

Newsletter education

No. 12 – October 2001

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This edition of the Education Newsletter focusses on some of the core work of the Council of Europe, and illustrates clearly the continuing need for our value-based approach to education development.

History teaching continues to present particular challenges and, at the dawn of a new century, this is a particularly appropriate time to look at what messages about the complex history of the last century we wish to convey, and how they are to be transmitted. The project on “learning and teaching about the history of Europe of the 20th century” doesn’t provide all the answers but, as the article on the final conference on page 2 illustrates, it does point to certain directions which could be usefully followed.

Our special pull-out section focusses on the European Year of Languages (EYL), an initiative of the Council of Europe organised jointly with the European Union (page 5). The wealth of experience that has been acquired over three decades of work on promoting linguistic diversity is drawn together in this celebration of European plurilingualism, with our common linguistic heritage of 225 indigenous languages. The main goal of the EYL is to promote and help overcome barriers to language learning. Europe needs plurilingual citizens, and learning new languages cannot be the privilege of a few. The EYL provides material showing the advantages of language learning, and illustrating how languages can be learned at all stages of life. The clear message is that

our education systems need to adapt and do more to develop this vital resource – and many tools are available to help them.

At the Council of Europe, an organisation now with 43 member states, it is self-evident that languages are a source of wealth, yet events in former Yugoslavia – and especially recent events in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” – remind us that language can also be a primary source of conflict. Helping find appropriate solutions to complex issues of language rights and language policy is central to our mission in Strasbourg, and it is vital that we encourage language learning as a source of mutual enrichment. Making the right decisions in this policy area now in the countries of former Yugoslavia and elsewhere will be a determining factor for stability and peace in the future. The article on higher education in Serbia (page 9) illustrates that we are currently at a crossroads: our support is needed to help Serbia and neighbouring states move forward in the right direction. Modest investment into our work in education regeneration now could save enormous resources – and lives – in the future.

Gabriele Mazza

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Final conference for the project “Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century”

The project “Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century” is the fruit of four years’ work carried out under the aegis of the Council of Europe’s Council for Cultural Co-operation and is aimed at helping teachers to find ways of presenting 20th century history from new angles, especially as this complex, war-stricken period is one that is often perceived as difficult to teach. It centres on theme-based and methodological “teaching packs” (see box) and uses the languages of the century, ranging from images to cinema and the computer, to explore the period’s chequered history, from the emancipation of women to the crimes and lies associated with totalitarian regimes. A far cry from the lecture theatre and peremptory statements of fact, it encourages students to question history as they discover it, and also teaches them to be on the lookout for traps and manipulation.

Meeting at the Haus der Geschichte (House of History museum) in the German city of Bonn from 22 to 24 March, the project designers, experts and members of the CDCC and of the various working groups, compared the finished teaching packs with current needs in respect of history teaching in Europe. The Haus der Geschichte provided the ideal setting as an interactive museum where visitors progress along a path lined with everyday or symbolic pictures, films and objects that retrace 50 years of German history. It is a perfect illustration of how it is possible to give history teaching and the presentation of history a new lease of life by placing the visitor amidst surroundings that will trigger dialogue and emotions rather than bare statements of fact.

The language of history and its meaning

The Bonn conference alternated plenary working sessions with smaller workshops devoted to detailed presentations

of the teaching packs. Participants were initially encouraged to reflect on history in terms of its content and to decipher its structure. In the wake of the 20th century, when facts were so often disguised and “re-arranged” for political or nationalist purposes by all kinds of propaganda made easier by modern sound and image technologies, teachers have a duty to warn their students that history can also lie, conceal and manipulate. From the 1939 German-Soviet Pact, for a long time presented in the Soviet Union as a defence against bourgeois regimes rather than an aggressive agreement for dividing up Europe, to the unmitigated glorification of Yugoslav partisans between 1941 and 1944, communist regimes have done a particularly good job of re-writing history in their favour. As a result, present-day students studying this period of the past, notably in the countries that succeeded the former “blocs” of countries, need to know not only the facts but also how these facts were presented. While in itself information technology can be an excellent teaching aid, it increases the risk of falsification, so that the problem of the origin and authenticity of source material is now all the more acute. For all these reasons, it is essential that history teaching should include a critical study of the actual concept of history and historiography. The project encourages students to think about the “hows and whys” of both their distant and their immediate history. It also alerts them to the fact that the silences in history, seen as the “blank spots”, sometimes say far more about what really happened at a particular time than all the rumblings of gunfire.

Emotions and encounters: keys for discovery

How, then, can we make sure that students are aware of these complex processes and yet acquire all the knowledge of history they need, when the classroom is the only place that this may be done? That is why the Council of Europe’s project is so important and why, on the basis of

new teaching methods, it sets out to promote an approach to history that is not only critical and methodical but also sufficiently “attractive” to win the support of students even once they have left school. Above all, history is brought alive through the use of first-hand accounts, dialogue, emotions, and confrontations with the past, which are a far cry from the traditional textbook approach that leaves no room for discussion and reflection. In Israel, for example, teaching of the Holocaust centres on conjuring up the victims and torturers from this tragic period and encourages the children to wonder what their own attitudes and fate would have been had they been alive at that time. In order to introduce students to complex events in history such as the Treaties of Westphalia or the Treaty of Versailles, schools in several European countries have them acting out roles so that they can acquire a feel of what it must have been like to be one of the treaty negotiators. The Council of Europe’s project copies and develops this approach and suggests new ways in which teachers can enable their students to experience history for themselves. For example, by presenting the life and fate of an actress or female factory worker, the project brings them alive as a comment on the history of women in the 20th century. Old films, photographs and posters, backed up by comments from the teacher, are used as aids to teach children about past events and reveal the attitudes of people living at that time. Similarly, on-line and off-line IT tools can be used to bring a past period or theme alive by providing access to authentic or fictional images, audio documents and texts, as well as links to further information or other points of view. In addition, through being taught how to master if not the sources then at least how history is represented on the Internet, students learn that the history presented is above all history seen through the eyes of whoever designed the different programmes they consult.

In other words, computers are one of a range of different tools, and while they may be powerful communicators they are certainly not to be regarded as a source of absolute truth.

Challenges for the future

“Ready-to-use” and up-to-date, the project on the history of the 20th century now has to establish itself in the education sphere, precisely at a time when, as we embark on a new century, we are reminded that the manipulation and falsification of history did not stop in 1989. The “historicising” explanations given for the tension and wars in south-east Europe, the way in which all European countries celebrate, commemorate or forget their recent history, or, quite simply, the flood of information and claims to a somewhat dubious historic truth that circulate on the Internet are an illustration of the need for interpretation tools that will help young Europeans understand not only their past, but also how it is portrayed and how it affects both the present and the future. As Robert Stradling, author of the teachers’ handbook, pointed out, the task will not

necessarily be an easy one, especially as there are countries that tend to neglect history teaching, either because of a lack of funding or staff or because they support the dangerous assertion that it is not by studying history that students will find a good job.

The belief that science and technology are all-powerful can undermine the role of history, as journalist Michel Meyer pointed out, even though, on the contrary, history can place the present “race for progress” in a humanist context, retracing how it has developed, its consequences, and its implications. The desire to re-design history syllabuses can also cause an uproar. This is currently the case in Italy, where people are at one another’s throats as the country tries to decide whether or not to reduce the number of hours of Italian history taught in middle and upper secondary schools in favour of a more comprehensive presentation of the history of humanity. Against the background of all these present and future challenges, and the challenge of reconciling young people with school-based education despite the fact that they are bombarded from

all sides with all kinds of media and “historical” facts, the project, if it is to succeed, now has to establish itself in member states’ education programmes. Owing to the interest shown in it by the European Union, and the favourable response from the education authorities in many countries, there is cause to hope that the project will not only come to influence European school curricula but will also become an integral part of history teaching and teacher training so that teachers and students alike will have access to it and will be able to consult the project publications both on paper and in electronic format. ■



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“20th century history”: project methods and themes

The Council of Europe’s project consists of a series of publications available in paper and electronic format. It provides teachers with suggestions for research subjects and themes for lessons and presents a whole series of new methods for teaching history. It also provides elements that will enable teachers to compare their initial and in-service training, and their country’s history syllabuses, with those of other European countries.

The project’s “nucleus” is the handbook entitled *Teaching 20th century European history*, which has been produced by British historian Robert Stradling with the aim of helping teachers to make their lessons more “dynamic” and incorporate new methods ranging from critical readings of the past to the search for source material hitherto rarely used in the classroom, such as personal first-hand accounts, the “oral memory”, audiovisual techniques and field trips.

Four books deal each with a specific theme: *Teaching about the Holocaust in the 21st century*, by Jean-Michel Lecomte, *Teaching 20th century women’s history*, by Ruth Tudor, *Europe on-screen – cinema and the teaching of history*, by Dominique Chansel, and *The European home: representations of 20th century Europe in history textbooks*, by Falk Pingel. In addition, three booklets have been drawn up following specialist seminars on the topics of the misuse of history, the introduction of a pluralist and tolerant approach to history teaching, and the challenges to history teaching in the context of communications and information technology.

Launching of an International Association for European Studies

On 8-9 June 2001 the University of Surrey at Guildford (UK) hosted the launching meeting of an International Association for European Studies (IAES).

The Association is an outcome of the CC-HER Project on European Studies for Democratic Citizen-ship aimed at promoting the teaching and research in European Studies in higher education, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. The IAES is an initiative of a group of senior academics, which have already been actively involved in the original work programme. The aim of the Association is to further the objectives outlined in the Recommendation No. R (2000) 24 of the Committee of Ministers on the Development of European Studies for Democratic Citizenship adopted in December 2000.

It is functioning as an ONG to also give advise on course design, quality

assurance and the validation of university programmes in European Studies.

The meeting adopted a Constitution, elected an Executive Committee and discussed a framework for further activities. For practical reasons IAES will be registered in England and at a later stage will apply for consultative status with the Council of Europe. The initial group involves representatives from some EU countries (France, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom) and from Central and South-East Europe (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Turkey).

It is intended that the IAES should operate in conjunction with the European Studies Open Academic Network, centred in Sofia and regrouping a number of universities in Central and South-East Europe, which was also established as an outcome of the Council of Europe's project on

European Studies. IAES will seek to develop links with other European Studies related organizations such as ECSA (European Community Studies Association based in Brussels), and the Council of European Studies in the USA. In Britain it will be in close touch with the Standing Conference of Heads of European Studies whose past Chairman, Professor Christopher Flood (University of Surrey) has been elected President of the IAES. ■



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History teaching in secondary schools: teacher training and history textbooks

The Seminar took place in Dombay, in the Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya, on 23-24 April. The President of the Republic, Mr Vladimir SEMYONOV, took part in the official dinner which served as the opening of the seminar. The seminar was opened by Ms Alla Afanasyeva, Minister of Education.

The importance which the different republics of the North Caucasus attach to the work on the preparation and publication of new history textbooks and the initial and in-service training of history teachers was clearly demonstrated by the high level of participation: the Ministers of Education of Karachaevo-Cherkesskaya and Chechnya and the Deputy Minister of Education of Kabardine-Balkyria. The Federal Ministry of Education also

supported this seminar and demonstrated this by chairing the whole meeting.

All the participants were interested in the progress being made in "The Tbilisi Initiative" for the preparation and publication of a joint Caucasian history textbook by teams of authors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation. They found the idea behind the initiative relevant to their situation and suggested that a teaching pack on the peoples of the Northern Caucasus would be useful for all the Republics and be a practical outcome of our joint work. This seminar could contribute to stability in the region and the Minister of Education of Chechnya made a strong plea for help for the training of history teachers in his Republic.

So were do we go next? The Deputy Minister of Education of Kabardine-Balkyria reiterated his invitation to hold a seminar in his Republic. He had already made the invitation during the seminar on "New approaches in teaching history in secondary schools in a regional context" (Kislovodsk, Russian Federation, September 2000). ■



Contact:

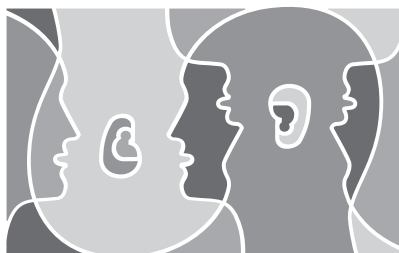
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Languages open many doors

Thousands of doors to improved communication and mutual understanding have been opened, and will be opened, through activities intended to stimulate people to learn languages and, at the same time, to celebrate and promote linguistic diversity as an essential part of our common European heritage.



European Year of Languages 2001

“Languages open doors” and “Europe – a wealth of languages” are the slogans of the European Year of Languages (EYL), which was launched in Lund on 18-20 February and will be concluded in Brussels on 7-8 December.

The European Year of Languages is a Council of Europe initiative which reflects its pioneering efforts to promote and support language learning over three decades. The Year is being organised with the European Union and a number of joint activities are in progress. The common goal is summarised in the first two lines of the Council of Europe/European Union booklet *How you can learn languages*:

“Learning new languages takes time and effort. But everybody can do it and it’s well worth it”.

The message is: language learning not only improves career prospects but opens up cultural horizons; it increases possibilities for meeting new people and understanding different ways of thinking and acting.

Official launch of EYL in Lund

“The ability to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries is a fundamental skill for democratic citizenship in our multicultural societies”, Council of Europe Secretary-General Walter Schwimmer told the 400 participants from 45 countries attending the EYL launch in Lund.

The Secretary General outlined some of the actions currently being taken by the Organisation to safeguard and promote linguistic diversity. He stressed the increasing importance of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: both legal instruments “supplement the language-related rights laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. The Charter has now been ratified by 14 member states and signed by 13 others (Russia and Armenia signed, and Spain, Slovenia, the UK and Austria ratified during the EYL).

Mr Schwimmer drew attention to a new Council of Europe initiative for the Year of Languages – the European Language Portfolio. This is a personal document in which people of all ages can show their competence in different languages and their main contacts with other cultures. It includes a Language Passport where skills can be recorded in an internationally transparent manner using a common European system of levels developed by the Council of Europe. The Portfolio is also designed to provide guidance and support for language learning throughout life (see <http://culture.coe.int/portfolio>). It is

linked to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* which has been published in 2001 (Cambridge University Press and Editions Didier) and whose basic aim is to provide common definitions and criteria for language learning, teaching and assessment.

EYL launch in 45 states

The European Year of Languages was launched in 45 European countries between January and April. In most cases the launch event was opened by the Minister of Education or other senior government representative and well-known personalities lent their support to the campaign. A message of support from the Secretary General was delivered at national launches which ranged from festivals and exhibitions to seminars or round tables on language policy. The EYL launch in most countries featured prominently in the national press and audiovisual media. A video kit on EYL produced by the Council of Europe was widely used.

Some examples of media impact:

While it is not possible to cite every country a few examples will suffice to give an idea of the media impact of these events. In Sweden the national launch, which coincided with the European launch, was covered by no fewer than forty-five newspaper

articles and featured in three television programmes. In Hungary the launch was accompanied by twenty hours of television and radio coverage over two days. In Portugal, the launch took place at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon with several ministers and personalities addressing a 550-strong audience and was widely covered by television, radio and press.

The EYL launch in Portoroz, Slovenia was covered in 17 articles in newspapers and magazines, 10 interviews and 3 programmes on national TV, and 5 broadcasts by different radio stations. In Austria, the launching ceremony was covered in a news item on the national broadcasting company (ORF), in 18 articles in the national press and in a half-hour broadcast on the national radio's "Morgenjournal". In Bulgaria a press conference held by the Minister of Education and Science was followed by a national conference which was covered in 9 articles in the national press (plus several others in regional papers), 7 radio programmes and 4 television broadcasts.

A number of launches were associated with international seminars on language policy issues, such as the Council of Europe presidency event in Latvia which dealt with the situation of small languages in 21st century Europe. In the Czech Republic an international seminar was organised to introduce the European Language Portfolio to a number of countries, with a follow-up seminar in the Russian Federation for the remaining countries.

Adult language-learners' week

One of the highlights of EYL in the first half of the year was the Adult Language-Learners' week from 5-11 May. Activities were held simultaneously in 45 countries to promote lifelong language learning. They ranged from language-tasting lessons

in the main squares or theatres of capital cities, to language fairs in Reykjavik, Skopje, Vilnius and elsewhere, a "language bus" tour throughout Ireland, a travelling road show in Austria and well-targeted language programmes on television in the United Kingdom.

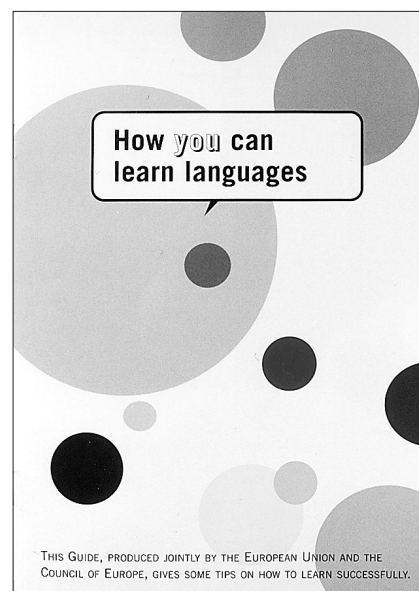
The Secretary General and the European Commissioner for Education and Culture strongly encouraged adults to take up the challenge of learning a new language. "Language learning is for everybody, whatever their age, background or job. Everyone can do it and everyone can benefit from the advantages it brings. Modern methods make learning enjoyable. It's never too late to start and we hope this week will inspire adults all over Europe to take the first step", they said.

Guide for Adult Learners

To mark this unique occasion, the Council of Europe and the European Union produced a guide with practical tips on how to study languages successfully. It is a short, attractive and practical guide on "How you can learn languages" and has been translated into the languages of many member states.

The new guide has been widely distributed and was freely available, for instance, on the Council of Europe's EYL stand at the European Parliament building in Strasbourg, which was visited by some 36,000 people on its "open day" last May.

"Learning a new language takes time and effort, but everybody can do it and it's well worth a try. Even if it's only a few words, you'll get a warmer welcome when you travel on holiday or business. And if you persevere, you'll find new doors opening all the time: you'll meet new people and new ways of thinking, perhaps improve your career prospects. And you'll get



*"How you can learn languages"
(cover of the brochure jointly produced for the
"European Adult Language Learners' Week"
by the Council of Europe
and the European Union; April 2001)*

a real feeling of achievement". These are the guidebook's opening words.

If you decide to learn a language, the guidebook suggests you first ask yourself which is the method that suits you best:

- quickly and intensively, or over a long period of time?
- with friends in a group, or on your own?
- with a private teacher, distance learning or self-study books and teaching aids?
- in your country of residence, or abroad (there are so many intensive courses for foreigners in most countries)?

And here are some of the guidebook's helpful tips for learners:

- don't try to learn everything at once, set yourself realistic targets and go at your own pace;
- be open to new ways of learning (new methods and new technology);
- use every opportunity that comes along to communicate in the target language;
- don't be afraid to make mistakes: what matters is getting your message across;

Learning new languages takes time and effort.
But everybody can do it, and it's well worth it.

Even if it's only a few words, you'll get a warmer welcome when you travel on holiday or business. And if you persevere, you'll find new doors opening all the time: you'll meet new people and new ways of thinking, perhaps improve your career prospects. And you'll get a real feeling of achievement.

What is more, Europe is a great place to learn languages, with so many language communities and so many cultures living close together.

**Millions of ordinary people speak foreign languages.
But lots of people think they couldn't do it themselves.**

HE WAS FANTASTIC
I WANTED TO WRITE
TO HIM IN PORTUGUESE.
THAT'S WHY I STARTED
A COURSE

**"I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO LEARN
LANGUAGES AND I'M TOO OLD NOW"**

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN. PEOPLE OFTEN SAY THAT ONLY CHILDREN CAN PICK UP LANGUAGES QUICKLY. NOT TRUE, ADULTS ALSO ENJOY LEARNING AND ARE VERY SUCCESSFUL.

**"IT WOULD TAKE YEARS TO LEARN
ALL THE WORDS AND GRAMMAR"**

YOU DON'T NEED TO LEARN IT ALL – YOU CAN START COMMUNICATING IN A LANGUAGE WITH JUST A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING A BIT AT A TIME.

"I WAS HOPELESS AT LANGUAGES WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL"

LOTS OF PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T DO WELL AT SCHOOL LEARN LANGUAGES LATER. MODERN METHODS ARE ENJOYABLE AND HELP YOU COMMUNICATE AND ENJOY USING THE LANGUAGE.

**"I don't know where to start"
Read on for some good advice!**

"I GET EMBARRASSED IF I MAKE A LOT OF MISTAKES"

THERE'S NO NEED TO BE. MAKING MISTAKES IS PART OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE WILL MAKE ALLOWANCES, SO DON'T WORRY. JUST TRY!

"ENGLISH IS ALL YOU NEED THESE DAYS"

ENGLISH CAN BE HELPFUL, BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. YOU'LL UNDERSTAND PEOPLE, AND WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU, MUCH BETTER IF YOU KNOW SOME OF THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.

*"How you can learn languages"
Brochure, jointly produced
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe (April 2001)*

- reading and listening are very important: the more you listen the better you'll speak, the more you read the better you'll write;
- read and listen to texts where the language is used naturally: newspapers, radio, TV;
- remember you don't have to understand every word to get the gist (you need to know just the most common words to communicate in a foreign language);
- practise speaking as much as you can – talk to friends, fellow-students, foreigners you meet, etc;
- try to find opportunities to express simple ideas in writing – sending e-mails, postcards or letters to friends, etc;
- most learners never achieve a perfect accent in a foreign language: it doesn't matter as long as people understand.

**The text of the Guide in a number of
languages can be found on the web sites**
<http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL>
and www.eurolang2001.org

European Day of Languages

A particular day is being dedicated to languages throughout all Europe for

the first time ever – on 26 September. Most countries are holding activities on that day to focus the attention of the general public once again on the aims of the Year. The following small

*Opening screen
of the Council of Europe EYL website
(links to the EYL event database, the "European
Language Portfolio" and other related sites)*



European Year of Languages 2001

The European Year of Languages 2001

In 2001, the entire continent is celebrating the "European Year of Languages" (EYL). It is an open invitation to learn other languages and encounter other cultures.

The EYL is organised jointly by the [Council of Europe](#) and the [European Union](#). A wide range of activities are being organised in the 45 participating countries – by non-governmental organisations, local initiatives and individual citizens.

This website provides updates and background material on EYL-related developments all over the continent:

- [What's new?](#)
- [Data base for the calendar of events in 2001](#)
- [What is the EYL 2001 and how can you participate?](#)
- [Background material and resources](#)
- [National EYL activities](#)
- [The EYL programme at international level](#)
- [Related links](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

sample is illustrative of the Day: rallies, competitions and award ceremonies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland, Lithuania), festivals (Moldova, Monaco), “language streets” (Lithuania, Turkey), language bus (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), “open-door” events and “taster” classes (Portugal, Ukraine, Slovak Republic), exhibitions (Belarus, Denmark, Iceland, Turkey), theatrical performances and concerts (Spain, Croatia, Ireland), language learning webcast (United Kingdom), the launch of a postage stamp (Portugal) and use of a special postmark (Iceland).

Language policy issues are being highlighted in a number of countries on that day in an effort to involve the public, for example: the role of parents in language learning (Albania); early start to language learning (Belgium, Spain); linguistic diversity and plurilingualism (France, Moldova). Particular attention is being paid to media coverage in all countries (Monaco has a “Day of foreign press”).

On the 26 September the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly hosted a presentation by the world-renowned expert Professor David Crystal on the challenge to linguistic diversity in Europe.

The Modern Languages Division launched a game on its website <http://culture.coe.int/AE/2001EYL> designed to draw attention to linguistic diversity linked to the EYL poster containing greetings in the official languages of the 45 states participating in the EYL.

Information about the many events organised in the forty five participating countries throughout the Year, including those specifically planned for the Day, can be found in the database on the Council of Europe website <http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL>.

A wealth of languages

Did you know?

- There are between 6000 and 7000 languages in the world – spoken by six billion people divided into 189 independent states.
- There are well over 200 indigenous languages in Europe – roughly 3 % and 4 % of the world’s total.
- Most of the world’s languages are spoken in Asia, India, Africa and South America.
- At least half of the world’s population are bilingual or plurilingual to some degree, i.e. they speak two or more languages.
- No language is in itself more difficult than any other – all children, in fact, learn their mother tongue in the same natural way and with equal ease.
- Many languages have 50,000 words or more, but individual speakers normally know and use only a fraction of the total vocabulary: in everyday conversation people use the same few hundred words.
- Languages are constantly in contact with each other and affect each other in many ways: English borrowed words and expressions from many other languages in the past, European languages are now borrowing many words from English.
- Languages are related to each other like the members of a family. Most European languages belong to the large Indo-European family.
- Most European languages belong to three broad groups: Germanic, Romance and Slavic.
- The Germanic family of languages includes Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic, German, Dutch, English and Yiddish, among others. The Romance languages include Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, among others. The Slavic languages include Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and others.
- Most European languages use the Latin alphabet. Some Slavonic languages use the Cyrillic alphabet. Greek, Armenian, Georgian and Yiddish have their own alphabet.
- The mother tongues spoken by most people in Europe are Russian, German, English, French and Italian, in that order.
- The non-European languages most widely used on the European territory are Arabic, Chinese and Hindi, each with its own writing system.

The above is an extract from “The celebration of linguistic diversity”, a text produced by the Council of Europe which also includes a number of informative and entertaining websites. This text is available in a number of languages on the Council of Europe EYL website <http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL>.

European Year of Languages information:

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Directorate-General
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Higher education in Serbia: forward to Europe or back to the past?

The higher education community in Serbia suffered doubly over the past decade: from the vagaries of a fundamentally undemocratic regime and from international isolation. A small group launched the Alternative Academic Education Network (AAEN) that offered a framework for teaching courses not controlled by state authorities. Many of the academics active in the AAEN had in fact been dismissed in the wake of their opposition to the 1998 Law on Universities. The AAEN also managed to maintain active links abroad, including with the Council of Europe and the Association of European Universities¹. AAEN representatives attended the plenary sessions of the CC-HER in both 1999 and 2000. It is worth noting that the situation in Serbia was considerably more difficult than in Montenegro.

The situation for higher education in Serbia started improving very soon after the ouster of Milošević on October 5. New rectors replaced the ones appointed by Milošević, and the new Minister, Professor Gašo Knežević, had been active in the AAEN. At the same time, the new university leadership and the new government started defining their priorities in bringing Serbia back as a member of the international academic family after 10 years. Already in December, a first meeting was held in Beograd, in which the Council of Europe, the CRE and other organizations and universities participated.

Another important step was the conference organized in Beograd on March 12-13, where more than 800 participants from all Serbian universities discussed higher education policies and reform in Europe.

Topics included the Bologna Process of higher education reform, autonomy, quality assurance, the recognition of qualifications, mobility, governance and – not least – student participation. This conference will now be followed up by focused seminars on specific topics.

The Serbian Parliament is about to adopt modifications that will do away with the worst excesses of the 1998 Law on Universities. However, a more thorough overhaul is needed. This work will begin right after summer, and the Council of Europe has offered its assistance.

Overall, there are good reasons for being optimistic with regard to the development of higher education in Serbia. The massive participation in the March conference testified to the need for breaking out of 10 years of isolation, and the high quality of the debate underlined that Serbia can rely on a mature civil society.

This is not to say that the road will be easy. The international partners can help in suggesting a direction, but the Serbian academic community will have to do the travelling. This community is made up of those who seize the present changes as a golden opportunity to catch up with developments elsewhere in Europe, and in particular with the Bologna Process, as well as of those who would like as little “interference” as possible. Therefore, autonomy is one of the most difficult issues. Serbian universities cannot remain an exception to the general trend toward greater accountability and quality control, within the bounds of academic freedom.

Another serious concern is teaching methods and the relationship between students and teachers. One of the most important functions of the Alternative Network has been to loosen up the hierarchical view most professors take of their students and

to try out alternatives to auditorium lectures where professors teach and students take notes.

Another discussion will be the make up of the higher education system, which today consists of four classical universities (Beograd, Kragujevac, Niš and Novi Sad) and one specialist institution (Beograd University of Arts). In order to carry out serious reforms, the central authorities of the universities will have to be strengthened, the status of faculties as independent legal entities should be reviewed and the setting up of some more specialized, non-university institutions will have to be considered. A particular issue concerns Beograd University, which has something like 85 000 students, and which could be broken up into several institutions.

One of the most positive aspects of the higher education reform in Serbia is the close cooperation between the international partners – in particular the Council of Europe and the European University Association. Individual countries, including Austria, France, Germany and Norway, are also offering assistance, and Serbia has now been included in the TEMPUS Programme. This, along with the clear will of the Ministry and a large part of the academic community to undertake often painful reform gives hope that while the road ahead will be long and winding, those travelling it will eventually reach their goal. ■



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1. The CRE - Association of European Universities – at the time. On March 31, 2001 the CRE and the Confederation of Rectors' Conferences of the European Union merged to become the EUA - European University Association.

2. http://www.aeen.edu.yu/info.php?info=univerzitet/konf_pismo

3. <http://culture.coe.fr/her/eng/bolognaprocess.htm>

Books in brief

European Year of Languages:

- Campaign Guide
- **Democratic citizenship, languages, diversity and human right** by Hugh Starkey – survey (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2001) 18
- **The relevance of language economics and education economics to language education policies: an introductory survey** by François Grin (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2001) 1

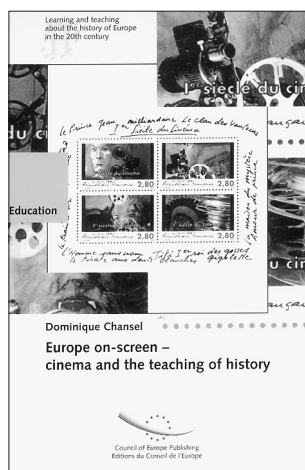
Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education. Structures and qualifications – reports, Higher Education and Research Division.

Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education. Application of the new information and communication technologies in lifelong learning – reports, Higher Education and Research Division

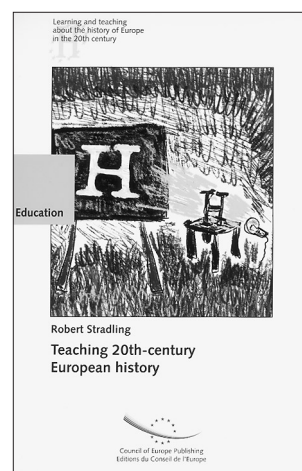
Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education. Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society – reports, Higher Education and Research Division.

Project on “Education for democratic citizenship” – Report of the final conference by Keith Forrester, Strasbourg 14-16 September 2000 (DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 41).

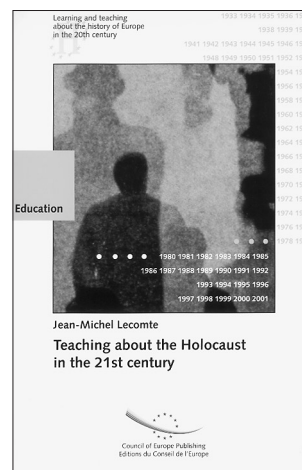
Europe on-screen – cinema and the teaching of history by Dominique Chansel comprises fact sheets on fifty films, illustrating four of the project’s themes – nationalism, women, immigration and human rights. It encourages teachers to exploit cinema as a source of 20th-century history and provides a pedagogical basis with which to do so. (217 pages ISBN 92-871-4531-8).



Teaching 20th-century European history, by Robert Stradling, is an innovative handbook on history education for history teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum designers and a curious public. The handbook covers teaching sensitive issues, “reading” visual archives, analysing “history” on television and the Internet and assessing the new technologies as well as the student’s own history textbook. (290 pages ISBN 92-871-4466-4).



Teaching about the Holocaust in the 21st century by Jean-Michel Lecomte. The rise of anti-Semitism in parts of Europe, the accessibility of “denial” Internet sites and the isolationist stand taken by certain European political leaders today are sufficient reasons for teaching the Holocaust. This guide, based on the work of widely recognised authors, plus first-hand accounts, offers teachers a body of knowledge for use in course planning. (129 pages ISBN 92-871-4537-7).



How to contact us

Come surf with us on <http://culture.coe.int> and have access to information on a wide range of Council of Europe activities and publications on education, culture and the cultural heritage. All Education Directorate officials can be contacted by fax (+33(0)3 88 41 27 88/27 06), by post (c/o DG IV, Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Council of Europe, 67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France) or e-mail (name.surname@coe.int).

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Calendar of events

May-December 2001

May

	European Adult Language-Learners' Week (5-11 May) How about you? Ever thought about learning a new language? Take an active part in this Week, get ideas from the booklet which is being distributed to all colleagues. Discover the European Year of Languages on the websites Modern Languages Division Council of Europe F-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex e-mail: decs-lang@coe.int Internet: http://culture.coe.int/lang 2001: European Year of Languages EYL websites: – Council of Europe: http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL – Joint European Commission / Council of Europe: www.eurolang2001.org
4-5, Sarajevo	2nd meeting of the stocktaking research group on EDC Policies in South East Europe (SEE). Contacts: Michela Cecchini and Mechthilde Fuhrer
4-8, Tbilisi	Second meeting of the working group for quality assurance in education in South Caucasus. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
5-9, Pristina	Consultative meetings on higher and general education legislation for Kosovo. Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
6-7, Sarajevo	Seminar on EDC: diversity project and policy development. Contacts: Michela Cecchini and Mechthilde Fuhrer
6-8, Ohrid, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Stability Pact – Teacher training seminar on "Teaching materials: controversial and sensitive issues, multiperspectivity". Contact: Alison Cardwell
17, Prague	Enlarged follow-up group to the Bologna Process. Contact: Sjur Bergan
18-19, Prague	Ministerial conference, Bologna Process. Contact: Sjur Bergan
18-19, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria	Stability Pact - Meeting of experts on "The preparation of the comparative study on the initial training of history teachers in SEE". Contact: Alison Cardwell
21-23, Vladivostok	Seminar on "new approaches in the preparation and publication of history textbooks in the Russian Federation". Contact: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko
21-23, Moscow	Co-ordination meeting on bilateral projects in education in the Russian Federation. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
28, Strasbourg	Working group on a standard-setting text for the heritage of European universities. Contact: Sjur Bergan and Nuria Sanz
June	
Date to be confirmed, Novi Sad	Seminar on quality assurance in higher education. Contact: David Crosier
30 may-2, Baku	2nd regional conference for quality assurance in education in South Caucasus. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
2-5, Riga	Annual meeting of the ENIC/NARIC network and ENIC Bureau. Contact: Sjur Bergan
5-6, Strasbourg	1st meeting of the Task-oriented group of experts on EDC policy development. Contacts: Michela Cecchini and Karin Völkner
6, Riga	2nd meeting of the Lisbon recognition Convention Committee. Contact: Sjur Bergan
7-9, University of Surrey, United Kingdom	Seminar on European studies for young teachers/researchers in SEE. Contact: Stefanka Hristoskova

7-10, Kirov	Seminar on in-service teacher training and quality assessment in the perspective of lifelong education. Contact: Jean-Pierre Titz
11-12, Strasbourg	CC-ED Bureau. Contacts: Jean-Pierre Titz and Carole Reich
13-16, Pristina	Meeting to explore language policy options for Kosovo. Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
15-17, Borowets, Bulgaria	1st training workshop for twinning of sites of citizenship in SEE. Contact: Mechthilde Fuhrer
18-19, Strasbourg	European workshop "Winds of change in the teaching profession". Contacts: Sjur Bergan and Jean-Pierre Titz
18-20, Pristina	Consultative meetings on higher and general education legislation for Kosovo. Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
21-22, Strasbourg	CC-HER Bureau. Contacts: Sjur Bergan and Villano Qiriaz
27-30, Coimbra	Regional seminar on the European Language Portfolio. Contact: Joseph Sheils/Johanna Panthier
28-13 July, various locations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Civitas/CoE teacher-training "Democracy and Human Rights Education". Contacts: David Crosier and Karin Völkner
29-6 July, Vladivostok	Meeting of the working group on the federalism in education in the Russian Federation: 3rd case-study: Primorskiy kraj. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
July	
2-3, Belgrade	Joint CoE/Unesco exploratory mission. Contact: Michela Cecchini
3-4, Strasbourg	Working party on lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge for higher education. Contact: Stefanka Hristoskova
7-14, Smoljan, Bulgaria	"The Jubilee of our Yestermorrow" within the "Classroom across Borders" project – Youth festival. Contact: Alida Matkovic
9, London	Meeting on the preparation of the Teaching Pack on the History of the Black Sea. Contact: Alison Cardwell
10, London	Experts meeting on "The Tbilisi Initiative". Contact: Alison Cardwell
11-13, Strasbourg	Meeting to finalise higher education legislation for Kosovo and to continue drafting the general education legislation. Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
August	
10, Pristina	Meeting to present the higher education legislation to the Interim Advisory Council (IAC). Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
2nd half of August, Pristina	Public information campaign on higher and general education legislation for Kosovo. Contact: Sarah Keating-Chetwynd
30-31, Brussels	Working group on Communication (EDC). Contact: Eleni Tsetsekou
31, Strasbourg	Stability Pact – Meeting with the co-ordinators of the history project. Contact: Alison Cardwell
31-1st September, Budapest	3rd meeting of the stocktaking research group on EDC Policies in SEE. Contact: Michela Cecchini
September	
Date to be confirmed, Tbilisi	Working group meeting on Georgian higher education Law. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
Date to be confirmed, Strasbourg	1st meeting of the writers of the all-European study on EDC policies. Contact: Karin Völkner

Date (3 days) between 4 and 10, Baku	Meeting of World Bank Education Strategy Group for Azerbaijan and draft law. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey	12-16 Donaueschingen	European Teachers' Seminar "History of Europe of the 20th Century through the media." Contact: Carole Reich
4-5, Strasbourg	Joint working party CC-HER/CC-ED. Contacts: James Wimberley and Jean-Pierre Titz	15-17, Paris	Final conference on the project Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education. Contact: Stefanka Hristoskova
7-9, Moscow	Meeting of the working group on Chechen Education law (Project V.e). Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey	15-17, Rotterdam	Conference on "Languages: promoting good practice". Contact: Johanna Panthier
8-11, Athens	Evaluation Seminar of the ESSSE project. Contact: Carole Reich	15-17, Moldova	Joint programme of co-operation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe to strengthen Democratic Stability in Moldova: seminar. Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko
12-15, Slatibor, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	EDC Seminar. Contact: Karin Völkner	16-17, Slovenia	National EDC dissemination seminar. Contact: Angela Garabagiu
13-17, Irkutsk	4th case-study on federalism in education in the Russian Federation: Irkutskij region. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey	22-24, Bucharest and Iasi	Stability Pact – Conference on the history textbooks. Contact: Alison Cardwell
26, European Day of Languages	- Game launched on the Council of Europe and events in the 45 members states: web site: http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL . Contact: Philia Thalgott	23-24, Andorra	National EDC coordinators meeting. Contact: Karin Völkner
28, Baku	Experts meeting on "The Tbilisi Initiative". Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko	26-30, Tbilisi	Contact meeting followed by a regional meeting on "the Tbilisi Initiative". Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko
28, Podgorica, Montenegro	Stability Pact – Second meeting of experts on "The preparation of the comparative study on the initial training of history teachers in SEE". Contact: Alison Cardwell	29-30, Sofia	Stability Pact – Seminar. Contact: Alison Cardwell
October		November/December	
Date to be confirmed, Moscow	1st meeting of the working group on strategic reform of education. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey	Date to be confirmed, Moscow or Chisinau, Romania or Moldova	Experts meeting on the Black Sea Initiative. Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko
Date to be confirmed, Djakovo, Kosovo	Experts meeting on "the development of new history curricula in Kosovo"; seminar on "active learning methods and enquiry-based learning for history educators". Contact: Alison Cardwell	Date to be confirmed, Brussels	ENIC Bureau and NARIC Advisory Board. Contact: Sjur Bergan
1-2, Strasbourg	24th meeting of the CC-ED. Contacts: Jean-Pierre Titz and Carole Reich	Date to be confirmed, Belgium	Informal meeting with the European Union Education Committee. Contacts: Sjur Bergan and Jean-Pierre Titz
1-6, Krasnodar	Chechen Teacher Training Seminar. Contact: Angela Garabagiu	December	
4-7, Varazdin, Croatia	2nd twinning training seminar in the framework of the "twinning of sites of citizenship in SEE scheme. Contact: Mechthilde Fuhrer	Date to be confirmed, Moscow	2nd meeting of the working group on strategic reform of education. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
5-6, Nalchik, Kabardina-Balkaria	Joint Programme with the European Commission in North Caucasus: seminar on "the training of history teachers". Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko	Date and place to be confirmed	2nd meeting of the joint working group on education policy and minorities in Moldova. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey
9-10, Birmingham	Conference on "language policy for a multilingual society". Contact: Joseph Sheils	5-8, Tampere	Annual conference of the European Association of International Education. Contact: Sjur Bergan
11-12, Strasbourg	CC-HER Plenary Session. Contacts: Sjur Bergan and Villano Qiriazzi	6-7, Strasbourg	Seminar on EDC policies and regulatory frameworks. Contacts: Karin Völkner and Angela Garabagiu
11-13, Piatigorsk	Seminar on the development of curricula. Contact: Johanna Panthier	7-8, Brussels	Closing event of the European Year of Languages. Contact: Philia Thalgott
18-20, Bled	Stability Pact - Seminar on "teaching the beginning of World War II". Contact: Alison Cardwell	13-15, Sarajevo	Stability Pact – Seminar followed by a meeting of the working group. Contact: Alison Cardwell
18-21, Chisinau	1st meeting of the joint working group on education policy and minorities in Moldova. Contact: Mary-Ann Hennessey	In-service training programme for educational staff: This year, the Council of Europe in association with 20 European countries organises 82 seminars on the following priorities: Education for democratic citizenship; European Year of Languages 2001; teaching history; impact of new Information technologies; school management and curriculum development, European dimension. Information concerning the 16 seminars is available on the internet http://culture.coe.int/teachertraining Click on "courses offered"	
22-24, The Hague	International Task Force meeting on the memory of Holocaust. Contact: Carole Reich		
22-28, Yerevan	Experts meeting on "the Tbilisi Initiative". Contacts: Alison Cardwell and Tatiana Milko		
25-26, Istanbul	International symposium on "Teaching Turkish as a foreign language in Europe". Contact: Alida Matkovic		
26-27, Irland	National EDC dissemination seminar. Contact: Karin Völkner		
November			
Date to be confirmed, Brussels	Working group on communication (EDC). Contact: Eleni Tsetsekou		
8-10, Hungary	Stability Pact – Seminar CE/EUROCLIO/Ministry of Education. Contact: Alison Cardwell		