journalists and even some historians. However, it suggests not a multi-variant comprehension of history but implies a straightforward and one-sided approach;

- develop students’ value orientation on the basis of their own, individual understanding of social, moral and cultural practices of peoples in the past and present; respect of human rights, tolerance to other nations’ cultures and histories, human rights and freedoms;
- shift the emphasis from passive methods of work to active and interactive dialogue, analytical approach in the comprehension of past and the present-day situations; to help pupils develop an ability to independently acquire knowledge.

### **Steps to be taken**

At the seminars, suggestions were made to:

- work out and establish, as early as possible, national standards of history education as the basis of teacher training systems;
- set up data banks and video libraries, also using international exchanges, on all of the major issues of teaching history;
- provide equal access to information sources on new education technologies for all teachers, irrespective of their levels or categories;
- develop education strategies that provide the general value-target and communication space of professional pedagogic activity;
- hold seminars and use other types of international cooperation as a part of the programmes conducted by the Council of Europe to facilitate a comparative analysis of the forms of initial and in-service training of history teachers;
- organise seminars during 2006-2010, devoted to in-service training of teachers and professors of history: practice, problems, prospects, possibly in North Caucasus, Urals, Siberia and the Russian Far East;
- hold an international web conference on in-service training of history teachers;
- prepare publications which describe international and Russian experience in this respect;
- use international exchanges not only to upgrade teachers’ skills, but also as a possibility to retrain “teachers of the teachers”, especially those involved in supplementary professional education;

- allow regional education development institutions and teacher-training universities to function as in-service teacher training centres for supplementary professional education;
- advance the system of expert examination and certification of history teaching education at secondary schools;
- bring the forms of expert evaluation and certification into line with the goals of reform in history teaching and use them as a way to raise the efficiency of initial and in-service teacher training;
- make use of international expert evaluation of the levels of education, standards, textbooks and organisation forms in teacher training.

### **Results and prospects of cooperation**

Consequently, fundamental cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe has good prospects. As a result of their joint efforts, a new system of in-service teacher training is being successfully developed in Russia; the system is characterised by a practical application of the theoretical concepts of teaching history.

This is a fairly flexible and efficient system of teacher training. It responds to the rapid changes in the content of history teaching at schools, with the help of regional seminars, conferences and new teaching aids and history textbooks.

The fact that such seminars are vital was proved by the interest shown in them by history teachers from all regions of Russia. They were attended by more than 3,000 teachers from the Urals, Siberia, the Russian Far East, North Caucasus, Central European Russia, and other regions.

The seminars welcomed a wide range of experts involved in the reform of history teaching, including senior ministry officials. They described the changes currently taking place in this area and provided a specific analysis of the situation in the regions today.

They also united educators from various regions and the Russian Federation as a whole into an educational community functioning in the context of growing cooperation and coordination in matters of history teaching strategy. Consensus on many aspects can be regarded as a positive result of transformations currently underway in the country.

As the expert Mr Vladimir Batsyn said, seminars represent the real “points of growth”, the “special pilot areas”, which are not only used to discuss the most outstanding issues, but also serve as an incentive for the development of supplementary pedagogical and methodological practices throughout Russia.

The creative atmosphere of the seminars helped to develop active communication between teachers from different regions and territories throughout the Russian Federation. It was important for teachers to “compare notes”, to check the common stance, and to get acquainted with a variety of viewpoints on reform in history education, both in Russia and in Europe. The search for new information, its comprehension, and awareness of changing realities is a major requirement for a competent history teacher today.

Hosts of the seminars did much to create a favourable working climate where each individual’s potential was realised. The environment shaped a distinct type of teacher trainer who is able to apply recent European achievements in training practice. Such a professional can cope with the analysis of, and research into, advanced pedagogical innovations, and knows how to use them in practice.

Teachers from Russia had an excellent opportunity to meet European authors of history textbooks, to get first-hand knowledge of the western European system of school history courses and present-day methods of teaching. For instance, they discussed research papers prepared by such leading specialists as Dr Falk Pingel, Ms Ann Low-Beer, Ms Carmel Gallagher and Dr Robert Stradling<sup>8</sup>.

Publications on history teaching were of great interest to the teachers: “Teaching History and Democratic Values” (1996), “History without Borders: Practical Guide to International Projects on History Teaching in Europe” (1996), and the Report of the Seminar held in Lviv (Ukraine) in 1997, motivated a discussion among teachers in Russia on initial training in the period of transition<sup>9</sup>. The discussions turned out to be a lively, emotional dispute on the subject.

When facing the challenges of history education reform, history teachers had to bring along innovative ideas, whilst preserving and advancing national traditions and European practices. In the opinion of the participants, the seminars created conditions in which Russia’s national policy was drawn closer to the principles and democratic values of contemporary Europe declared within the movement towards a new “European dimension”.

Such seminars have made it possible for teachers from different countries to come to know and understand each other better, to ease the unnecessary tensions and confrontation, and to see that development strategies and democratic principles have been proved by diverse practices of teachers and researchers.

Reform of the present-day initial and in-service teacher training systems is a long-term and costly process. The speakers stressed that, in future, it would be necessary to work

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<sup>8</sup> – Dr Falk Pingel: “The European Home: representation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe in history textbooks”, Council of Europe publication, 2000;

– Ms Ann Low-Beer: “The Council of Europe School History”, Strasbourg, 1997;

– Ms Carmel Gallagher: “History teaching and the promotion of democratic values and tolerance”, Strasbourg, 1996;

– Dr Robert Stradling: “Teaching 20<sup>th</sup> Century European History”.

<sup>9</sup> Report on the seminar on “The initial and in-service training of democratic transition”, Lviv, 1997.



out a concrete programme, which should correspond to available funds, institutes and training staff.

These seminars, therefore, have contributed to the current reform in education in Russia by:

- expanding the scope of information, including broad coverage of the seminar results in local and federal press and publishing results of the seminars (Ekaterinburg, Khabarovsk, Pyatigorsk and Tomsk) and express bulletins (Ekaterinburg and Nizhny Novgorod);
- creating regional history teachers' associations, as in Khabarovsk, Arkhangelsk, etc. and their participation in European associations such as Euroclio;
- defining guidelines for initial and in-service teacher training to be included in curricula for university departments and in-service teacher training institutes;
- developing proposals and recommendations to improve in-service teacher training for different levels and units of the education system. The recommendations have been presented to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and studied by the regional administrations;
- developing innovative programmes for seminars with clearly defined priorities determined as a result of cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Among the priorities for future steps, the participants pointed out the following fields: initial training of history teachers, use of new educational methods, and development of new approaches when analysing historical sources.

They stressed that in-service training of history teachers requires systematic improvement which should be discussed at future seminars.

One of the main conclusions drawn by the participants is that the integration of Russia into the European educational space should not only be carried out at government level. In this respect, success can be achieved if the process is backed by all educational institutions as well as by the academic and educational community.

As a result of the joint efforts taken by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, substantial improvements in history teaching in Russia have been made. It is slowly eradicating ideological bias and becoming increasingly humanistic and democratic. Its characteristic features are:

- establishment of a partnership between teachers and students and development of a new type of pedagogical culture;
- constructive cooperation between teachers in team work;

- social partnership both inside and outside the education system (associations, public movements);
- teaching history in a context of diversified viewpoints and opinions.

The cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation contributed to the reform of in-service teacher training.

Through this cooperation over the last decade, Russia has taken a new step towards integration into the European educational space. An impressive agenda of seminars has helped to adjust guidelines for future changes; assess implementation of new principles of in-service training of history teachers in Russia that should be compatible to those used in other European countries; to improve the educational system by making it more professional and accessible.



## **CHAPTER 4**

**Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe in the framework of regional and multilateral projects in history teaching**

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## **Introduction**

International projects linked to the issues of school history teaching constitute an important part of the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science (prior to 2004 known as the Ministry of Education) of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe. During the period under consideration, three projects were undertaken: the Black Sea Initiative, the Tbilisi Initiative and the programme of cooperation with Japan. The first project was successfully completed in 2004, the second is nearing completion, and the third project has also been effectively implemented at several different stages, and, judging by the results attained, could also be considered as completed. All these projects were drafted and implemented, not only almost simultaneously, but they shared the philosophical and methodological thinking behind the Council of Europe documents.

It is worth noting that considering the international projects together as a single entity does not mean that they should be separated from the general problems of reforming history teaching in schools in Russia, and from other forms of cooperation with the Council of Europe. The universal approach simply demonstrates how original and substantial their contribution is to the pan-European and Russian pedagogical process. As a result of the implementation of these projects, many important teaching resources and recommendations have come about, which have combined the collective experience of many highly reputable professionals from different countries, whose intellectual potential lies in their various scientific and cultural traditions and their unique professional and personal experience. The process of implementing such projects is, in itself, the best possible master-class, and one which uniquely improves the qualification of all the participants, especially if there is a chance to follow the process from the first idea up to the publication of a teaching book. Therefore, this section is not confined to a description of the projects as such; it attempts, rather, to put the goals and results achieved into practice in teaching history in schools in Russia, and to take a look at Russia's problems as an outsider and from an international standpoint. This approach seems to help make these projects reality for the readers in the Russian Federation. It helps them to apply the methodology to everyday practice in national and world history teaching.

One may assume that the teaching pack on the Black Sea Initiative may be used only in schools historically linked with the Black Sea coast and, similarly, that the Tbilisi Initiative is applicably only to the south of Russia, and that the resources elaborated in cooperation with Japanese colleagues are only for schools along the Sea of Japan coast. But this would be utterly wrong and short-sighted. Each of the projects and publications created as a result of these projects could be considered as a source of information for studying "regional identity" as well as having educational value. The author of this chapter is convinced that they have universal, and not just local, value and that they can be of great interest to all creative teachers, experts in teaching methods and textbook authors, whatever country in which they work. Whatever historical and geographical environment these textbooks are linked to, they remain focused on approaches and principles which are far from being generally accepted in our classic school textbooks. Such approaches include: tolerance; multiperspectivity; freedom from double standards; expressions of xenophobia and ultranationalism;

dominance of state history over history of society and common people; and favourising the “mainstream” line of development over the cultural and everyday life aspects of an historical process.

It would be absurd to assume that the resources created in the framework of the projects are perfect; as with any other teaching publication they are wide open to criticism. However, it is important that when they were conceived, and at the subsequent stages of their development, their structure, content and design were constantly brought into line with the collectively scrutinised and rigidly defined initial goals. What is also significant is the fact that these goals were thought out and set by a number of different persons who had never met and were only brought together by a common vision. This is what made the process of elaborating teaching resources stand out from the writing of any textbook. Figuratively speaking, these resources were fostered by the international community of experts who were periodically subjected to multifaceted analyses on an intellectual and “material” level; whereas the drafting of classic textbooks is not as open to public scrutiny. Thus, the teaching materials which appeared as a result can be viewed as a product of collective effort and it could quite rightly be seen as an example-setting and positive experience.

Thus, this part of the text could be regarded as an attempt to interpret these examples from the viewpoint of their significance to the theory and practice of history teaching in schools in the Russian Federation in all of its constituent parts, i.e. world history, the history of Russia and the history of the regions of the Russian Federation. The appropriateness and timeliness of this attempt is substantiated by the fact that history teaching in our schools is subject to serious criticism on the part of the state, society and, first and foremost, history teachers themselves.

### **Supporting international projects in history teaching in schools as a political priority of the Council of Europe**

International projects in the sphere of history teaching in schools is a logical and a significant part of the multifaceted activity of the Council of Europe. At the Vienna (1993) and Strasbourg (1997) Summits of Heads of State and Government a very important idea was put forward, which was subsequently substantiated by all the developments which followed: the major challenges of tomorrow on the European continent are about to take place in the sphere of education and culture. Thus, in October 2001, the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, striving to “enhance mutual understanding and trust between peoples, particularly, through a history teaching syllabus intended to eliminate prejudice and emphasise positive mutual influence”, adopted the Recommendation Rec (2001) 15 on history teaching history in twenty-first-century Europe, in which the aims of the organisation in the framework of international cooperation were specified as follows:

History teaching in a democratic Europe should:

- be a decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust between peoples;

- be one of the fundamental parts of the freely agreed building of Europe based on a common historical and cultural heritage, enriched through diversity, even with its conflictual and sometimes dramatic aspects;
- enable European citizens to enhance their own individual and collective identity through knowledge of their common historical and cultural heritage in its local, regional, national, European and global dimensions.

In this respect the meaning of the notion “European dimension” is acquiring still greater importance.

The document cited contains direct recommendations on what should be done to make the European dimension of history teaching a reality:

- to show continuing historical relationships between local, regional, national and European levels;
- to encourage teaching about periods and developments with the most obvious European dimension, especially the historical or cultural events and tendencies that underpin European awareness;
- to use every available means, particularly information technology, to promote cooperation and exchange projects between schools on themes connected with the history of Europe;
- to develop pupils’ interest in the history of other European countries;
- to encourage schools in different countries, depending on the circumstances, to implement international and regional projects, which focus on the same topics, comparative analyses or tasks, whilst using, among other things, new opportunities provided by information technologies, as well as school exchange and cooperation projects.

As can be seen from these ideas, the role of international cooperation in the activities of the Council of Europe is no less important than that of such traditional areas as defining the content of history teaching, drafting a new generation of textbooks or the initial and in-service training of history teachers. Furthermore, at times, international projects can transform the processes which are underway into the above-mentioned areas. The intensity of efforts aimed at the implementation of international projects, creative competitiveness in the process of preparation of teaching resources, and the impressive expansion of the scope of professional activities of the participants of the projects all bring about a specific creative effect; many “domestic” problems start to be perceived on a larger scale and, more specifically, their solution is viewed as a particular case of solving far more ambitious tasks like the ones laid down in the main documents of the Council of Europe.

It is exactly this mobilising role that makes the projects considered in this analysis so significant, and their importance, as will be shown later, by far exceeds the limits of

the school teaching process. However, to be able to understand this, it is necessary to restore the context of the circumstances, conflicts and events that predetermined both the dramatic touch and – ultimately – the successful implementation of these initiatives.

### **School history teaching in a context of big politics**

Among the numerous and immensely varied consequences of the collapse of Soviet communism, the Soviet block and the Soviet Union itself, was one which is directly related to our subject. This is the necessity to introduce substantial changes into the last century's history textbooks on a global scale and draft new courses on national and world history in Russia and in the new states which appeared in the territory of the former USSR. By the late nineties this process was completed. The single mythogenic textbook "The History of the USSR", used both in Russia and in the "fraternal" republics of the former USSR, was substituted by dozens of textbooks, whose authors sometimes strove to take revenge on the Russian Empire and the USSR for their real as well as imaginary sins, which had built up over centuries. To a certain degree, the same happened in the former countries of the "people's democracy". This wave of historical accusation and resentment was unfortunately accompanied by the factual destruction of the mechanisms of cooperation between the educational systems of the parties concerned, which were aimed at reconciling controversial issues and finding tactful and mutually-respectful solutions (including methodological) to dissipate, or at least to distort, the image of Russia as of the "eternal foe".

In 1996 Russia acquired the status of a full member of the Council of Europe and, since that time, seminars on reforming school history teaching have been held on a regular basis. At that time education in the Russian Federation was going through one of the most difficult periods of its structural and conceptual reform. The formerly independent ministries, supervising general and professional education, were amalgamated. The intensive process of the so-called national and cultural revival of the peoples of Russia was underway, which resulted in a proliferation of textbooks on regional history and ethnic cultures. The content of history teaching was divided into two components: federal (world history and the history of Russia as a whole) and national/regional (history of a region and peoples inhabiting it, especially the "title people").

On the one hand, this process reflected the objective tendencies of the fledgling Russian federalism; however, on the other hand, it did not have the support of a flexible mechanism of correlating evaluation and interpretation of historical figures and events described in federal and regional textbooks. This resulted in numerous discrepancies and contradictions, which became especially evident when delicate and sensitive historical events were described.

In this situation the seminars of the Council of Europe have been and are still the only pan-Russian forum that gives different kinds of history educators an opportunity to exchange opinions on topical issues in the context of European methodology and practice. Therefore, it is no surprise that, back in the late nineties, the presence of the Council of Europe in education in Russia was already perceived as a constant positive



factor of development. The wide range of topical issues discussed at the seminars, as well as the high level of qualifications of the experts invited and the wide geographical coverage led to the constant growth of respect for these activities and greater esteem for the Council of Europe as regards its reliability, philosophy and politics. Hence, in 1998-1999 some new (this time international) initiatives were set, which were received with genuine enthusiasm and, due to previous experience of working together with the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation side was ready to participate in such projects.

This brief outline of the history behind this work is necessary so that one can get a general idea about the background against which the international initiatives of the Council of Europe were taking shape; the initiatives on drafting supplementary teaching materials on history and culture of the countries of the Caucasus, the Black Sea area and Japan.

### **International projects in the mirror of Russia's internal problems**

The idea that foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy is well-known. We have already dwelt upon certain negative features characteristic of the post-Soviet countries' history segment dealing with the common past. The image of Russia as the "eternal foe", created in the countries of the former USSR, has also been mentioned. These are important issues which will be further discussed in this paper.

Another side of the problem is the internal one, i.e. while elaborating different programmes and writing textbooks on domestic history of multinational and multicultural Russia, the authors encounter the same problems as the authors of "international" teaching materials. The only difference is that, in the first case, the history of one state is described whereas, in the second, the history of several states are brought together in a book by their geographical proximity.

Russia's experience (spanning almost a century) in writing textbooks on national history proves that it is extremely difficult to deal with such diverse phenomena as the development of the state, as well as the development of dozens of ethnocultural communities belonging to different cultural identities. Numerous attempts to do so, including the ambitious step to divide up national history into pan-Russian and regional histories, were not successful. Federal textbooks still deal mainly with state history but not with the lives of its peoples. The dominance of one "great" nation and its culture over minor peoples makes it extremely difficult to create school textbooks which correspond to the national and cultural identity and the historical self-consciousness of the latter.

It is evident that this conceptual deadlock is rooted in the doctrine of "historical materialism", which still exists and which has resulted in a disregard for humanitarian and cultural grounds linked to understanding history as a process which is defined, not by hierarchical, but by complementary ties between nations and civilisations. This is why teachers and educators have difficulty perceiving history as an unpredictable process, which is determined by the multifaceted, non-linear system of interacting objective and subjective factors.

In this respect, the new (at least for history teaching in the Russian Federation) concepts, created by European intellectuals and endorsed by the Council of Europe, acquire still greater importance. They are, primarily: critical thinking; multiculturalism; multiperspectivity; tolerance; rejecting double standards; prejudice; national supremacy and xenophobia.

The very first results achieved through applying these “testing devices” to current history textbooks showed that, even the teaching resources which had been considered “updated” by reviewers with a traditional way of thinking, did not meet these requirements. Although teachers and experts in teaching methods are interested in the new approach, the majority of teachers (as well as some authors and publishers) still adhere to traditional views. These views manifest themselves in the emphasis in textbooks on the idea of the “great state”, in perceiving the state as the only and ultimate value which, when strengthened in every possible way, can help a country and its citizens to prosper. This standpoint inevitably results in a marginalisation of the topics related to the history and culture of those peoples who do not have their own statehood, for example, as is often thought, all those peoples who are not Russian.

In any case, the possibility to work on the preparation of educational materials based on the democratic principles of the Council of Europe opened up new perspectives for the reformers of history education in secondary schools in Russia. Were it to succeed, it was hoped that certain material based on new ideas would be presented to a professional community. This work also aroused great interest because the participants of the projects were so-called “problematic” countries which had strained relations with Russia, and there was no cooperation in the field of history education in secondary schools.

### **The Tbilisi Initiative**

The idea of the project known as “The Tbilisi Initiative” proposed by the Georgian Ministry of Education was first mentioned in September 1997 during the first Caucasian regional seminar of the Council of Europe, which took place in the suburbs of Tbilisi (Tabakhmelo). It was envisaged that educational materials be prepared on the history of the Caucasian region for secondary schools in the following states: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation, primarily, for its nine North Caucasian administrative units.

It cannot be said that this idea was a brand new one. In Soviet times, there was a proposal to prepare detailed “transregional” textbooks which would cover major historical and cultural zones of the country: the Caucasus, the Volga region, Middle Asia and Kazakhstan. However, taking into account the political situation in 1998, it was regarded as extremely innovative. The Nagorny-Karabakh conflict strained the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the Khasavyurt peace agreement in Chechnya was still in force, but it was obvious that fighting may flare up at any moment and affect other North Caucasian regions; Abkhazia unilaterally proclaimed its independence from Georgia as a result of a military conflict and separatist movements in Ajaria and South Ossetia became stronger. There was much discussion

about strong anti-Russian movements in connection with changing attitudes to its “unpredictable past”. This is why an idea to create a supplementary textbook on a history of the Caucasus from ancient to modern times was met with a certain confusion at the beginning.

However, confusions soon gave place to enthusiasm, particularly when it was decided not to write about present times but to limit the textbook to 1921: the year when the Soviet Army established Soviet power in the Caucasian region. This was a very important decision as it facilitated the task by excluding that part of the common history of the tragic 20<sup>th</sup> Century (i.e. both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods), the problems of which were painful for everybody. Moreover, the 70 years which followed saw the cruel civil war, the so-called "delimitation of republics" which gave rise to many conflicts after the collapse of the USSR, the collectivisation, the epoch of the Great Terror, the deportation of peoples, and many others. Of course, many problems remained but they were not considered insurmountable. As a result, all the participants supported the initiative. It was decided that, after coordination with every party that would officially take part in the project, they should meet again to consider more carefully a whole range of organisational matters and define a main approach to the structure, content and design of the manual. The Georgian side kindly suggested holding a seminar in Kazbegi, the town situated at the foot of the second highest Caucasian mountain in one of the most picturesque parts of Georgia which also has a remarkable history.

In a short space of time, all four member States coordinated everything with their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education. At a political level, everybody understood how important the initiative was and how unique the chance was to create a precedent for a real “humanitarian breakthrough” in such a difficult region as the Caucasus. The Council of Europe, for its part, provided sufficient funds to implement the project.

However, such support did not necessarily mean that everybody fully believed in a successful outcome; problems and differences which remained unsettled seemed, to many, too great and complicated. Those problems were not only historical or historic-philosophical. Serious difficulties were expected in the human and personal relations between the participants of the project; they were certainly affected by the emotional stress and the political climate that existed in their respective countries. All this led to fears that the negotiation process could be damaged.

Although at times some serious conflicts and tensions emerged, the participants, to their credit, always managed to overcome the difficulties and achieve a compromise. This was evidence of their professional and civil responsibility for the mutual work and that everyone understood that the manual had to be completed at all costs.

The ground-laying seminar took place on 2-3 October 1998. On paper, it lasted two days but, in reality, two days and two nights. All the participants were extremely enthusiastic and the discussions were relentless. It was undoubtedly one of the most creative moments in the professional life of every participant, which is why even

today, almost eight years later, the scope of the questions and issues discussed in such a short a period of time, is astonishing.

During the opening session, the Minister of Education of Georgia, Professor Alexander Kartoziya, informed the participants of the support given to the initiative by President Eduard Shevardnadze and Ms Alison Cardwell, Administrator in the Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education of the Council of Europe, remarked that the Secretary General attached great political importance to the project and has expressed confidence in its success.

The participants realised that they should firstly determine the general idea of the book. They were unanimous that it should be not just a common manual aimed at providing students with certain information not available in their national textbooks, but that it should carry a message and have a certain appeal to the young people of the Caucasus, i.e. discuss matters relating to the region, for example, its natural history, the history of peoples inhabiting the region and their cultural heritage. Hence, the first conceptual task would be that of portraying the Caucasus in the manual as a historical and cultural entity, and an exceptional phenomenon of world civilisation.

In practice, it meant that (bearing in mind the historical individuality of each state now existing in the region) the authors of the manual should develop the idea of this communion, integrity and Caucasian identity. At the same time, it was implied that such an approach meant neither eliminating the Caucasus from a European and world context, nor opposing it to this context. It would in any case be impossible to do so. The Caucasus has always been the centre of attention of its close and distant neighbours and their interaction for thousands of years may be considered as a significant factor in its history. However, the most deserving task lies in showing the individuality of the Caucasian “cultural universe”, the most outstanding monuments of its spiritual and material heritage and, at the same time, portraying its full involvement in European and world history. The participants noted that European school children, and not only school children, had a very limited and often distorted knowledge of the Caucasus, not to mention the history and culture of its peoples. This is why they vigorously supported the intention of the authors of the manual to give the young readers a wide, panoramic view of the Caucasus and to avoid superfluous details, better suited for national textbooks and try to have a bird’s eye view of the history of this civilisation.

Here it would be fitting to digress a little and point out that this approach received full support at the Regional Conference of the Ministers of Education, held in Tbilisi on 28-29 March 2000. Among the participants there were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation, as well as Ukraine and Moldova playing the role of observers. The Council of Europe was represented by Deputy Secretary General, Mr Hans Christian Kruger. By this time, the work on the organisation of all the various positions on the future manual was underway and its progress could already be evaluated. The following paragraph was included in the text of the Final Declaration as a result of the analyses of the situation in this sphere:

“ (...)3. In accordance with the Tbilisi Initiative (preparation and publication of the textbook on the history of the countries of the Caucasian region) and in accordance with the Black Sea Initiative on History, the Council of Europe should continue to support the Tbilisi Initiative and the Black Sea Initiative on History, because the Ministers consider them of the highest importance as they can lead to the creation of good neighbourly relations and mutual understanding between peoples of these countries, leading to stability and security in the region.”

It was also noted in the Declaration that these “regional initiatives” unite efforts of different countries and give to the experts an opportunity to discuss their common problems, related to teaching history and, in particular, the questions of teaching controversial issues in the history of neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, bearing in mind the principal importance of this official document it would be appropriate to draw attention to the welcoming speech by Mr Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of Georgia to the participants of the Regional Conference. This speech was written in informal, emotional language and vividly expressed the fundamental idea of the project.

“We understand that this task is a difficult one, but at the same time we realise the importance not only of the textbook but also of the process of its preparation. Now, we are the witnesses of how, during the short period of time for creation of this textbook, we should think over and analyse the long historical way which was gone through by peoples of Caucasus who make up this unique Caucasian community. This way reflects the unity and diversity of cultures, languages, peoples and states of the Region. Maybe I am subjective, but I think that we, the peoples of the Caucasus, with our character, originality, moral and ethical traditions, languages, and also our outlook, are different, but, in spite of our problems, we hope to receive support from the world community.

The preparation of the textbook is a very difficult, but, at the same time, very urgent task. This textbook should bring peace to souls of people and should stop the pointless debates of the ultra-nationalists who can only bring about misfortune.

Moreover, the outstanding representatives of the Caucasus: scientists, writers, artists, have given an extraordinary example of objectiveness towards their own countries as well as towards other nations. They teach how to cultivate love and not hatred through history, mutual support and not hostility.”

Thus, looking back on the debate in Tabakhmelo, we can say that the approaches undertaken there fully conformed to the opinions of politicians and the positions of heads of educational institutions from the countries concerned.

More significantly, the Tbilisi Initiative had a European dimension. The future textbook targets not only students living in the Caucasus but also their European peers

and primarily English-speaking ones, as the Council of Europe planned to publish the textbook in English. This made us take a new look at the most important purpose of the project: for whom was this textbook intended?

As a result of a continuous exchange of opinions, all of us agreed that those targeted will be students aged from 14 to 16 who have sufficient social and cultural experience as well as a basic knowledge of history. At this age they can both appreciate the special character of the text and develop critical thinking. It was pointed out by many that, today, students that live in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and in Russia's south have no positive knowledge of their immediate neighbours. Their knowledge could even be seen as a mixture of prejudice and fragmented ideas heavily distorted by the recent tragic events which they witnessed (military conflicts, refugees, rumours, fears, images of enemies, etc.). That is why the textbook has yet another purpose, that of creating a positive image of the other; an image that will not be artificial but a real one, based on real facts and long-term processes that have for many centuries defined the development of the Caucasus as having mutual cultural and historical value.

These ideas led us to the logical conclusion that in the textbook particular emphasis should be put on the cultural element. In this regard, the question was whether it was necessary to shift the emphasis from political history (development of states, wars, diplomacy, legislation, etc.) to the history of culture and everyday life, even up to culinary history, which is one of the brightest features of Caucasian identity. It is clear that such an approach required each member country to utilise largely untraditional criteria for the selection and interpretation of historical material. Traditionally, national history textbooks (especially those of young states trying to maintain their new identity) focused on the description of events connected to the birth of their nationhood, establishment of power, dynasties and great rulers. However, it would be strange and difficult to offer the same information to students coming from other countries and this does not help them to form a positive cultural image of their neighbours.

When work was started, this turnabout in cultural perspective posed problems to some of the participants. It became apparent that the cold narration which focused on the history of the state would not be so easy to eradicate and perhaps, even now, still exists to some extent. Even accepting the logical fact that there should be less politics in the textbook, participants justified their conservatism by saying that they would be criticised in their native states. This example, among many others, characterises the objective and subjective difficulties that arise in projects endeavouring to follow the guidelines of the Council of Europe.

It is clear that even a full understanding of the common task did not always render it less difficult nor did it allow participants to easily accept the new positions. This was particularly evident when both sides discussed those topics in national textbooks which contained mutual and often profound contradictions.

One of the numerous examples that could be quoted here is Georgia's annexation to the Russian Empire. For modern Russia, this event is merely an episode in its history that is worth mentioning in school textbooks, but is in no way critical in terms of

policy, nor could it be termed “sensitive”. That is why modern textbooks in Russia (as well as those in the Soviet times) only mention that the Georgian Treaty signed in 1801 led to Georgia’s annexation to the Russian Empire. This event is regarded as positive for both sides, especially for Georgia which, as the great Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov said, “was granted God’s grace and could now bloom in the shade of its gardens fearing no evil, protected by friendly weapons”.

However, debate with Georgian colleagues showed that the same event is described by Georgian historians and in Georgian textbooks in many different and controversial ways. Georgia’s annexation to the Russian Empire is considered by many scientists to be the key point. But the event is interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, the Treaty of 1801 brought stability and economic development after territorial and demographic losses following invasions from the east and the south. On the other hand, Russia’s imperial policy and the treaty had a negative impact as they turned Georgia into a colony even though there were no more invasions. Some think Georgia lost its independence not only because of Russia’s aggression but also because of its own weakness.

In the end it was decided that in such situations one should avoid being biased and consider instead the attitudes of both sides, in keeping with the principle of multiperspectivity.

This approach defined in Kazbegi was applied to all the subsequent seminars. If contradictions on an issue were too deeply rooted to allow for compromise, the issue was by mutual agreement excluded from the textbook. Almost all of these issues concerned the state borders in ancient times and in the Middle Ages; that is why information on this was reduced to a minimum and it was decided to have no maps in the textbook. In this way, the participants slowly worked towards a common vision of the structure of the textbook and the topics covered therein.

Since civilisational and cultural integrity of the Caucasus was considered to be the crux of the textbook, it was agreed that special emphasis should be put on the introduction as it was a separate structural and informational element. This would give a general description of the Caucasus’ geographical position, its basic historical and cultural regions and nationalities living there. It was decided to have a physiographical map of the Greater Caucasus but later, while working on the layout, the map was replaced by a multicolour satellite picture of the region with the capitals of the three Transcaucasian states and indicating the constituent entities of the south of Russia.

This introduction (about 12 pages) was to play a consolidating role by introducing the Caucasus as a unique, natural and civilisational phenomenon to students. After some debate, participants agreed that this part should be written by an independent expert rather than a representative of one of the four sides. That is why they turned to the Council of Europe for an experienced expert that could draft the introduction. All the participants of the project agreed that the introduction should be prepared by Professor David Braund from the Department of Classics in the University of Exeter, United

Kingdom. The procedure of preparing and approving the planned texts was preconditioned. It included the following:

- submitting draft texts to the Secretariat;
- sending them to the group of authors representing the member countries for their comments;
- discussing texts at national seminars;
- discussing and approving their final version at a meeting of the editorial board.

It was also agreed that the textbook should have the following prefaces:

- welcome addresses by the Ministries of Education of the countries concerned;
- a preface by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

These materials would define the status and purpose of the textbook and emphasise its political and cultural significance, not only for the Caucasus, but for the whole of Europe.

The structure of the main part of the textbook caused some heated debate. There was a choice between two approaches: topical and chronological. The chronological approach is typical of school textbooks that present history as a timeline, as a succession of events in the logic of causal connection. If written along these lines the textbook, as some participants pointed out, would become a simple extension of school already existing textbooks, i.e. completely deprived of diversity which is the brightest and the most interesting side of Caucasian people's history and culture. Opponents objected that in this case there was a risk that the textbook might become an encyclopaedic reference book where material on each country is scattered amongst topics which would lessen the integrity of the national images which students from different countries were supposed to find in the book.

The solution which was found, as a result of discussion, could be called a compromise as it combined both approaches. The chronological component boiled down to the division of the historical timeline into three periods, according to the traditional eras:

- (i) the Caucasian region in the ancient period;
- (ii) the Caucasian region in the Middle Ages;
- (iii) the Caucasian region in modern history (18th century – 1921).

Within each of those chronological periods, each country was given about 10 to 15 pages and authors could relate the events along the following guidelines: the parts should contain all that countries would like foreign students to know about their history. The topical component was defined as a list of 10 to 15 key topics such as:



- (i) an introduction: the Caucasus, its nature, people and geography;
- (ii) heritage;
- (iii) conflicts;
- (iv) trade and commerce;
- (v) traditions and customs;
- (vi) migration and population changes.

Certain changes, depending on the special character of each country's national history, were allowed but the core ideas were maintained in the first part of the textbook so as to enhance the informational integrity of the whole textbook. This part was allocated 50 pages.

Finally, another significant part of the textbook was a 12-page section that contained profiles of the region's major historical figures known for their significant cultural contribution to the history of their Motherland. The list included not only scientists and artists but also politicians and foreign scientists.

### **“European dimension” of Russian-Japanese cooperation in school history teaching**

This “heavy” title is intended to highlight the three most important aspects of the phenomenon in question. The first aspect concerns politics. Although Russia and Japan never signed a comprehensive peace treaty and the disputable issue of “northern territories” has not been resolved, these countries have improved their cooperation in many areas. The second aspect concerns the delicate area of cooperation which is school history teaching. As for the third aspect, it deals with the constructive role of the Council of Europe in supporting and developing this cooperation which has already yielded significant positive results. It is the role of the Council of Europe to lend a “European dimension” to this essentially far eastern project, although it may seem unusual at first sight. Japan is not a part of Europe in geographical terms and if one looks at the globe it is clear that Strasbourg and Japan are geographically on opposite sides. However, in this case, there is nothing unusual about it.

First of all, the Russian Federation stretches over two continents and it is the whole country, not only the European part of Russia, that became a member of the Council of Europe. This is why it has become common practice to hold Council of Europe seminars in Yakutsk, Ulan-Ude or in Vladivostok, although Yakutiya, Buryatia and Primorie are not geographically a part of Europe.

Secondly, according to the statutes of the Council of Europe, problems of studying border and neighbouring territories are one of its main priorities. This means that projects which appear under the auspices of the Council of Europe may not only

involve its member States, but other countries as well. Hence, there was nothing that unusual about the “trilateral” project “Council of Europe – Russia – Japan”, nor the “The Mediterranean Sea in European History” project, which involved all coastal states including Middle Eastern states and North African states which may serve as a worthy example of this kind of cooperation.

Thirdly Japan, as well as a number of other non-European states, has official observer status at the Council of Europe.

Fourthly, it is important that Russia and Japan seek to develop bilateral relations in different areas, including education. Therefore, the two countries try to benefit from the opportunity provided by the Council of Europe and to establish such contacts under its auspices.

The first meeting of Russian and Japanese educators was at the Council of Europe seminar in St. Petersburg held in June 1999, and which had been preceded by a meeting which could be seen nowadays as a preamble to further cooperation, although the participants at the time were not aware of the momentum the situation would gain.

The Council of Europe seminar on “The teaching of history in multicultural societies and border areas” was held in Khabarovsk on 21-23 September 1998. The theme of the seminar demonstrates that it was largely devoted to the problems of learning and teaching history in China, Japan, North and South Korea (as well as in the USA), which are neighbouring countries of the far eastern part of Russia.

It was stressed that proximity to these countries and rapid economic, social and cultural changes in the Asia-Pacific region and in the far eastern part of Russia, in particular, make a purely educational problem more acute and raise such questions as: what should teachers tell students about neighbouring peoples and how should they do it, bearing in mind that, in everyday life, common people quite often develop false stereotypes and prejudices towards their neighbours.

The fact that those sections of school textbooks which deal with neighbouring countries contain mainly (and often only) negative information on wars, conflicts, and territorial claims, hinders the process of building a positive image of these countries. Participants stressed that the Far East of Russia has a long and rich history of close political, economic and cultural relations with neighbouring countries. All major positive and negative aspects of these relations should be explicitly stated in writing. The history of economic, political and cultural relations with neighbouring countries should become a part of the region’s history. It is important to shift the current focus of curricula from the history of European countries to the history of neighbouring countries and to incorporate this component into curricula. The history of far eastern Russia should reflect the role of international trade, migration and policy in the region. This approach should help students better understand the economic, demographic, political and cultural situation in their region.

Mr Maitland Stobart, Head of the delegation of the Council of Europe, made a very interesting presentation on history teaching in border areas, which allowed participants

to better understand the conceptual problems of history teaching in border areas. He focused on the nature of borders and their formation, stated guiding principles for history teaching in border areas, and cited examples of approaches towards curricula that may be used in history teaching in border areas. Mr Stobart's presentation aroused great interest and lively debate among participants. A number of curricula-targeted proposals were discussed during workshop sessions and were later incorporated in the recommendations which came out of the seminar.

Practically every speaker at the seminar called for the promotion of a dialogue and exchange of opinions between scholars and teachers from the Pacific Rim countries and set a long-term challenge to create additional teaching materials on the history of the Far East of Russia and neighbouring countries. It is remarkable that, almost simultaneously, the ISEI (International Society for Educational Information) conference was being held in Tokyo where the participants discussed a similar initiative and decided to ask the Council of Europe to act as an intermediary. That appeal coming from the opposite shores of the sea of Japan was heard in Strasbourg and it was already in June 1999, in St. Petersburg, that a working meeting was held which laid down the groundwork for fruitful cooperation between Europe, Russia and Japan.

Among the participants were officials from the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, officials from the Council of Europe and the ISEI as well as a group of Japanese researchers whose visit was sponsored by the ISEI, and who covered a wide range of issues that are of special interest to Japan, such as:

- the history of Russo-Japanese relations in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries;
- excavation of the medieval state of Bohai in Primorie;
- difficult and disputable issues connected with the Russian-Japanese War, World War II as well as with the fate of Japanese prisoners in the USSR.

However, the key issue of the discussion was comparing history textbooks in order to analyse how the history of Russia was presented in Japanese textbooks and what image of Japan is created in the minds of Russian students through their textbooks.

The exchange of opinions confirmed the need for deeper analysis of materials for textbooks so as to develop objective opinions and recommendations. It was clear to all the participants that the situation in the field of education could not be considered satisfactory. A more serious approach would mean closer cooperation that required not only time and a great deal of expertise, but also a deep mutual understanding and the ability to listen and understand each other. The meeting showed a general readiness for such constructive dialogue. Participants reached an agreement to hold seminars in their countries of origin on a rotation basis. Japanese counterparts announced the intention of Ms Michiko Kaya, Head of the ISEI Board, to invite a group of Russian experts and curators of the project from the Council of Europe to visit Japan in Autumn 2000 to participate in the first seminar.

The Meeting of Russian and Japanese Experts on History Teaching took place in Tokyo (25-27 October 2000). The meeting focused on the discussion of problems faced by the two countries in terms of history teaching in secondary schools. It was stressed at the opening ceremony that the event was a step forward as it reflected global trends for the development of close cooperation. All the participants were enthusiastic as it was the first meeting of this kind and they expressed genuine gratitude to the Council of Europe for its support and assistance.

The Head of the Russian delegation, Professor Alexander Kiselev, First Deputy Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, said that it was necessary to find a suitable balance between world, national, regional and local history, taking into account the specific features of the Russian territory where students reside. For example, one cannot simply teach a class about the events of World War II in the same way in St. Petersburg and in Vladivostok. For students from Primorie, there should be more emphasis on the military operations in the Asia-Pacific region, while for young Moscovites there should be more emphasis on battles in Europe. No doubt, some invariable standard of knowledge has to be there, but the importance of a variable component should not be underestimated. Therefore, the seminar was intended not only to discuss the general issues of the Russian-Japanese dimension of school history education, but also to establish direct contacts between Japanese and Russian colleagues from Primorie with a view to an exchange of materials.

Discussion focused mainly on the key issue of the image of the neighbouring country that authors from Russia and Japan create in history textbooks. Professor Olga Strelova from Khabarovsk State Pedagogical University made a comprehensive presentation on "History of Japan in textbooks in the Russian Federation".

She said that the investigation of more than 20 textbooks has shown that, in general, all the authors present the same events of Japan's history and Russian-Japanese relations. All the textbooks briefly describe the creation of the state, Taika reforms, Samurais and the Code of Honour, the origins of the Segunat, religions, chronicles and literature of Japan. However, some textbooks give a brighter, more human and realistic image of Japan in the Middle Ages. By way of illustration she cited the only (!) example of a Russian history textbook where the people, not the State, are the focus of attention: "It is not at all that the Japanese intend to change nature or subjugate it, but to admire it. What they prefer is not the pompous and the conspicuous, but the graceful and the undemonstrative. Accustomed to be content with what little there is, the people of this country are able to value the beauty in everything around them, in any ordinary item, whether it is tableware or clothes".

All schoolbooks on new history (7-8th grades) include the theme on "Japan from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries". Such political events as military dictatorship, isolation from other countries, the aggressive "discovery" of Japan by western countries are dominant in the texts. It would seem that researchers in Russia sympathise with their eastern neighbour by using the following characteristics in connection with Japanese history: "Unequal treaties with European countries, including Russia in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", "Western intervention led to the worsening of the traditional economic relations and caused a decline in the quality of life for the majority of the population".

The economic and political phenomena of Japan in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century appear even more essential to historians in Russia. How did it happen that Japan which, at the beginning of the century, was “on the remote outskirts of the civilised world and the object of expansion for western countries, had by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century turned into a colonial power and become one of the world's great powers?” Therefore, the textbooks focus on the Meiji reforms and their consequences. The authors explain that the key to the Japanese success lies in a “combination of western technical achievements and national specificities”; in a “balance of traditions and new conditions”.

Russian Federation textbooks on the modern history of foreign countries (9<sup>th</sup> grade), presented Japan as a powerful industrial and military power, which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century joined the struggle for spheres of influence in Asia. Describing the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Russian history textbooks continued to focus on the political events of Japanese history, such as establishing an authoritarian regime, military power build-up and aggression on the continent, and the bloody conclusion of the historical drama as Japan entered into World War II and finally capitulated.

In the history of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the economic development of Japan, and “sources of Japanese economic miracle” are seen as significant. The components of the neighbouring country’s great success include: qualification and discipline of personnel; national labour traditions; the historic experience of the industrial development; radical reforms; demilitarisation; American weapon orders during the Korean and Vietnamese wars; orientation to advanced technologies; and political stability.

It is interesting to note that the material about post-war Japan in our school textbooks is traditionally given in the regional and cross-cultural section “Asia, Africa, and Latin America” and, at the same time, is compared with the leading countries of the western world. In the opinion of scientists from the Russian Federation, Japanese experience of post-war reconstruction and modernisation is very attractive to many developing states.

Summarising the contents of schoolbooks on world history relating to Japan, Professor Olga Strelova made the following conclusions:

- the principal approaches to the subject are political and economic ones with brief cultural and historical allusions to religious and social relationships and, predominantly, into the Middle Ages and New time history;
- the reformation experience of Japan during the 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries and its consequent economic and foreign policy achievements are highly appreciated; the foreign policy of Japan during the 1920-1940s is negatively portrayed;
- all schoolbooks in Russia lack materials about Japan’s cultural life, especially in chapters on New time history and Modern history;

- European influence on Japanese culture is shown but nothing is said about the contribution of Japan to world culture. Only in one of the schoolbooks is there a reference to the Japanese writer Oe Kenzaburo;
- through random information, schoolchildren in Russia get an idea of Japanese as hard-working, disciplined, team-oriented, autonomous, and highly cultured people, but there is no integrated and systematic material about the national psychology, traditions, life, values of the Japanese society and outstanding people in the textbooks;
- on the whole, the image of Japan in schoolbooks on world history in Russia is quite attractive, but at the same time it is not spiritual enough and appears “dehumanised”. According to one of the authors, “Japan remains a distant, exotic and almost unreal country”.

In schoolbooks on national history in Russia, information about Japan is less available. It is first mentioned in connection with the Russian-Japanese agreements of 1855 and 1875 and Russia’s policy in the Far East. At the same time, all the authors mentioned the Russian-Japanese war of 1904-1905, although its evaluation was each time different. The authors’ opinions about the initiators of the war range from “Russia did not want to be at war with Japan. The war was imposed on it” to “At the beginning of the century both Russia and Japan pursued their own interests in the Far East. Objectively, some of Russia’s top officials desired the war” and “Japan was the principal obstacle on the way to Russian influence in the Far East ... The war was a logical consequence of Russia’s imperial policy.”

In the first case, the whole logic of narration suggests that students answer the following questions: “Was it possible to avoid the war with Japan? Why did Japan win when it was clearly weaker than Russia in military and economic terms? Others consider that the victory was stolen from Russia, and if it had not been for fatal circumstances, the war would have ended differently. A number of authors lay more emphasis on the influence of the Russian-Japanese war on the country’s domestic situation. It is natural that in each of these cases the presentation of historical facts and students’ conclusions will be different.

The second subject common to all the authors is military conflict between the USSR and Japan during the 1930s and the final stage of World War II. Authors in Russia on the whole are unanimous in their evaluation of the Far Eastern conflicts regarding Japan’s territorial claims in Manchuria and the Primorsky Krai illegitimate. The authors are equally unanimous in their opinion why the Soviet Union declared war on Japan in August 1945. The reasons include loyalty to the allies’ duty, liquidation of the seat of military aggression in Asia and security of the eastern frontiers of the USSR. Professor Alexander Danilov honestly added in his textbook that in the war with Japan, Stalin “took into consideration the interests of the Soviet Union’s expansion into the Far East.” The address of the Soviet government to the people is cited once in the textbook by Mr Valery Ostrovsky: “The defeat of the Russian army in the Russian-Japanese war of 1904 left the Soviet people with bitter memories and was generally perceived as a disgrace. Our people looked forward to the day when

Japan would be defeated and disgrace forgotten ... ”. And again, in each case the events were interpreted and perceived differently.

Mr Vladimir Shestakov, in his textbook, made an attempt to avoid the stereotypes of the “Cold War” suggesting to students unusual and pertinent questions such as: “What do you think about the following ideas: to cancel Victory Day to avoid stirring up memories of military conflict; to give the title of the “Veteran of World War II” to all those who participated in the war on both sides; to restore the cemeteries of German and Japanese war prisoners who died and were buried on the territory of Russia?”

The third group of themes concerning Japan is related to matters of foreign policy of the USSR and Russia during the 1980s-1990s. All the authors approve of the resurgence of bilateral relations, official meetings and negotiations, and recognise that “Japan’s great economic potential can be made use of in the development of many branches of industry of our country’s economy”. At the same time, they regret that the “East” direction of Russia’s foreign policy still remains of secondary importance despite all official statements.

Analysing textbooks on national history in Russia, Professor Olga Strelova made the following conclusions:

- the image of Japan is formed solely on the basis of recent military and political history;
- this image is more realistic and tangible than that in the course of the world history, since Japan is portrayed as the sometimes difficult neighbour of Russia in the east, and its competitor in the struggle for power in the Far East throughout the century;
- this image does not match up with the more positive vision of Japan that is formed in the course on world history.

The presentation made by Ms Tatyana Romanchenko, Primorsky Institute of In-Service Teacher Training, Vladivostok, on “Teaching Japanese History in Educational Institutions of the Far East of Russia” also aroused great interest among Japanese colleagues.

The participants were informed of the results of a survey involving 500 students of from the 10 and 11 forms in schools in Primorsky Kray who were asked 27 questions to assess their knowledge on the history, geography, literature, and fine arts of Japan. The analysis of these questionnaires yielded disappointing results and showed that students had very superficial knowledge of Japan. Most of them answered “No” to the question: “Are you satisfied with the information about Japan that you get at school?”

The questionnaire revealed that the attitude of 85% of the interviewed students to the Japanese is positive, 10% were negative and 5% indifferent. Students, on the whole, described Japanese as patriots of their country, intelligent, industrious, honest, educated, well-bred, and nature-loving people. The question “What information about

Japan would you most like to get?” helped to determine the interests of students. They answered that above all they would like to be informed about the Japanese culture, and then on the history and economy. This confirmed once again that it is necessary to introduce changes to the world history syllabus, to create new teaching aids as well as to integrate all the existing sources of information and to adapt them to the needs of present-day schools.

The discussions continued in May 2001 in Vladivostok at the seminar held by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, and by the Department of Education of the Administration of Primorsky Krai, with the participation of experts in education from Japan. The seminar was devoted to new approaches in the preparation and publication of history textbooks for secondary schools.

The key event of the seminar (as a part of the international cooperation) was the presentation of the supplementary teaching material on the history and culture of Japan, our neighbour, the first in the history of education in Russia. The announcement that this publication was only a part of the regional project “History and culture of the countries of the Asian and Pacific Region” worked out by historians from Russia - experts on Japanese history from the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East and the Far East University in Vladivostok - received general acclaim. The aim of the project was to instil in students respect for other cultures, religions, traditions and to teach them to resist national prejudice and xenophobia and to enable them to understand more deeply history and culture of neighbouring states and peoples. Within the framework of the project, it was planned to create a set of educational and methodological materials consisting of a teacher’s guide, training aids for students, a collection of documents and illustrations, and hand-outs for students.

The participants emphasised that the creation of such teaching material was a direct continuation of the activity, the necessity of which was the subject of special consideration at the seminar of the Council of Europe “The teaching of history in multicultural societies and border areas” held in Khabarovsk on 21-23 September 1998. At this seminar an opinion was expressed that Far East students, while studying world history, learnt much more about distant neighbours in Europe than about their next-door neighbours in Asia”. And now, just three years later, the teaching material “History and culture of Japan in documents and illustrations” has become available. Undoubtedly, this could not have happened without our Japanese colleagues, who not only supplied a substantial part of the visual aids (over one hundred photos and pictures) and documentary materials, but also made a number of valuable remarks on and proposals for the manuscript as well as having financed this publication.

As a result, teachers and students of the Far East of Russia received a unique book covering a period from ancient times to present day. The book consists of 3 parts: “Japanese: national character, customs, traditions”, “History and culture of Japan”, and “The relations of the Far East of Russia and Japan from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to our times”. This superb publication which contains interesting and



diversified information has proved that international cooperation can enrich the opportunities of the educational system.

At the same time, the participants of the seminar focused on a number of important additional motivations, which history teachers should use intensively to develop students' interest in culture and history of neighbouring countries. The geographical proximity of Japan allows students of the Far East of Russia to gain profound and versatile knowledge of the country from sources other than textbooks. Much information about Japan is given in mass media. In the region, joint economic and cultural projects are implemented including festivals of Japanese culture, tours of the Kabuki theatre, ikebana expositions, and tea ceremonies. Japanese film festivals have become a good tradition. Children can also receive information from their families, as their fathers and grandfathers, fishermen and seamen, have visited Japan more than once.

Student exchanges have become a regular event, as well as exhibitions of children's artistic creativity and tours of creative teams. With the assistance of the General Consulate of Japan, competitions are held in Vladivostok among students testing their knowledge of the Japanese language. One could say that students are becoming the envoys of people's diplomacy. Specialised Japanese schools are successfully working in Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

Japanese colleagues, in their turn, noted that their system of education is undergoing profound changes aimed at enhancing the "international" component in teaching history and, in particular, history of neighbouring states with which Japan had strained relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, i.e. China, Korea and Russia (notably Siberia and the Far East of Russia). Professor Yasushi Toriumi reminded participants that, in 1998-1999, new "Guidelines on education management" were published and formed the basis on which new history textbooks are now written. These textbooks offer a more comprehensive concept of international education, and emphasis is placed on the importance of understanding international processes. Moreover, many universities review their programmes, the principal task of which is to meet with the requirements of international education.

The Japanese colleagues, in their speeches, paid particular attention to the humanitarian aspect of cooperation and to the opportunity of visiting, for the first time, those places in Primorsky Krai that are connected with their scientific research. The tour of the fortifications system of Vladivostok and Russky island built in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the exhibition devoted to Admiral Stepan Makarov in the History museum, and the common grave of seamen of the legendary cruiser "Varyag" aroused their particular interest.

Against this background, the "History and culture of Japan in documents and illustrations" publication takes on special significance. It becomes of paramount importance and marks the emergence of an unprecedented phenomenon in Russian education – an educational programme on history that came into being, not through a bureaucratic decision, but through a vital need for friendship and mutual understanding. The importance of this experience is even more significant considering

that it emerged between states which had controversial historical and political heritage and, moreover, in the field of education, in which nothing of the kind has ever occurred. It is symbolic that the Council of Europe's active stance directly contributed to such regional mutual rapprochement.

### **“The Black Sea Initiative on History”: the view from the Russian coast**

Due to its characteristics, the “Black Sea Initiative on History” stands out from other international projects in which the Russian Federation participated within the framework of cooperation with the Council of Europe. The distinguishing feature of this project was determined by three principal factors.

First, the subject of research was the development of cultural space limited by the seashore, but not by any chronological frames, i.e. “trans-maritime” and “coastal” interaction of peoples and states that have existed there from the earliest times till present day.

Second, the main outcome of the project was to be a unique teaching pack for teachers and schoolchildren of all participant countries, which had never before been compared in such a way, and was designed to help add a “Black Sea dimension” to the usual school courses on national and world history.

And third, dozens of teachers and hundreds of students were to be the co-authors of the book. They were to participate in the elaboration of different themes in “electronic co-operation” with their colleagues and peers living on the opposite coast of the Black Sea.

Thus, the project promised to be interesting, but, on the other hand, it required from the participants a willingness to adopt new educational approaches and untraditional organisational and managerial decisions.

Russia's interest in this initiative was determined, in particular, by the fact that the south (Black Sea) direction is one of the priorities in its school history syllabus. Starting with the formation of Ancient Rus, the struggle for access to the Black Sea and Russia's hold of its coasts, was the most important political objective that brought about serious regional and international conflicts (armed struggle with nomadic tribes, military incursions to Byzantium and later to the Crimean Khanate, numerous Russian-Turkish wars, the Crimean war, etc.). On the other hand, the Orthodox Christian religion and the written language came to Russia from the south and this also was the most important commercial and cultural route “from Vikings to Greeks”.

Another important factor supporting Russia's interest in the project was the fact that the early period of its history, as it is well known, was common with that of Ukraine, when both states, independent today, existed as a single entity for many centuries. Joint participation in the project enabled them to find a balance in the factual and illustrative material reflecting the historical realities of that time.

And certainly Russia, like all the other participant countries, was extremely interested in the result of the project: a teaching pack enabling teachers and students to see the general historical and cultural context of complicated and controversial processes that took place on the Black Sea coasts. It was especially meaningful for the younger generations living in the area, since it was intellectually and psychologically important for them to feel that they belong to such a specific multicultural area.

However, it is one thing to agree to participate in a project and it is quite another to work out a common position on all issues: from setting targets to the technology of schools' interaction. Thus, as soon as the initiative was put forward by Romanian authorities at the Council of Europe's seminar on "History curricula for secondary schools in the Black Sea countries" in the city of Constanta on 6-8 May 1999, an intensive exchange of opinions began.

It seems appropriate to describe the atmosphere in which the initiative was received. Later, analysing the already completed project, the participants in that seminar unanimously agreed that their enthusiastic reaction to the idea of Romanian authorities was due not only to the professional understanding of its importance, but also to the psychological factor. The initiative was announced in a hall through ribbon windows which allowed them to see only the blue sea stretching out to the horizon. Moreover, all of them were under the spell of the recent excursion to the museums and monuments of the city of Constanta, which is, in itself, a vivid illustration of intercultural dialogue. The city's name commemorates the Byzantine Emperor Constantine, in whose honour the inhabitants renamed ancient Tomis. The great Roman poet, Ovidius Naso, lived in exile and died here, and his monument was erected in one of the city's central squares. In the city, alongside the Greek-Roman cemetery, one can see a Genoese beacon, a medieval Turkish minaret and an Orthodox church. The host's initiative sounded the more inspiring against such a rich historical background. And it is not surprising that a collective position, which can be regarded as the final aim of the project, and as a general definition of its objectives, started to form:

- approval of the principle at which teaching history nowadays should be aimed, i.e. enhancing openness, tolerance, aspiration for discussion and rapprochement of positions, instead of creating dividing lines; a text should not be written in a triumphal, polemical or accusatory style; various standpoints should be presented but they should not encourage interpretation from nationalistic or xenophobic positions;
- reaching consensus on the issue that teaching history should be based on mutual respect without attempting to create the image of an enemy, especially when teaching history of neighbouring countries and peoples; thus, the materials should be devoid of political and ideological stereotypes and should not use historical events which could intensify existing political tensions;
- recognition of the fact that history should be taught entirely on a multiperspective basis, especially when dealing with controversial and delicate

issues, and without too much emphasis on military themes, although it is obvious that military history could also be included;

- reaching consensus on the issue that teaching history should help the young generations to become active citizens, and, therefore, its main purpose is to help them to develop such skills as critical thinking, intellectual openness, the ability to make independent conclusions and not to confine themselves only to acquiring a certain amount of knowledge;
- broader knowledge of the mechanisms of regional cooperation within the framework of the Council of Europe, based on respect and equality of all countries involved and principles of transparency in the team work.

From the outset, it was obvious that the “Black Sea Initiative” was considered as a large-scale and multifaceted project with its own philosophy, strategic objectives and concrete and practical results. According to the participants of the project, despite its practical orientation, its content was not to be reduced to a simple summary of additional information on the history of the countries of the Black Sea area, although an expansion on this would itself be important.

The word “bridge” was recognised as the principal concept describing the approach to the content of the future book. The Black Sea was considered as a bridge connecting people, cultures and states appearing and disappearing on its coasts. And if one wishes to expand on this metaphorical image, the bridge could be seen as their meeting place, even if the participants were not fully aware of the cultural and civilisational implication of events. However, the participants of the project became discoverers who were the first to interpret the Black Sea not as a border between “us” and “them”, “ours” and “theirs”, not as a stretch of water that this or that state seeks to get control of and turn into an inner sea, but rather as a common historical space of the living and the dead. It is the main reason why the authors of the teaching pack added the subtitle “A history of interactions” and put on the cover a geographically unidentifiable image of the sea: a stretch of water and rocks.

Thus, the aim of the project was not only to prepare and publish useful teaching material but to achieve a more challenging objective. The authors of the project sought to change the subject by going beyond the limits of a traditional textbook and enhancing the democratic values in its content.

The educational programme on the history of the Baltic Sea countries is a brave deviation from the traditional categories of the historical discourse. The programme envisaged not only the study of a region about which little is known in the international practice of teaching history, and giving additional information on the subject, but it is unusual for another reason. It focuses on the history of the seacoast, not of the continental land. The subject of investigation is the dynamic of ties and relations rather than formal events. It is this fact that makes “The Black Sea Initiative” the vanguard of innovative historical research of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

However, the innovative value of the project lies not only in its conceptual foundation. It manifests itself entirely in its approaches to the preparation of teaching materials as a means of education. These materials in terms of their content, structure and design were to meet the following requirements:

- to be balanced in political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the historical process;
- to show controversial and delicate issues from the position of political correctness and using multiperspectivity; to avoid a stereotype of “others” (in this case, coastal neighbours), which is often painted in “dark colours” since such stereotypes are created when studying wars, military conflicts, revolutions, etc.;
- to promote interactive methods of teaching history.

Since the creation of such materials required much research, the realisation of the project was a long process which included seminars, conferences, meetings of those experts responsible in their respective countries for the preparation of new textbooks, programmes and teacher training materials.

The experience in formulating topics (sections and chapters of the teaching pack) gained while working on the project is of particular methodological interest for specialists, including experts from Russia involved in writing history textbooks for multinational communities.

The authors agreed that the structure and contents of a textbook cannot and should not follow the logic in which similar themes are presented in the course on national and on world history in participant countries’ schools. This meant a combination of the traditional linear-chronological principle with the problem-thematic presentation of the material. At the meeting on the preparation of the teaching pack for the Black Sea Initiative on history, held on 14-15 March 2000, it was decided that the contents of the teaching pack would focus on the following themes running through different historical periods:

- trade and trade routes;
- legends;
- migrations and resettlements;
- navigation;
- culture and science;
- customs and traditions.

As for the historical periods, they were related to the most important cultural processes and events of regional history:

- antiquity: Greek cities on the Black Sea coast, the Scythians, Caucasian kingdoms, the Persians, the Daci, the Romans;
- Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium): early Christians, Caucasian princedoms, the Great Steppe, the appearance of Romanians and Bulgarians;
- Italian cities-republics (13-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries): the Kingdom of Tamara, the collapse of Constantinople, the Golden Horde, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom;
- Ottoman Empire (15-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries): the Khanate of the Crimea, Ukrainian Cossacks, Georgia and the Ottoman Empire, the Danube princedoms;
- Modern History (19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries): the Russian dominion, collapse of the Ottoman Empire, appearance of contemporary states.

A reader accustomed to school programmes can easily see how much this approach differs from the traditional one. Firstly, no country member showed the Black Sea region in textbooks as an independent historical unit. Secondly, from a historical viewpoint, no country except Russia associates the Black Sea with any great war victories. Hence, the events which happened in this region are on the margins of national historical memory. These matters are of such minor importance in the past of other countries that they are not included in school programmes.

All historians agree that developing teaching materials which totally alter the situation demands serious work including scientific research. The Council of Europe experts stated that they did not know enough about monographic or subject works of the history of the Black Sea to include parts of them in textbooks. Moreover, the participants of the project admitted unanimously that, in fact, general texts about the history of the Black Sea region did not exist. Different countries had just a few books and these could not be seen as serving a certain purpose because they described different topics. For example, there were books about ecological history, which described peculiarities of the region as well as issues concerning climate, flora and fauna. There were books on anthropological history, which described how groups of migrants became settled communities during different ages. There were books on history of seafaring, shipbuilding, coast topography and sailors' memories. There were books on commercial history, which dealt with overseas trade, sea routes by which silk and spices were delivered from the east to Europe, and also included the history of spreading a wonderful animal style in the art of Eurasian steppes, horse-breeding, cattle-breeding, archery, etc. There were books on social institutions, which dealt with trade agreements of ancient merchants, laws of ancient communities that evolved into principles and present-day values. There were books on military history, which did more than simply describe horsemen attacking villages, huge exotic armies besieging coast cities, death, marauding and enslavement. There were also books on the history of religion and philosophy, which told how Christianity and Islam came

into the world of paganism; they described a mesh of dogmas and rites, and preserved fairy tales and legends about Amazons and Arimasps, Argonauts and dragons, heroes and heroines. Most of the information concerning the history of the region was buried in magazines which were mostly unavailable, and published in dozens of languages. This is why history educators elaborating the subject in the course of the project, to some extent, left specialists behind. Through the experience they understood not only what should be found and how it should be used but also how to elaborate ideas cooperatively. The experience also inspired them to create an innovative teaching pack.

However, it would be unfair to state that international educational practice does not have any examples of creating teaching materials on the history of a sea.

In the course of the project two examples were studied. The first one dealt with the history of Scandinavia, which is similar to the Black Sea with its developing relations between bordering countries linked by sea-lanes. The second one was the example of Italy, studied in the context of a wider Mediterranean region. It is clear that outside contacts were important for the development of the Italian lands as well as the internal ones.

Although the situation is similar in the Mediterranean, Baltic-Scandinavian and Black Sea regions, we cannot ignore the principal differences between the ways in which the three regions developed. There are two main differences. The first one is that the capital, or most important trade cities, of the majority of the Mediterranean and Baltic countries tended to be situated near the coast line, while the Black sea coast had only one capital city, Constantinople or Istanbul, besides the ancient Pantikapaeum. The second one is the relative remoteness of the Black Sea in comparison with the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. Military and trade expansion into the region both by land and sea was somewhat impeded. It is a well-known fact that since the 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., for more than 2000 years, its sea-lanes were controlled by Greeks, their successors the Byzantines, partly by the Genoese, and for about 400 years by the Turks. Only by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century did Russia's expansion into the south alter the situation. However, 200 years had passed before the Black Sea got its chance to become really "Mediterranean", a sea of numerous and equal partners. From this point of view, the project became the first step towards a new age although it was clear that for participants of the project the experience of Italy and Scandinavia was more inspiring than practical.

It would be useful to speak about the countries which do not belong to the Black Sea region, but which are, to some extent, linked to it through their culture and history. For example Italian, or to be more precise, Genoese active presence in the region lasted several centuries. Genoese fortresses in the Crimea (Feodosiya, Sudak, Alushta, Balaklava, etc.) prove this fact. Genoese trade was one of the most important factors in the medieval history of the region.

Earlier participation of Norwegian forefathers in the Black Sea trade was quite significant. Their numerous relics found in different places, particularly on the island of Berezan, the final point of the transeuropean trade route "from Vikings to Greeks",

illustrate this. However, the most significant contribution to the culture of the region is illustrated by Greeks and their successors, the Byzantines. Taking into account this exceptional fact, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of Greece proposed to the Council of Europe to host the Meeting of Experts on “The Greek in the history of the Black Sea”, which took place in Thessaloniki from 2-4 December 1999. This activity became the second meeting of experts after Constanta.

The participants pointed out that the location of the meeting was of historical significance. The Apostle Paul, the founder of the Christian church in Thessaly, lived there. Until the Holocaust in 1943 it was a prosperous shelter for the Sephardic Jews persecuted by the Spanish Reconquista. It was a place where two outstanding politicians, the Turk, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1908) and the Greek, Eleutherios Venizelos (1916) started their revolutionary activities.

It was not surprising then that the main theme of the meeting was regarded as the impetus by the Greeks to seek historical development, the factor of gradual changing nations of the Greek “oikoumene” from strangers into neighbours. Regarding trade and culture, the colonisation of Greece, already in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., joined such distant islands and lands as Sicily and Colchis, Cyprus and the Crimea, the mouths of the Don, Danube, Dnieper and Dniester. In fact it was the first example of the international economic system in history. Through the Greek mediation all these areas became immediate neighbours despite the absence of common borders. Moreover, they were joined not by land but by sea, not by seizing territories but by trade and cultural influence of the most developed country of those times.

The role of Greeks in developing civilisation also included the following. Greece involved peoples who had never faced the sea in its cultural and economic relations. Thracians, Scythians, Cimmerians and Colchs who occupied territories of 435,000 km<sup>2</sup> were land peoples, i.e. steppe nomads, cattle-breeders and forest hunters. They were neither seafarers nor fishermen. They neither settled in the mouth of rivers nor operated any sea or river trade.

The Greeks, who occupied the edge of the shoreline and never advanced inland, became the link that brought together peoples and cultures which had never before had contact with one another. Considering the consequences of Alexander the Great’s latter campaigns and almost 1,500 years of the Christian Byzantium, the Greek cultural heritage appeared to have influenced not only the whole Black Sea area but also rather distant territories of East and North Europe.

This heritage is not limited to the development of commercial relations and familiarising neighbouring peoples with Greek religion and written culture. This Greek factor (as was later the case with the Turkish and Russian factors) greatly affected the political, economic and military history of the Black Sea coasts, migration processes, mixed marriages, the emergence of new ethnic and cultural groups (for instance, Gagauz, Karaim, etc.). We should also keep in mind that it was thanks to Byzantium that the Black Sea area became a part of the common European political context. It was also important that the Greek influence on the region was the first and the longest in history (over 2,000 years). So, despite the diversity of the processes that



have been ongoing in the region since the emergence of the Bosphorus and the filling of the Black Sea area, the “Greek dimension” of the cultural and historical background of its coasts still remains the deepest and, therefore, the determining one.

The meeting participants drew important methodological conclusions from the issues addressed. First, they treated the “Greek factor” as an extremely sound argument in favour of developing a single, integral textbook rather than a number of separate educational materials on specific topics as some participants suggested. Second, it was deemed necessary to exclude, to the greatest extent possible, from the future book subjects related solely to local or national history. Third, it was decided to focus on the problems of formation and development of a multicultural Black Sea community and to cover various points of view on sensitive and controversial historical events.

Another important debate was related to the selection of materials to be included in the teaching pack. They were to comprise photos, maps, written sources, ethnographical and archaeological artefacts, legends, costumes, traditions, statistical data, etc. All these various materials were to be presented in the context of modern pedagogical techniques in order to motivate students’ interest.

The above-mentioned inter-school cooperation played a special role in the design of the Black Sea Initiative; it accelerated the “grown-up” work as well as stimulating interest in the project. The idea of school partnership turned out to be very popular, which allowed children from different countries to exchange information about the history of their towns by e-mail or fax. The programme was aimed at stimulating students from different countries to use the results of one another’s research in order to create a common basis for this activity. The students showed interest in choosing a subject as well as in preparing materials. Some preferred to describe their town by providing illustrations, others by describing monuments and popular sights. Many described the results of archaeological excavations in which they had participated. The programme proved to be popular as the students were free to choose what information to search for, to use fax to exchange ideas with new pen-friends. The teachers were able to use the results of their work for methodological purposes, to deepen their students’ knowledge of historical research and of the critical analysis of sources.

School children from Sochi chose a subject that dealt with the Neolithic period, the so-called “dolmen culture”. It was a conscious choice as the dolmens, as well as other megaliths, are still a historical problem. They are scattered all over Europe, from Britain (the famous Stonehenge) to the Caucasus, and in spite of being thousands of miles apart, have a lot in common. In this respect the Sochi region is unique: there are dozens of gigantic funeral constructions there. The examination of these historical objects within the framework of the project, as well as the exchange of ideas by e-mail with Moldavian and Romanian teenagers, gave a boost to the ethnographical programme of the young historians of Sochi.

That is why the proposal of the Council of Europe, supported by all the participants of the project, to hold the Final conference to launch the teaching pack on “The Black Sea Initiative on History - A History of Interaction” in Sochi was a great honour for

Russia. The book was published by Gyldendal publishing house in Norway and edited by Dr Zofia Archibald, Professor of Archeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool.

The conference was held in September 2004. Addressing the participants of the conference, representatives from Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine (unfortunately, the Georgian delegation was unable to arrive due to travel difficulties), Mr Andrey Svinarenko, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, said: “Now that everybody can open this book published by the Council of Europe – the final result of the research – it becomes clear that the educational centres of all the countries of this region have got a priceless gift. The significance of the book is not only in its contents but in the very fact of it being published. This is the first teaching material in history that was borne out of the sea, like the famous goddess!

Teaching history in school provides us with many opportunities. It brings back the past as a memory of age-long cultural, commercial and political links. Although at times the Black Sea did not actually unite but rather separated peoples living on its coasts, nowadays the sea is regaining the ancient name the Greeks once gave it – the Hospitable Sea!

Children having the opportunity to learn history through books that have been written not just by teachers from different countries, but by teachers who are friends, really are very lucky! They will perceive this sense of a common history and a common cultural heritage. Standing on the sea shore and looking across the horizon they will know that far beyond it there are friends!”

One can draw many important conclusions from the experience of participation in the project. One of the most general ones is, of course, the concept of “European dimension”, which is a part of the Council of Europe’s philosophy. In this connection we can quote Professor Zofia Archibald who spoke at the conference. She said:

“Lately, especially before the recent expansion of the European Union, many prominent persons began discussing again ‘the European Identity’. What does it mean to be a European? Is it a cultural or a geographical phenomenon? Although many EU decisions are made on a purely economic basis, they contain certain hidden cultural and historical limitations. These limitations go back to stereotypes perceived in one’s childhood and which are deeply rooted in people’s minds. The identity of present-day leaders was tailor-made to fit the norms of a national state. Their ideas of other nations were formed on the basis of state diplomacy. Although quite useful, such a background turns can also be rather inadequate when it comes to forming an independent opinion. From this point of view “The Black Sea Initiative on History” is a contribution to the pan-European discussion of originality and identity. This is a discussion on the most controversial and difficult to realise cultural and historical subjects: to what extent does our past influence our future? What do we evaluate in each other’s history? Christians, Muslims, and other religious groups – how did they co-exist? How do they co-exist now? What are their prospects?”

Actually, this is the main purpose of teaching history at schools or, rather, this should be the main purpose. In reality, quite often we see a totally different approach: children are taught to differentiate “our” history and culture and “alien”, “our” people and “enemies” (or “ex-enemies”). Other results are difficult to achieve if the problem is viewed through the focus of “state interests”. The culturological approach to the matter allowed the participants of the project to see not just a collection of conflicting tendencies but their multicultural interaction. As an illustration we can quote a passage from “Defying Geography”. The implication of the title is ‘something not to be seen on a map’.

“In the history and traditions of the Black Sea communities one can find such profound meanings and subtle links that cannot be seen on any map. We would like to give some examples. When studying the history of Christianity in that region it was interesting to find what an important role in that process was played by the Jewish community: the first followers of the new religion were Jews. On the other hand, the importance of the Jewish community in the development of culture and commerce in that region has always been overestimated: thus, the Byzantine military leader Gregor Bakuriani, Georgian by origin, founded a famous monastery in Bachkovo (to the south of Plovdiv, Bulgaria) in 1083, and according to the Georgian, Armenian and Greek sources, it was the Georgians who played the key role in that region (the Byzantines were not even mentioned properly). Many manuscripts circulating in the towns and monasteries of Eastern Europe were translated from Greek and copied on the Athos Mountain by monks from non-Greek provinces. The highly-original look of Georgian temples, built in 4-7<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD, resembles churches in Armenia, North Mesopotamia and, especially, in Samaria. The marvellous tiles, used since the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century for decorating mosques, were produced according to the Persian technology.

The Turkish *dirhem* (this word comes from the Greek coin *drachma*, which literally means a *handful*) was a monetary unit which is nowadays found not only all over the Black Sea region but also on the shores of the faraway Baltic Sea. The governors of Moldavia and Walachia, who, starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, were the vassals of the Ottoman sultan, used trade revenues to build temples in Istanbul, Alexandria, Jerusalem and on the Athos, and so did the Turks, by the way. Even the sovereigns who never were under the reign of Byzantine emperors introduced Byzantine ceremonial of the court and aspired to gain better knowledge of Greek literature. The Russian Tsar’s summer palace in the Crimean Livadia built in 1910-1911 is a mixture of Byzantine, Gothic and Arabian styles. It is the very palace that hosted the Yalta Conference in February 1945”.

One can see that this text is not educational from a traditional point of view and it does not claim to be so. Its task is to create an impression of deep cross-cultural links, of which the then contemporaries were often not aware, but which literally penetrated the everyday life of people ranging from tsars to ordinary peasants and townsmen, although political history of relations between the countries where they lived could, at the same time, be filled with constant fight, which often came to armed conflicts and long wars.

This approach is especially efficient when we deal with the history of multinational countries that by no means always emerged through voluntary association of peoples. If, by the time of such association, these peoples had sovereignty, which was more ancient than that of the “embracing” state, description of surrounding circumstances becomes a very complicated and sensitive task. Shifting the emphasis to the cross-cultural dialogue makes it possible not only to alleviate the acuteness and dramatic nature of an event but also to consider it in a broader cultural and civilisational context beyond which it is impossible to deeply understand historical processes.

The above-mentioned constitutes another lesson of this project as well as other international projects of the Council of Europe: it is necessary to teach children to regard the past as the interaction of people, who created the heritage common for all of us the living, to see in the past not only wars, revolutions and conflicts but also creation, achievements and search for truth.

### **History of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the European dimension**

In addition to regional programmes, the Russian Federation took part, together with other member States of the Council of Europe, in multilateral projects such as “Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”. It is not difficult to understand why this project was so important for history education in Russia. An unbiased, extensive analysis of national history in the context of European and global history is one of the principal conditions for overcoming deep-rooted stereotypes. In this regard, a method was chosen within the framework of this project, which focused not only on events taken from histories of different countries, but also on common processes, which brought to life such international socio-political phenomena as the first and second World Wars, totalitarianism, the Cold War, present-day European integration, etc. This approach offered the possibility of linking internal and inter-state processes with European and global trends in such areas as economy, demography, social life, etc, which cannot be correctly interpreted if they are only analysed at national levels. For the Russian Federation, this approach was particularly important as school history in our country traditionally includes two parallel independent courses on national and world histories. This makes it sometimes difficult to look at events of national history in the context of universal, European and world processes.

In this respect, the multiperspective approach proved to be extremely efficient when analysing complicated historical phenomena of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In particular, the advantage of this method became evident when analysing the causes of both world wars, and presenting them as a result of controversial geopolitical interests of the Great powers as well as of the ambitions of their leaders.

Experience gained from the activities organised in the framework of this project gave an opportunity to better understand issues linked to the preparation of a new generation of history textbooks, which is becoming increasingly important within the current educational policy in the Russian Federation. By familiarising themselves with European examples when presenting key events of this complicated era in history,

from the point of view of multiperspectivity, authors of history textbooks in the Russian Federation were encouraged to shorten the amount of text and to increase the variation of sources. This allowed them to portray different, and sometimes controversial views, of eye witnesses and those directly involved in events, as well as perspectives of historians who later analysed the facts. Such an approach seems to be particularly efficient when using teaching materials in CD-ROM format, the preparation of which has been already started in Russia.

It should be pointed out that questions discussed during seminars organised in the Russian Federation within this period had many similarities with topics identified as priorities for multilateral cooperation projects. One of the best examples is the book on “Teaching 20<sup>th</sup> Century European History” by Dr Robert Stradling and published by the Council of Europe. The themes analysed in this publication are of special interest to teaching history in schools in the Russian Federation for two reasons: from the point of view of content as well as of methodological and didactical approaches.

Among the most important the following questions can be identified :

- development of complex historical understanding based on an analysis of facts in a broad chronological and logical context and combining levels of regional, national, European and world histories;
- analysis of turning points, controversial and sensitive issues in history, in particular, those of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century;
- development of a multiperspective understanding of history comprising different views on social events and phenomena; involvement of pupils in evaluation of historical processes;
- use of research methods when learning history;
- use of extensive historical sources and teaching materials; training pupils to acquire skills such as ability to critically analyse sources and work independently with historical information.

The above-mentioned topics have been discussed during seminars in the Russian Federation, and multilateral projects have provided an opportunity to compare methods and approaches used in Russia with the experience of many European countries; to analyse them in a more global context has helped considerably in searching for efficient and practical solutions. It should be mentioned that this publication was translated into Russian, which greatly helped in the exchange of views.

### **Use by the Russian Federation of its experience gained through participation in international projects of the Council of Europe**

As mentioned above, academic and practical experience gained in the course of implementation of these projects was very important in the context of future

development of school history education. It appears even more important if we consider education as an instrument to prepare young generations for the life in a world that is becoming more and more multinational and multicultural all over the globe. An immense growth in migration flows, creation of new labour markets and intensively growing academic mobility – these and many other factors distinguish school history from ordinary educational subjects and make it a social and cultural phenomenon, outstanding in terms of its creative (or, on the contrary, destructive) power.

School history acquires a special significance in the present-day environment in Russia, which is undergoing several profound social processes.

In this context, the experience gained is primarily valuable as an opportunity to get familiar with the experience of the Council of Europe and that of other countries that faced similar problems before Russia and have developed approaches to school history policy, which can be of common interest. The science of management correctly claims that experience is inseparable from its bearer and, therefore, cannot be carried over. However, it is possible to carry over the principles and conceptual bases that turned out to be appropriate for conduct in similar circumstances. From this point of view, it is possible to outline a number of important issues that appear universal:

### **1. Common discussions on the general goals and project monitoring**

The progress of all the reviewed projects showed that immediately after “generation of ideas” their comprehensive discussion began. It is during such brainstorm discussions that like-minded groups emerged, out of which future project implementation teams were spontaneously formed. These teams were comprised of the most creative individuals who were duly qualified to perform this work. It is also important to note that both the initial discussions and all subsequent stages involved professionals belonging to various levels and sections of management, science and teaching. Common plenary sessions and working groups brought together ministers and teachers, scientists and methodologists, textbook authors and Heads of Departments, publishers and even students. Sincerity, mutual confidence, common goals, team spirit, partnership on terms of equality inspired highly productive discussions and a drive for greater efficiency. According to the participants, it was the first time they had a chance to work in such teams, which makes this informal mechanism of creating and managing projects highly commendable.

### **2. Development of educational process at international level**

Analysis of the projects showed they have never been an end in itself; their educational potential could be used to improve national systems of history teaching in member states. International textbooks on national or world history are a new and positive development in history teaching. What makes them especially important is the fact that they have been prepared by “native” authors rather than “foreigners” outside a national education paradigm, yet incorporate “transition modules” allowing them to be used in other states with similar historic background and common future.

### **3. Transition to history teaching on the basis of multiculturalism and multiperspectivity**

The two above-mentioned principles have become a *sine qua non* of a successful implementation of the projects and, therefore, cannot be ignored when preparing textbooks on national or world history, above all in multiethnic countries. In Russia, a patchwork of ethnically and historically defined communities and close contacts with neighbouring cultures and civilisations (a pattern that has been complicated by the collapse of the USSR), introducing the principles of tolerance and multiple identity, as well as the “European dimension” into new generation history textbooks, is a task of paramount importance. The first section of this paper quoted some of the Council of Europe’s strategies in history teaching:

- “be a decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust between peoples;
- be one of the fundamental parts of the freely agreed building of Europe based on a common historical and cultural heritage, enriched through diversity, even with its conflictual and sometimes dramatic aspects;
- enable European citizens to enhance their own individual and collective identity through knowledge of their common historical and cultural heritage in its local, regional, national, European and global dimensions.”

This made participation in international projects and seminars held by the Council of Europe an inspiration for regional education systems in Russia. Here are some notable examples.

It has been shown that the Far East of Russia, particularly the Primorie and Khabarovsk regions, have actively participated in the international projects of the Council of Europe integrating them in their own programmes of regional and international (across the border) cooperation. Documents of the seminars and meetings of experts have made a dramatic impact on history teaching in the region, have aroused enthusiasm among history teachers and provided them with a wide range of different perspectives, educational concepts and illustrative materials. Teachers have been informed on the use of advanced methods of history teaching and, over the seven years, many concepts and projects have been put into practice.

New programmes and textbooks on the history of the Far East have been prepared and published in the Khabarovsk region, namely, “The land you live in”, educational aids for primary schools, “History of the Far East: the Middle Ages”, teaching materials for 6-7<sup>th</sup> and 8-9<sup>th</sup> grades. Annual regional and international conferences have been held and collected papers and recommendations on teaching methods have been published, including “Culture as a goal and meaning of history teaching at secondary schools” (2003), “Secondary education in a multicultural environment” (2004), “Pedagogy in border territories” (2005). Professor Olga Strelova devised a number of specialised courses for teacher training universities: “Multiperspective approach in secondary school history teaching,” “Image of the other and ourselves in teaching

history”, “General approaches in the development and use of national and regional history components in school courses”, and others.

The Primorie effort has resulted in the development of:

- new in-service training programmes for history teachers on “Teaching history in a multicultural environment: methodological aspects” (83 hours), including a section on the Council of Europe, Euroclio, the International Society for Educational Information (Tokyo), the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Braunschweig) and other international organisations involved in history teaching in school, as well as on international projects aimed at improving history teaching;
- courses on “History and culture of the Asia Pacific region” (82 hours);
- elective courses (34 hours) “History and culture of China”, “History and culture of Korea”, “History and culture of Canada”.

New textbooks published in the region include: “History and culture of Japan in documents and illustrations”, which received a letter of commendation from the Governor of Primorie; and “History of the Russian Primorie region”, which was awarded a Smaller Gold Medal at the “Textbooks of Siberia 2004” international exhibition. On the request of Japan, and with the aim of promoting good neighbourly relations, friendship and mutual understanding, the rights to translate and publish this textbook in Japan were granted to the Akashi Seton publishing house. Two more entries in the list of recent publications were: “Civic education in the west and the east”; and “History teaching in East Asia: Teachers-scholars dialogue.” The textbooks “History and culture of Korea in documents and illustrations” (the Republic of Korea and Korean People’s Democratic Republic) and “History and culture of Canada in documents and illustrations” have been prepared for publication with “History and culture of China in documents and illustrations” underway.

To promote understanding between experts of neighbouring countries, an international conference on teaching history of bordering states was held in Vladivostok. For the same purpose, Primorie teachers familiarised themselves with foreign teaching practices while on an exchange to Japan and China.

There has been an exchange of history textbooks and training aids throughout the Russian Federation. The Primorie In-Service Teacher Training Institute has set up a library for multicultural education.

School history teachers have had a chance to work with experts from consulates general, diplomatic missions, the Japanese and Korean centres, Ombudsman’s Office in Vladivostok and non-governmental organisations. Thus, the Consulate General of Japan in Vladivostok held several master classes on the principles and history of kimono design, tea ceremony etc., while the Korean Centre supplied Korean traditional dress, videos on Korea and music records for educational purposes.



Acting on the directive of the Governor of Primorie, education authorities started to work out a law on national and regional components in education standards that would incorporate principles of multicultural education. The Primorie Forum on Educational Initiatives has carried out many proposals put forth during the seminars of the Council of Europe.

The philosophy of the Council of Europe's projects has also been used in extracurricular activities. For example, the "Ocean" All-Russian youth centre holds annual competitions on the culture and history of the Far East, Primorie, and the Asia-Pacific region while the Institute of History and Philosophy in the Far East State University holds "Budding Orientalist" competitions.

School students have devised a number of guided tours: "The Japanese in Vladivostok," "The State of Bohai" and others; they also make good use of the access to history web sites.

The Sochi Multicultural College (founded in 2000) provides another example of a successful implementation of the projects based on the principles of multiculturalism and multiperspectivity. Situated by the Black Sea, in one of the most ethnically diverse regions of the North Caucasus, it trains teachers to work in a highly complex ethnic environment comprising over a hundred ethnic groups.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and local educational authorities are currently working out plans for a textbook on the history of that multiethnic region, employing the experience gained during the implementation of the "Tbilisi Initiative" and the "Black Sea Initiative on History".

## **Appendix**

List of activities organised in the framework of cooperation with the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation within bilateral and regional cooperation programmes from 1996 to 2006

### **1996**

Conference on the “Reform of history teaching in schools”, Suzdal  
12 – 14 December 1996

### **1997**

Seminar on “Goals, curriculum balance and teaching methods in history teaching in secondary schools of the Russian Federation”, St. Petersburg  
26 – 28 May 1997

Seminar on “Teaching national history in the Russian Federation: the balance between local, regional and national history in a multinational State”, Novgorod the Great  
10 – 12 November 1997

### **1998**

Seminar on “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation”, Ekaterinburg  
30 March – 1 April 1998

Seminar on “In-service training of history teachers”, Perm  
3 April 1998

Seminar on “The preparation, publication and use of new history textbooks and teaching resources”, Arkhangelsk  
29 June - 1 July 1998

Seminar on “The teaching of history in multicultural societies and border areas”, Khabarovsk  
21 – 23 September 1998

### **1999**

National Stocktaking Conference on “The reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation”, St. Petersburg  
11 – 13 March 1999

Seminar on “The reform of history teaching in the Russian Federation”, Kazan  
12 April 1999

Seminar on “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in the Russian Federation and their evaluation”, Nizhny Novgorod  
15 – 17 April 1999

Seminar on “New history textbooks and teaching resources: aims, preparation and use in the classroom”, Petrozavodsk  
17 – 19 June 1999

Follow-up Meeting to the Seminar on "Teaching history in multicultural societies and border areas", St. Petersburg  
21 – 22 June 1999

Seminar on “Standards for history teaching for secondary schools: present situation and future developments”, Irkoutsk  
16 – 18 September 1999

Meeting of experts on “Future cooperation with the Russian Federation within the programme on the reform of history teaching”, St. Petersburg  
23 – 24 November 1999

## **2000**

Seminar on “The preparation of a new generation of history textbooks for secondary schools: approaches, prospects and systems of evaluation”, Yaroslavl  
10 – 12 April 2000

Seminar on “New methods in teaching history in present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation”, Volgograd  
19 – 21 June 2000

Seminar on “New approaches in teaching history in secondary schools in a regional context”, within the “Tbilisi Initiative” project, Kislovodsk  
13 – 15 September 2000

Meeting of experts on “Future cooperation with the Russian Federation within the programme on the reform of history teaching”, Moscow  
4 December 2000

## **2001**

Meeting of experts on “History education and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)”, Moscow  
5 – 7 April 2001

Seminar on “History teaching in secondary schools: teacher training and history textbooks”, Dombay, the Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya  
23 – 24 April 2001

Seminar on “New approaches in the preparation and publication of history textbooks in the Russian Federation”, Vladivostok  
21 – 23 May 2001

Seminar on “How history teaching can strengthen reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance in present-day society”, Nalchik, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria  
5 – 6 October 2001

## **2002**

Seminar on “Interpretation of historical facts when teaching history in secondary schools”, Elista, the Republic of Kalmikiya  
26 – 27 April 2002

Seminar on “New approaches for the assessment of pupils’ knowledge and skills in history at secondary level in the Russian Federation”, Samara  
28 – 30 June 2002

Seminar on “New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for secondary schools in the Russian Federation”, Kaluga  
23 – 25 September 2002

Meeting of experts on the follow-up to the “Tbilisi Initiative”, Moscow  
11 – 13 November 2002

Training seminar for history teachers from Chechnya, Kislovodsk  
18 – 19 November 2002

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

## **2003**

National Stocktaking Conference on History Teaching in the Russian Federation, St. Petersburg  
20 – 22 March 2003

Seminar on “The initial training of history teachers in the Russian Federation”  
Ulan-Ude, the Republic of Buryatia  
20 – 22 October 2003

## **2004**

Seminar on “The preparation of new history textbooks in the Russian Federation”, Moscow  
26 – 28 April 2004

Final Conference on the Black Sea Initiative on History, Sochi  
28 – 29 September 2004

Seminar on “The preparation of new textbooks on regional history in the Russian Federation”, Moscow  
8 – 9 December 2004

## **2005**

Seminar on “How to reflect diversity and inter-cultural dialogue in textbooks on regional history”, Astrakhan  
25 – 27 April 2005

Interdisciplinary Seminar on “Intercultural dialogue through education: history teaching, languages policies, teaching about historical and cultural basis of world religions”, Yakutsk  
19 – 20 May 2005

Seminar on “New interactive methods in teaching world and national history in multicultural context”, Pyatigorsk  
23 – 25 June 2005

Seminar on “How initial training of history teachers should prepare them to work in a multicultural context”, Tomsk  
29 September – 1 October 2005

Seminar on “New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on regional history for present-day schools in the Russian Federation”, Moscow  
19 – 20 December 2005

## **2006**

Seminar on “New approaches in teaching about conflicts in school history”, Moscow  
25 – 26 April 2006

Seminar on “Teaching history in multicultural context: how to integrate mechanisms of intercultural dialogue in school history teaching”, St. Petersburg  
23 – 24 June 2006

Seminar on “How to respect a balance in teaching regional, national and world history”, Moscow  
6 – 7 November 2006

Final Conference on “Intercultural dialogue through education: history teaching, languages policies, teaching about historical and cultural basis of world religions”, Moscow  
9 – 10 November 2006