

WHY DOES HISTORY EDUCATION MATTER?

Since its inception, and as stated in the European Cultural Convention, the Council of Europe recognised the importance of history as a basis for the education of the citizens of Europe.

History can be taught in ways which foster reconciliation within and between nations. However, in the current context of rising populism, xenophobia and nationalism, the risks of history being manipulated are significant and require additional action. If it is used as a tool to indoctrinate and manipulate pupils and students, history can be taught in ways which encourage prejudice, stereotypes, and biased thinking. In addition to fueling conflict and violence, this may have a negative impact on increasingly diverse European democracies striving to be inclusive.



“Given the risks of manipulating history, it is more important than ever to promote history teaching that helps to educate all young Europeans in democratic citizenship and contributes to the emergence of a common European sense of belonging”.

Alain Lamassoure, Chair of the Governing Board



**OBSERVATORY
ON HISTORY TEACHING
IN EUROPE**



The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member States, 27 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member States have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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**THE WAY HISTORY
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WHAT IS THE OBSERVATORY ON HISTORY TEACHING IN EUROPE?

The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) is a new Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement, which allows different countries to reinforce their co-operation on history education.

Through a series of regular and thematic reports, the Observatory provides an impartial overview of the state of history teaching in Europe and specialised analysis on particular topics. In addition, OHTE seeks to build up a Cooperation Platform of organisations and networks active in the field of history education.



HOW CAN THE OBSERVATORY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Fostered reconciliation within and between nations and greater unity between countries in Europe

European citizens are open to different perspectives and embrace democratic culture

Member States improve history education in line with the Council of Europe values and the most relevant research in the field

OHTE provides a comprehensive and reliable picture of the state of history teaching in Europe and stimulates debates

Reports

Cooperation Platform of exchange

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE OBSERVATORY:

- Set up in November 2020 at the initiative of the French Government.
- Founded by 17 member States* and is open for accession to other European countries. To enhance the coherence and relevance of its work and ensure a broader impact, the Observatory strives continuously to increase its membership.
- The Governing Board and the Scientific Advisory Council are the two statutory organs.
- The Secretariat is based in Strasbourg in the Council of Europe, Directorate of Democratic Participation.
- Builds on and supports the decades long work of the Council of Europe on history education.

*17 members: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, North Macedonia, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

1953

The first programme on history teaching focusing on the content of textbooks, continued until 1991.

1954

The European Cultural Convention (ETS 18) adopted in 1954, explicitly mentions the study of history.

1965

Between 1965-1991, work on the content of history teaching in schools results in the Recommendation (83) 4 on the "Promotion of an awareness of Europe in Secondary Schools".

1983

History educators from Western and Eastern Europe meet for the first time to share their views on history teaching (Brugge Symposium) as part of the project "New Europe" (1989- 1998).

1997

The project "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century" (1997-2001) culminates with the Recommendation 2001(15) on History Teaching in Twenty-First Century Europe. A key concept multiperspectivity is introduced.

2011

The Recommendation (2011) 6 on Intercultural Dialogue and the Image of the Other in History teaching is adopted as a result of an eponymous project (2006-2009).

2014

The project "Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines" (2010-2014) results in an innovative e-book for teachers and students.

2020

Adoption of The Recommendation (2020) 2 on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.

The Council of Europe amplifies its work on history education with a new intergovernmental programme "History Education for Democracy" and the establishment of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.

Council of Europe and History Education, a continuous commitment