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The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe

Report[1]
Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
Rapporteur: Mr Bertrand BOUYX, France, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Summary

In November 2020, 17 member States of the Council of Europe decided to establish the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe as an Enlarged Partial Agreement. The report welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to establish this new co-operation instrument, also giving a timely impetus to its long-standing intergovernmental programme on history education. Through synergy the activities of the Observatory and of the intergovernmental sector on history education can help member States of the Council of Europe to address the challenges for history education in the 21st century.

The clear definition of the Observatory's mandate, which excludes any wish to harmonise curricula in Europe, should be a reassurance to the remaining member States to recognise the added value of such a platform for exchange on policies and methodologies and to consider adhering to the Enlarged Partial Agreement in the near future.

The European Union could effectively contribute to the activities of the Observatory and of the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Europe by creating adequate programmes to fund innovative co-operation projects based on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and the guiding principles for history education, which had been developed by the Council of Europe.

1. Reference to committee: Doc. 14988, Reference 4483 of 27 January 2020.

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A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly emphasises that history education is of key importance to strengthen common values and promote a reflection on history thereby bringing people together rather than dividing them. Stimulating historical analysis and debate will help young people to acquire a critical understanding of the past with all its complexities and can provide the answers to critically understand the present.

2. On 12 November 2020, the Committee of Ministers established the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe and to date 17 member States have joined. The activities of the Observatory focus on producing regular reports on the state of history teaching in the participating member States, publishing thematic reports on specific topics, as well as organising annual conferences and events, thereby offering a knowledge-exchange platform for experts, policy makers and history education professionals.

3. The Assembly welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to establish this new co-operation instrument, also giving a timely impetus to its long-standing intergovernmental programme on history education. Through synergy, their combined activities can help member States to address the challenges for history education in the 21st century.

4. Over the past few years the Council of Europe has developed the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and the guiding principles for history education, with a set of models and methods to help teachers adapt them in the classroom. Combined, they can inspire and guide young people to develop attitudes of openness to cultural difference, respect and responsibility and to develop particular skills such as autonomous learning, analytical thinking, dialogue and argumentation including conflict resolution skills, which clearly intersect with competences that are needed to exercise democratic citizenship in society.

5. The Assembly holds that in increasingly diverse societies, it is crucial to learn about cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity and interactions to avoid a mono-cultural curriculum. Multiperspectivity is fundamental to understanding different standpoints which often result from a specific historical context. When analysed in the classroom and considered together they create a nuanced and deeper understanding of the historical dimension of any event.

6. Accordingly, the Assembly calls for the member States of the Council of Europe to:

6.1. join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe and fully benefit from this knowledge-exchange platform for experts, policy makers and history education professionals;

6.2. take an active part in the work of the intergovernmental sector on history education of the Council of Europe Directorate General of Democracy;

6.3. undertake a strategic policy review to incorporate the Council of Europe guiding principles for history education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in their education policies, and in particular:

6.3.1. concerning curricula and methodologies to:

6.3.1.1. develop flexibility of history curricula to provide more time and autonomy for teachers to move away from knowledge-based towards learner-centred and competence-based teaching;

6.3.1.2. introduce teaching of the complex history of democracy and develop democratic practices, attitudes and values in the classroom;

6.3.1.3. develop methodologies to stimulate critical thinking by learning to evaluate historical sources and make well informed judgements;

6.3.1.4. develop multiperspectivity in history education to analyse different standpoints that together create the historical dimension of any event;

6.3.1.5. introduce learning about cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and interactions to avoid a mono-cultural and one-sided curriculum;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 28 September 2021.

6.3.1.6. develop interactive pedagogies and co-operative learning in small groups which acknowledge cultural differences and multiple identities among learners in a class;

6.3.1.7. consider introducing sensitive and controversial issues to overcome prejudice and bias;

6.3.1.8. open up a European perspective in history education by identifying historical themes that are common in Europe and that could be considered from similar or different perspectives;

6.3.2. concerning measures to create a supportive and enabling environment for teachers and learners:

6.3.2.1. multiply opportunities for professional exchange and development among teachers and use different teaching resources and guidance – including the Council of Europe guiding principles – available in local languages;

6.3.2.2. include the “Competences for Democratic Culture” in teacher education and professional development;

6.3.2.3. bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education by encouraging partnerships with cultural institutions and other relevant partners outside schools (museums, archives, libraries, etc);

6.3.2.4. encourage the use of digital technologies in history education to promote collaborative learning as well as international co-operation with other schools;

6.3.2.5. guarantee free access to virtual learning environments, which give access to open educational resources.

7. While acknowledging the subsidiarity principle and independence of the European Union member States to decide freely on policies in education and history teaching, the Assembly would welcome the participation of the European Union in the activities of the Observatory and its support to co-operation programmes and innovative pilot projects for quality history education.

B. Draft recommendation[3]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution … (2021) "The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe", believes that history education is key to strengthening a sense of citizenship. Historical knowledge and critical understanding of political, social, cultural and economic systems and of their interaction are the basis of a more nuanced and mutually respectful debate, and of deeper understanding of the past and present, thus preparing young people for democracy.

2. The Assembly welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to establish the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, also giving a timely impetus to its long-standing intergovernmental programme on history education. Following this very positive momentum, the Assembly considers that it would be important to define in more detail how the activities of the Observatory would tie in with the ongoing work of the Council of Europe on history education (involving 47 member States), so that they are mutually reinforcing.

3. The Assembly emphasises that the Council of Europe guiding principles for history education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture are excellent guiding tools to be further promoted and broadly implemented in member States.

4. In this context, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

4.1. provide adequate support for the activities of the Council of Europe Education Department concerning history education to ensure good synergy with the activities of the Observatory and a long-term viability of the intergovernmental programme;

4.2. provide assistance to member States to review their education policies, and also to integrate the Council of Europe guiding principles for history education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture;

4.3. develop co-operation with the European Union, UNESCO and other relevant international organisations within the framework of the activities of the Observatory;

4.4. encourage co-operation between European professional associations and institutes active in history education, making full use of the networking platform provided by the Observatory;

4.5. invite those States parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) not yet members of the Enlarged partial agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe to join it.

3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 28 September 2021.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Bertrand Bouyx, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. Following an initiative of the French Presidency of the Council of Europe in May 2019, the Committee of Ministers' Delegates and the Council of Europe Secretariat (Directorate of Democratic Participation, Education Department) started working towards the creation of an Observatory on History Teaching in Europe. The motion for a resolution[4] which has launched the preparation of the present report refers to this initiative and emphasises that history teaching is of decisive importance to strengthening common values and promoting a history that brings people together rather than divides them. It also calls the Parliamentary Assembly "to contribute to the reflection on the configuration of this observatory, to monitor and evaluate its implementation, and to propose preferred orientations."

2. At the informal Conference of Ministers of Education which took place on 26 November 2019 in Paris, 23 member States of the Council of Europe signed the Paris Declaration[5] and endorsed the proposal to create the Observatory. Since March 2020, following consultations with the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice of the Council of Europe, the Rapporteur Group on education, culture, sport and the environment of the Committee of Ministers has prepared the draft statute in order to launch the Observatory during the Greek Presidency of the Council of Europe.

3. On 12 November 2020, the Committee of Ministers established the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe. Its activity will focus on producing regular reports (every 3-4 years) on the state of history teaching in the participating member States, publishing thematic reports on specific topics, as well as organising annual conferences and events, thereby offering a knowledge-exchange platform for experts, policy-makers and history teaching professionals.

4. The Observatory is supervised by the Governing Board, composed of 17 government-appointed representatives of the participating member States, that decides on the programme of activities and monitors its implementation. It is advised by the Scientific Advisory Council, composed of 11 independent highly qualified experts in the field of history education. The Governing Board met for the first time on 18-19 February 2021 and is currently developing the first medium-term programme of the Observatory. It aims to produce the first thematic report by autumn 2022 and the first regular report by autumn 2023.

5. The Parliamentary Assembly should contribute to this process by initiating a debate on history education, also with a view to promoting the guiding principles on Quality History Education in the 21st century developed by the Council of Europe[6] and to make those principles and guidance tangible with examples of good practice in different parts of Europe.

6. Beyond backing the establishment of the Observatory, the Assembly should encourage those member States which still have doubts to adhere to the Partial Agreement by raising awareness on the added value that the Observatory is intended to produce.

2. The challenges for history education in a wider context of democratic citizenship

7. The 21st century brought deep societal changes connected with information technologies, growing mobility and migration, as well as growing cultural and religious diversity. The challenge today is to find multiple ways to enable people, especially young people, to acquire knowledge and skills to act as democratic citizens in diverse and rapidly changing societies. This implies resolving clashes of competing world views by building knowledge over difference, respect, dialogue and empathy, without turning to hatred or violence. It also implies reaching a common ground with common values, while appreciating and valuing diversity.

8. I therefore wish to consider history education in this wider context of democratic citizenship. The Council of Europe has over the past few years developed a set of models and methods to help teachers in the class nourish competences for democratic culture. They are grouped around four themes: values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. For more details illustrating these competences for democratic culture (CDC), I refer to the specific webpage of the Council of Europe[7].

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4. Doc. 14988.
5. https://rm.coe.int/coe-declaration-observatory-en-2019-11-26/168098fb19.
6. www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching.
7. www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/.

9. In my view, history education is particularly relevant for acquiring knowledge and critical understanding. Stimulating historical analysis and debate – by using different primary and secondary sources, comparing and confronting them, viewing events from different perspectives – will help to acquire a critical understanding of the past with all its complexities and can provide the answers to critically understand the present.

10. Moreover, methods used for history education and historical analysis in the class can also help young people to develop attitudes of openness to cultural difference, respect and responsibility and to develop particular skills such as autonomous learning, analytical thinking, dialogue and argumentation including conflict resolution skills, which clearly intersect with competences to exercise democratic citizenship outside school.

3. Guidance for quality history education that promotes diversity, multiperspectivity and tolerance

11. This chapter refers to the expert report[8] drafted by Ms Maria Luisa de Bivar Black, University History Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Portugal, and consultant for the History Teaching Unit of the Council of Europe. The chapter contains ten issues that we have identified together as key issues to be considered by policy makers.

3.1. Developing flexible curricula for history education

3.1.1. Curriculum structuring concepts

12. The curriculum is the sum of all that is taught, and learnt, whether intentionally or not in an educational setting. It incorporates the *formal curriculum,* which varies from rigid to flexible guidance and typically includes subject content, time allotted, learning outcomes, teaching options, and assessment. Teachers interpret the official curriculum to adapt and organise their own lessons, therefore there are differences between the formal curriculum and the learned or *experienced curriculum*. The formal curriculum, at its different levels of implementation, is *not neutral*, and constitutes a preponderant form of maintaining the existing power distribution in society. Implementing curriculum decisions affects the context where the learning takes place, for instance the classroom, conveying values and promoting behaviours via the authority of the teacher, the selected learning resources, the rules governing the different relationships, etc.

13. The *hidden curriculum* includes all the unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended lessons, values, behaviours and perspectives that learners learn in school and which influences them above and beyond the official curriculum and the learning activities. The *null curriculum* refers to what is *not taught* in the classroom, whether deliberately or not, as it is impossible to teach everything in schools. The null curriculum is more evident than the hidden curriculum, and is the underlying basis, for example, of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recently adopting a Recommendation[9] that for the first time ever calls on its 47 member States to include the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.

14. A curriculum necessarily implies a selection, but this selection should be relevant to learners' educational and social experiences. What is not taught sends learners two subtle messages, one that states what is not important, and another that reveals what is to be valued.

3.1.2. The specificity of disciplinary history

15. There is no European consensus about how history curricula should be structured and there are a number of curriculum frameworks in practice. Regardless of the criteria on which the curriculum is based, it is generally overloaded. The situation is similar concerning the number of hours dedicated to history education, the pedagogical approaches, the discrete- or the over- use of school textbooks and the degree of autonomy or trust given to the teacher. Overloaded curricula prevent deeper exploration of certain topics and, in particular, hinder the full development of analytical and critical thinking skills, multiperspectivity, etc.

16. That said, decisions on what should be included or excluded in the history curriculum derive from the power distribution in society, a complex, dynamic and heterogeneous structure.[10] Examining *what* and *whose* history learners have opportunities to learn about in schools corroborates what was selected and included in

8. AS/Cult/Inf(2021)03.

9. The Recommendation calls for countering persistent anti-Gypsyism by offering a balanced and contextualised teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history, reflecting both their national presence and historical context and their common history as a people present in Europe for centuries.
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016809ee48c.

the curriculum which varies according to what was defined as *historically significant*. For example, events that are considered foundational of a nation or events that resulted in great change over long periods of time for large numbers of people. The selection of historically significant events has been changing from the one sided account of political, military and economic achievements of a nation, that fed the *grand historical narratives*, to a wider understanding of the actions of people in the past, individually or collectively, that made a difference to the world, for example the role of particular groups in relation to the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of women or the extension of voting rights. These are the general features of history curricula with variations and resistances, involving educationalists, parents, teachers, political actors, etc., which are echoed in the media and more acutely in social media.

17. History as a discipline does not compare with mathematics, science or languages, as it lacks a clear developmental learning pattern. However, there are models of what progression in history learning looks like and familiarisation with and discussion of different models of progression should be part of the professional development of history teachers.

18. Nowadays, the learning of history is considered a complex enterprise, more difficult than previously thought. It involves the acquisition and use of a set of domain specific cognitive strategies, by which the past is learned and understood, a process termed as *historical thinking*, grounded on the notion that history is for the most part an *interpretative discipline.* Still, it is generally accepted that learners study history in order to learn about and understand the world they live in and the forces, movements, and events that have shaped it. However, history teaching in schools does not always help learners understand the processes of change in time and *in relation to themselves.*[11]

19. Today, and as a result of the work developed by history teachers' associations, namely by EuroClio, and with the rapid digital dissemination of information, history education in many teacher training institutions, and in schools across Europe has relied on the Historical Thinking Project,[12] as a viable rationale. The influence of this project in Europe has been extensive and has allowed teachers to have a common conceptual ground. There is still a lot of work to be done, especially with regard to teachers' professional development (since the current generation of history teachers is ageing), the revision of overloaded curricula and evaluation methods in order to achieve a coherent whole, that would benefit learners and teachers.

20. The Historical Thinking Project was designed to foster a new approach to history education – with the potential to shift how teachers teach and how learners learn, in line with recent international research on history learning. It revolves around the proposal that historical thinking – like scientific thinking in science instruction and mathematical thinking in maths instruction – is central to history instruction and that learners should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling.

21. The project developed a framework of six historical thinking concepts to provide a way of communicating complex ideas to a broad and varied audience of potential users: establish historical significance; use primary source evidence; identify continuity and change; analyse cause and consequence; take historical perspectives; understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.

22. Taken together, these concepts tie “historical thinking” to competences in “historical literacy.” In this case, “historical literacy” means gaining a deep understanding of historical events and processes through active engagement with historical texts.

23. Historically literate citizens can assess the legitimacy of claims that there was no Holocaust, that slavery wasn't so bad for African Americans. They have thoughtful ways to tackle such debates. They can interrogate historical sources. They know that a historical film can look “realistic” without being accurate. For history to be meaningful there is an ethical judgement involved. We should expect to learn something from the past that helps us to face the ethical issues of today.

24. Learning to think historically by using these concepts is no small task. Because the past is difficult to penetrate from the standing point of the present, evidence is often sparse, and any attempt to construct a history of events operates on a necessary connection between a past reality and present interpretations of that reality. This connection is, however, denied because there is no method for bringing that past reality back to life to establish the full accuracy of a contemporary interpretation. Learning to use the strategies of thinking historically that enable an understanding of the past depends on the cultivation of a number of such counter-

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10. George Orwell in his book *1984* stated that “the control of the present and the future depended to a great extent on the control over the past”.
11. Arkell Tom (1988) History's role in the school curriculum, Journal of Education Policy, 3:1, 23-38, DOI: 10.1080/0268093880030103 (Accessed 20.11.2020).
12. Project originating in Canada and directed by Professor Peter Seixas, http://historicalthinking.ca/.

intuitive cognitive processes.[13] Yet, history education, for this very reason, allows for the development of tolerance of ambiguity, with the notion that there are no absolutely established historical facts, of analytical and critical thinking skills when engaging with historical sources, and of a deeper understanding of difficult terms and concepts such as post-truth, alternative facts, parallel realities, etc. thus building resilience to misinformation.

25. History education provides the answers to critically understand the present, by teaching that any feature of the past must be interpreted in its historical context and by raising awareness that historical interpretation is a matter of debate. The thinking processes and skills acquired through the study of history constitute a standard of judgement that is transferable to any subject. It is evidence based and encompasses an ethical dimension: learners are expected to learn something from the past that helps them face the ethical issues of today. Moreover, history education instils a sense of citizenship, and reminds learners of questions to ask, especially about evidence. Hence, historical knowledge and critical understanding of political, social, cultural and economic systems intersects with the democratic culture necessary for active citizenship and prepares learners for democracy, namely for engaging with democratic society, including politics, the media, civil society, the economy and the law. Therefore, history and citizenship education are subjects that are closely related, but not interchangeable. Whereas school history can contribute to citizenship education, education *for citizenship does not necessarily support or rely on the standards, procedures, and rationale of history*.[14] In fact, history education and its methods allow learners to confront the current political, cultural and social challenges, as it fosters the ability to interrogate differing, even conflicting, narratives, requiring that arguments are supported by evidence, and recognising that both historians' interpretations and their own can change in the light of new evidence.

3.1.3. Flexible history curricula

26. History education, to the extent it tackles *what- and whose- history* and promotes a learner centred pedagogy, has a relevant role in promoting social inclusion and social cohesion, and this dimension needs to be addressed.

27. The main concerns of a flexible history curriculum are to avoid curriculum overload and obsolescence, to meet learners' needs and to revise history pedagogy. Flexible learning is learner-centred, encourages greater independence and autonomy on the part of the learners and prepares them to navigate the rapidly changing society. Its ethos is to enable and empower learners by giving them greater control of their learning, in other words providing for rather than constraining their success and progression. A flexible curriculum is a competence-based curriculum.

28. However, a flexible competence-based history curriculum needs to tackle issues related to assessment. This is rather complex, as learning history and performance are usually associated in education systems. A learner's performance is what teachers are usually asked to measure when grading learners, but does performance translate into learning? What is performance in history education? Is it linked to how well a learner remembers facts? There can be considerable learning in the absence of observable changes in performance and conversely it is possible to have improvements in performing without results in learning.[15] Learning is something that can be inferred from performance, though not observed directly. Thus, the models of progression are important tools to supporting teachers' inferences on the progression of history learners.

29. The introduction of flexible curricula in Portugal, a recent experience that OECD has positively analysed[16] has stressed (a) that giving learners, teachers and school leaders more autonomy, choice and responsibility encourages changes in both mind-sets and behaviours, accommodates diversity, innovation and personalisation that in turn eliminate barriers to access; (b) that allowing schools and teachers to adopt interdisciplinary approaches and create new learning opportunities increases the quality of learning experiences for learners and makes learning more accessible and relevant to more learners, thereby creating a more inclusive school; and, (c) allocating 0-25% of weekly instructional time to curriculum autonomy allows schools to choose how to best structure time according to their contexts and strategic plans to meet learners' needs and aspirations.

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13. This paragraph and the previous were drawn from Vansledright, Bruce A., *History, learning of, teaching of*, https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2048/History.html.
14. Levesque, Stéphane. (2008) Thinking Historically: Educating Learners for the 21st Century (pp. 28-29). University of Toronto Press. Kindle edition.
15. Professor Robert A Bjork, "Dissociation learning from performance", Youtube, https://youtu.be/MMixjUDJVlw.
16. "Curriculum Flexibility and Autonomy in Portugal – an OECD Review", pp.27-28, www.oecd.org/education/2030/Curriculum-Flexibility-and-Autonomy-in-Portugal-an-OECD-Review.pdf.

30. Over the last two decades, European education systems have been widely adopting competence-based approaches and setting aside the most traditional concepts of knowledge-based curricula (declarative knowledge). In parallel, the Council of Europe has developed a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, built on principles common to democratic societies, applying to all areas and levels of education, with 20 competences organised around four clusters: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. The Reference Framework upholds the development of open, tolerant and diverse societies – and history education has an important contribution to make in delivering that commitment, given that what (and whose) history is taught, how it is taught, and the quality of the available resources would enable it to do so.

31. The CDC framework perceives the curriculum as a plan for learning. It puts the learner and learning at the centre of the curriculum. *Ergo*, the significance and value of flexible history curricula lie in its potential to include and acknowledge cultural differences and to accommodate the integration and understanding of systemic societal change, allowing for all learners to develop a sense of belonging to their school community[17] and to make their own positive contributions to that very community and, later, to the democratic societies in which they will live.

32. Flexible curricula and interactive pedagogies sensitive to socio-cultural diversity allow young people to find their strengths and interests and to develop interdisciplinary perspectives needed to address the key issues facing society, such as stereotyping based on gender, ethnicity, language, social status, etc. In fact, a curriculum reflecting only the history and culture of the dominant group in society constrains learners outside the majority to engage with it. They may perceive it to be personally meaningless and at times offensive, therefore, the hidden practices and messages of the curriculum need to be addressed. Also, a curriculum reflecting only the history and culture of the dominant group in society also prevents the majority group from learning about others.

3.2. Preparing learners for democracy by teaching the complex history of democracy

33. History teaching contributes to an understanding and development of democratic values, by promoting the analysis and critical understanding of the historical struggles for democracy and freedom, or of the development of democratic institutions and values; furthermore, such teaching and learning take place in classrooms where learners participate in decision making, experience collaborative learning, express their own views and interpretations, listen to contrasting views in a reasoned and respectful manner and learn to take part in classroom discussions – learners are learning through democracy, acquiring behaviours that respect democratic values and attitudes. Thus, history education plays a key role in preparing learners for democracy as it empowers learners to become autonomous participants in democracy and in intercultural dialogue.

34. History education that prepares for democracy acknowledges that the mono-cultural curriculum was part of a cultural dominant model that viewed difference as dangerous and divisive. History education should not overlook the existing diversity of any society, nor be limited to the national narrative coinciding with the history of the largest or dominant linguistic and cultural community. All learners should be helped to understand the various ways in which people from diverse cultures and communities have in the past contributed to developments at local, national and global levels.

3.3. Identifying common historical themes in Europe from similar or different perspectives

> *"A growing number of individuals, especially young people, have multiple cultural affiliations to enjoy, but also to manage, on a daily basis. Their 'composite identity' can no longer be restricted to a 'collective identity' related to a particular ethnic or religious group."*[18]

35. The task of identifying common historical themes across Europe to be included in the history curricula of Council of Europe member States seems to be increasingly difficult. In 2014, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18), the Council of Europe published *Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines*,[19] the end product of a four-year intergovernmental project that focused on aspects of European history which had left their imprint on the whole European space.[20] Shared

17. Belonging allows for, and mediates, meaningful relationships.
18. Assembly Resolution 2005 (2014), "Identities and diversity within intercultural societies".
19. *Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines* is an interactive e-book with links to external sources. It includes a set of exemplar teaching and learning materials, primarily intended for teacher education. https://asp.zone-secure.net/v2/index.jsp?id=6423/8544/44168&lng=en.

Histories laid an emphasis on shared experiences, exploring the idea that "your history is also our history and our history is also the history of the other".[21] This method allowed for the deconstruction of stereotypes, myths of identity and negative visions of the other and approached history in its full complexity, taking into consideration all the dimensions of an historical event, all the interactions, convergences and conflicts, by promoting a dialectic interplay of all elements involved in a historical event.

36. Rather than attempting to tackle history exhaustively, a careful selection of themes with a potential to concern a maximum number of member States might be a more beneficial procedure that would respond to the need of young people to understand the world they live in and the forces, movements, and events that have shaped it. For example, the impact of the industrial revolution, the development of education, the complex history of democracy, human rights as reflected in the history of art, Europe and the world – themes developed in the Shared Histories project, or others, such as, the Cold War, Decolonisation and Post-Colonial Societies, Revolutions, Democracy, Gender, Migrations etc. It is critical to understand that history education offers a type of learning based on analytical and critical thinking skills that is unique, engaging, cross-cutting and provides lifelong tools for navigating modern democratic societies.

37. A major obstacle for a more general use of the publications and tools offered by the Council of Europe is language. If inspiring practices and research could be shared in multiple languages, the impact would be wider. It is a fact that different teachers will be looking for different elements: some will need sources, others will be looking for different ways of teaching and learning. Still, the possibilities are often limited to the time available in the curricula, both for teaching and for preparing lessons in line with the assessment methods.

38. That said, exploring shared histories can be approached by different or similar perspectives, as learners look at similar or different resources, mental structures or geographies, related to the shared theme, to think historically to reach interpretations and share findings. Shared histories accommodate the composite identities of today's young people and lend themselves both to interdisciplinary approaches and project-based learning.

39. Interdisciplinary learning involves exploring content or solving a problem by integrating more than one discipline and drawing information from different fields. It is a holistic approach that helps young people to look at the bigger picture and requires close collaboration of teachers to create a more integrated, enhanced learning experience for learners. Interdisciplinary learning is congruent with flexible curricula.

40. Project work, or learning through developing projects, is a pedagogical approach appropriate for the development both of history and the CDC, because it contributes to acquiring a combination of attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding, as well as to developing values. It can be used within a specific history topic, but it is also appropriate for an interdisciplinary approach.

3.4. Evaluation of historical sources

> *"The most critical question facing young people today is not how to find information. Google has done a great job with that. We're bombarded by stuff. The real question is whether that information, once found, should be believed. And according to some recent studies young people are not doing so well in that department. The first thing that historical study teaches us is that there is no such thing as free-floating information. Information comes from somewhere."*[22]

41. Past events happened in the past and will not be repeated. Of many such events there is a historical record, and only some of it is revealed to us by the work of historians. Written history, or historiography, represents a very small part of the past.

42. Humans have the aptitude to think back and forth in time; the concept of historical consciousness "is defined as the understanding of the temporality of historical experience, that is how past, present and future are thought to be connected for the sake of producing historical knowledge".[23] This ongoing dialogue between the three dimensions of time is shaped using a lot of input from a lot of sources, typically, "it refers both to the way people orient themselves in time, and how they are bound by the historical and cultural contexts which shape their sense of temporality and collective memory".[24]

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20. Of all signatories to the European Cultural Convention in 1954.
21. "Shared" but not "the same as".
22. Sam Wineburg's keynote address to the 2015 AASLH annual meeting in Louisville. For full audio of his talk, go to https://soundcloud.com/aaslh-podcasts/2015-sam-wineburg-keynote-address.
23. Glencross, Andrew (2010), "Historical Consciousness in International Relations Theory: A Hidden Disciplinary Dialogue", University of Aberdeen, Millennium Conference. https://millenniumjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/glencross-andrew-historical-consciousness-in-ir-theory-a-hidden-disciplinary-dialogue.pdf.

43. History education allows for organising different information, processing it in a systematic way, preparing learners to understand the nature of historical knowledge, how it is a construct, and how such knowledge is transformed by different generations with different dialogues between the three dimensions of time. Learners also learn to differentiate what are facts, memories, interpretations, perspectives and, importantly, how to detect propaganda. This is one of the contributions of history education to democratic citizenship. By asking fundamental questions, history education shows learners models of good and responsible citizenship, facilitates learning from the mistakes of others, and furthers critical understanding of change and societal development.

44. The fast development of information and communication technology has made information, communication and knowledge more globalised and the rise of social media has significantly increased the amount of e-information available. Online media platforms and social media in particular, shape learners' perceptions of reality and the way they see the world: in this respect young people are one of the most vulnerable groups, being disproportionately affected by the new technologies.

45. While the historical impact of rumours and fabricated content have been well documented, we are witnessing something new: information pollution on a global scale; a complex web of motivations for creating, disseminating and consuming these polluted messages; a myriad of content types and techniques for amplifying content; innumerable platforms hosting and reproducing this content; and breakneck speeds of communication between trusted peers.[25] It should be stressed that visuals can be far more persuasive than other forms of communication, which can make them more powerful vehicles for mis- and disinformation. It is important to support learners to critically understand and deconstruct the messages of visual resources and the power of such images to manipulate and persuade. The way learners understand visuals is fundamentally different to how they think about texts.

46. For navigating effectively through digital visual and written materials learners make use of the historian's toolbox. By applying analytical and critical thinking skills to interpret and evaluate sources, learners must find, comprehend, select and use key historical information, to make well informed judgements:

– Being able to assess and judge motive, utility, reliability, and trustworthiness is an important step in building resilience and preventing manipulation when accessing historical sources and interpretations.

– The use of diverse and contradictory sources shows that historical interpretations are provisional and liable to reassessment, an essential safeguard against the misuse of history, as it works against too ready an acceptance of accounts seeking to promote intolerant and ultra-nationalistic, xenophobic or racist ideas.

– The greater accessibility of visual sources reinforces the need for learners to be able to critically read a photograph, a documentary film, or a broadcast video and distinguish between what the image(s) depict, and the message that the author of the image wishes to convey.

– Learners make judgements that differentiate the historical dimension (what does this tell us about what really happened?) and the ethical dimension (is this a positive and forward move?).

3.5. Multiperspectivity in history education

47. In the context of history education, the notion of multiperspectivity refers to the epistemological idea that *history is interpretational and subjective*, with multiple coexisting narratives about particular historical events, rather than being objectively represented by one *closed* narrative[26]. Such an interpretational approach to history education should go beyond relativism by teaching learners to judge and compare the validity of different narratives using disciplinary criteria. Societies are becoming more ethically and culturally diverse which makes an exploration of different perspectives a valuable and necessary way for learners to find mutual understanding of different cultures and become responsible democratic citizens.[27]

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24. Seixas, Peter (2006) "What Is Historical Consciousness?", *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*, edited by Ruth Sandwell, 11–22. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p.15.
25. Claire Wardle, and Hossein Derakhshan, with support from Anne Burns and Nic Dias, *Information Disorder. Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2017.
26. Stradling, Robert, Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: A Guide for Teachers, Council of Europe, 2003, https://rm.coe.int/0900001680493c9e.
27. Bjorn Wansink, Sanne Akkerman, Itzél Zuiker and Theo Wubbels (2018), *Where Does Teaching Multiperspectivity in History Education Begin and End? An Analysis of the Uses of Temporality*, Theory & Research in Social Education, 46:4, 495-527, DOI: 10.1080/00933104.2018.1480439.

48. Multiperspectivity, like the analysis of sources, is a vital aspect of understanding the historical dimension of any event. All historical accounts are provisional, and it is unusual to have a single correct version of a historical event. Thus, multiperspectivity entails distinguishing facts from opinions and understanding that there is no universal historical truth, but rather a number of diverse interpretations of a given event. The same historical event can be described and explained in different ways, depending on the standpoint of the historian, politician, journalist, television producer, eyewitness, etc.

49. Although multiperspectivity is increasingly emphasised as essential, research has shown that many history teachers struggle with addressing multiple coexisting perspectives.[28] Teachers need to possess deep knowledge of their discipline, have limited time, limited access to resources, overloaded curricula, and they are responsible for preparing the learners for exams. It is important that teachers incorporate a multi-perspective approach to enable learners to engage with different views to build a more informed understanding, reflect critically and empathise with people of the respective time period being studied. For example, an empathetic assignment might explore motivation by asking learners to compare and contrast two or more perspectives of people relating to a historical event and identify the likely motives driving the sources. Explaining and justifying their decisions is key: learners should be able to spell out their historical thinking around causation and motive.

3.6. Should difficult history be included in the curriculum?

50. Whereas controversial issues may be absent from the curriculum, controversy may arise unexpectedly during any time in a lesson. When learners are used to applying historical enquiry as an everyday method, controversy is most welcome as it promotes the ability of the learners to approach the past, or any question, objectively. Controversy is engaging and motivating, learners learn by actively debating and trying to create meaning for their questions and doubts around the issue that is being debated.

51. The inclusion of controversial and sensitive issues in history lessons enhances democratic culture, as the critical understanding of controversy facilitates the respect for different opinions, the acceptance of disagreement promotes tolerance of ambiguity, and the confirmation that heterogeneity is part of the world we live in.

52. In fact, *how* the learning experience of discussing such issues is organised is key to the success of the learning process. Learning is not passive: when learners learn, they are linking the new information to what they have already acquired. The recourse to estrangement methodological approaches to discussion of controversies allows for each individual learner to engage in the discussion and collectively reach a new understanding of what was discussed, a complex and holistic process, involving individual and collective historical understanding through discussion, which develops the *cognitive, emotional and social* dimensions of learning.[29]

53. This is of particular significance in the context of studying the more recent past and relating it to contemporary events and concerns, enabling learners to consider their own allegiances, their multiple interests and identities, recognise that it is possible to be both the insider or outsider to something and that one's own beliefs can be conflicting and change. Being aware of one's own prejudices and stereotypes, how they can be embedded in thinking patterns, and how they are passed down through the generations helps learners detect myths and biases and fosters tolerance within the classroom.

54. The skills and mindset required both for historical understanding and for future engagement in a participatory democracy cannot be acquired by teaching approaches where the learner's role is confined to that of a mere passive recipient of knowledge. More is needed, in particular independent, active and interactive learning strategies which involve learners in doing things and in thinking about what they are doing.

55. It is critical that discussions occur in *supportive environments*.[30] Addressing sensitive and controversial issues requires maintaining a classroom atmosphere in which all learners, even if in a minority, have confidence that it is safe to express their view and argue their case. Discussion has to be managed in ways that promote controlled, informed dialogue and respectful interaction.

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28. Ibid.
29. Illeris, K. (2002) *The three dimensions of learning: Contemporary learning theory in the tension field between the cognitive, the emotional and the social*. NIACE, Leicester.
30. Parents also play a major role and can put pressure on schools and teachers when learners are exposed to views they disagree with. Classrooms should be supportive. Societies as well. Populism has added pressure on teachers, cf. www.euroclio.eu/2019/07/18/safe-schools-and-spying-learners/.

3.7. Is teaching history a dangerous profession?

56. History is a rich discipline, full of twists and turns, that can trigger abundant and rich reflections, and therefore cannot be reduced to learning a sequence of dates or facts. The objective is to support learners to develop critical thinking skills and a culture of their own by studying the evolution of mankind over time – one can only understand the present and conceive of the future by critically understanding the events of the past. This dimension emphasises the importance of history as a discipline and *as a source of knowledge construction for all other disciplines.*

57. Although historical facts need to be learned for engaging in historical debates, history education goes beyond the single narrative that excludes different interpretations of historical events. Learning about and analysing different perspectives of past events promotes attitudes of openness to cultural otherness, other beliefs, world views and practices, enables the development of critical thinking skills, and in the long run promotes more tolerant and egalitarian societies. However, even if no agenda is being consciously or subconsciously pursued, learners are often presented with (over)simplified information in history, due to limited time allotted to history education, limited and/or age-related intellectual capacity of learners, the limited knowledge of many teachers, and the sometimes still persuasive conception that teachers' main task is to prepare learners for exams. And, importantly, the *non-disclosed awareness* that the context in which one is teaching is not always favourable to the introduction of historically sensitive subjects, plays an important role in what and how history education is delivered.

58. When history is misused and becomes partial, fallacious or propagandistic, it does not shed light on the past nor does it contribute to developing analytical and critical thinking skills. That said, in some schools across Europe there are situations of interference both by school management and/or by parents questioning the content of a lesson, the teacher's choice of resources, or the type of learning promoted.

59. The discipline of history is particularly under scrutiny, and history teachers today question what freedom they have, or what risks they run, when they use certain methods or select some resources.[31] This happens for a number of reasons. Often, because parents do not understand the current scope of the discipline, they defend the *unquestionable truth* of the one-sided narrative they have learned and exert pressure on the school Board; but in the background of these interferences is today's more divided and violent society, where teachers become targets to accuse and hold accountable for what goes wrong.

60. The Assembly Recommendation 1880 (2009) "History teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas" refers to the need to "support a change in how "the other" is presented in history classes. This involves interventions relating to both what is taught and how it is taught. Considerable investment in skills building for teachers, today's and tomorrow's, to encourage them to move to a new style of curriculum and teaching, must continue. This process is progressive and therefore has implications for initial and in-service teacher training." EuroClio has also worked with local history teachers' associations on a set of recommendations for responsible teaching of the wars in Yugoslavia and its successor States,[32] which is a bottom-up initiative to "foster history teaching that aims to nurture a critical understanding of the wars through cultivation of historical thinking as we find this essential for challenging manipulation and myths, as well as prejudices and stereotypes arising from them. EuroClio (European Association of History Educators) believes that history teaching should have a transformative role." Lastly, it should be mentioned that the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/HCNM) is recognising history and memory as a potential source of conflict.[33]

61. It is unquestionable that history education has a transformative role in building sustainable and resilient democratic societies and that in the rehabilitation of post conflict societies the role of history education is crucial. Still, teachers need professional development and continuous training opportunities. Well-performing teachers are the most important resources in any educational system, as teachers are key in the learning process. In addition to supportive professional development, teachers – beginners and experienced alike – also need time and resources to study, reflect, and prepare their practice.

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31. On 16 October 2020, Samuel Paty (1973–2020), a history and geography teacher, was beheaded in France; at stake were the freedom of expression and the resources used in the classroom. EuroClio – European Association of History Educators statement on this assassination can be downloaded here. For further Europe and world-wide information please refer to the Network of Concerned Historians. Established at the History Department of the University of Groningen, Netherlands, it serves as a small observatory and provides a bridge between international human-rights organisations campaigning for persecuted historians and the global community of historians. It publishes an Annual Report, the 2020 report concerns 91 countries.
32. https://euroclio.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Making-sense-of-the-past-that-refuses-to-pass_final-English.pdf.
33. www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/b/415121_0.pdf.

62. Learning the specific history of a people, a country or a cultural/ethnic or international group is an absolute necessity for the cognitive and social development of young people. History education in schools, in its content, pedagogy and learning materials, needs a thorough dusting off in order to stimulate interest in this subject, perhaps even risking the fate of disaffection.

3.8. Using ICT in history education

63. Information and communication technology (ICT) can be used to provide considerable support to the development of learners' historical thinking and understanding, and in ways which also promote education for democracy and diversity. In moving beyond content delivery, technology-supported learning affords opportunities for:

– expanding intercultural interaction by enabling learners to communicate directly with those from other schools, countries, and cultures;

– building and enhancing co-operative learning, including international collaboration supported by tools such as cloud computing, videoconferencing, interactive online platforms, wikis, and blogs;

– using simulations and educational game-playing, allowing the study of subject matter that would be almost impossible otherwise, or exploring complex historical processes and decision-making in a more dynamic way ('*epistemic game*s', for example, are based on testing how well learners are able to think and operate like an expert – in this case a historian).

3.9. Bridging the gap between formal and non-formal education

64. Across Europe, learners visit museums where they have the opportunity to deepen aspects of history that have already been dealt with in the classroom or learn about specific topics that the museum is exhibiting through a selection of objects and trying to fit such objects in the bigger historical picture. Usually, mediators and teachers plan the visits to enhance specific aspects of learning. A visit to the parliament for learners to attend a session is usually organised as part of the history discipline. This type of activity only makes sense if previously planned and discussed in class. Watching films (in part or in full), using Internet resources, listening to podcasts and excerpts of radio broadcasts are commonplace in many history classes across Europe.

65. To complement the out of school activities, inviting historians, authors, protagonists from various fields linked to history, arts, literature, human rights associations or NGOs to come to the history class and share experiences with learners also occurs. The world outside the classroom can send powerful messages of inclusion and respect for diversity to learners. Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices helps learners make sense of the world they live in.

66. However, such activities depend more on the teachers involved, the school location and culture, and are easier to organise within urban settings; the regional more distant schools have more difficulties in this respect.

67. To broaden the field beyond history education in schools and consider also innovative roles undertaken by other stakeholders, a partnership between the Council of Europe and the International Council of Museums – Portugal [ICOM] was developed within the project *Shared Histories for a Europe without Dividing Lines*. Its aim was to bring together history educators and museum mediators to share experiences and practices and acknowledge the educational complementarity of their functions and the potential for their co-operation.

3.10. Including the Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) in teacher education and professional development

68. The critical understanding of historical phenomena facilitates the process of acquiring CDC, and the intersection of school history and education for democracy is evident. History education can gain from including and adapting the CDC pedagogical approaches to create a classroom climate where young people can actively explore historical questions to experience and learn about, through and for democratic culture.

69. Teachers should be aware and open about their own understanding of the past, their views, prejudices, stereotypes and biases, and promote inclusive environments where all learners feel confident to voice their thoughts and disagreements where difficult dialogues might occur – flexibility and adaptability on the part of the teacher is crucial. Teacher education and professional development should include CDC and intercultural education to sensitise about inclusion of *otherness* and resilience in dealing with insensitivity and inappropriate responses.

70. The CDC approach should be applied in a transversal way in teacher education and professional development; the successful inclusion of learning and teaching activities that seek to consider values and develop attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding for a culture of democracy in history education will ultimately depend on the ability of teachers to include CDC when planning and developing educational activities in accordance with the needs of their learners. The acquisition and development of CDC are not a linear progress, rather *a lifelong personal journey*, as individuals – teachers and learners alike – continually experience new and different contexts.

71. Including and adapting Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture is the responsibility of policy makers. Educating for democracy and diversity is necessarily an on-going task. It requires appropriate investment in schools and teachers both intellectually and in terms of resources.

4. Objectives and functioning of the Observatory

72. On 12 November 2020, 17 member States of the Council of Europe[34] decided to establish the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe as an Enlarged Partial Agreement.[35] The Observatory is open to all 50 States parties to the European Cultural Convention with the possibility of adherence of other non-member States. Widening its membership and ensuring a better geographical balance between the members will remain a key priority for the coming years. This would enhance the relevance and added value of the Observatory's work.

73. The Statute of the Enlarged Partial Agreement[36] states that the aim of the Observatory shall be to promote practices encouraging history teaching and learning in order to strengthen and promote the values of the Council of Europe enshrined in its Statute (ETS No. 1). The task of the Observatory shall be: "to collect, process and make available factual information on the ways in which history is taught in all countries of the enlarged partial agreement (EPA). In doing so, the Observatory shall pay particular attention to ensuring that its activities are based on a solid scholarly and academic basis, take due account of the diversity of education systems in member States of the EPA and ensure complementarity with the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work on history education. The Observatory will not aim to harmonise curricula."

74. The clear definition of the Observatory's mandate, which excludes any wish to harmonise curricula in Europe, should be of a reassurance to the remaining member States of the Council of Europe to recognise the added value of such a platform for exchange on policies and methodologies and to consider adhering to the Enlarged Partial Agreement in the near future. The relevance and credibility of the Observatory are assured by the work of the Scientific Advisory Council that was elected to provide the academic, scholarly, and methodological quality of the work of the Observatory. The Scientific Advisory Council will guarantee all information released are accurate, cross-checked, comparable and comprehensive.

75. The good functioning of the Observatory, which was established for an initial period of three years, will inevitably depend on its budget. I would strongly support the argument that the related COVID-19 budgetary restrictions in member States should not undermine the decision to ensure the proper functioning of the Observatory.

76. Finally, I believe it would be important to define in more detail how exactly the activities of the Observatory would tie in with the ongoing work of the Council of Europe on history education, which involves 47 member States, so that they are mutually reinforced. In this respect, I would strongly argue that the activities of the Council of Europe Education Department concerning history education should receive appropriate funding from the Council of Europe ordinary budget to ensure a long-term viability of the intergovernmental programme.

5. Participation of the European Union

77. It is very encouraging that the European Union is open and willing to be involved in the activities of the Observatory. While acknowledging the subsidiarity principle and independence of the EU member States to decide on policies in the area of education and history teaching, the European Union could play an important role to stimulate the EU member States to adhere to the Enlarged Partial Agreement (Observatory).

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34. Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.
35. Resolution CM/Res(2020)34 establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.
36. https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=0900001680a054e7.

78. The European Union could also effectively contribute to the activities of the Observatory and the intergovernmental sector of the Council of Europe by creating adequate programmes to fund innovative co-operation projects based on the guiding principles developed by the Council of Europe.

79. Through the existing Erasmus programme, students of history (future teachers) could undertake part of their professional training abroad. I would also suggest creating a specific ad hoc programme to fund professional exchange among history teachers also involving teachers from neighbouring non-EU countries.

80. As a political stimulus, the European Union could consider introducing in the accession criteria for candidate countries an "act of memory and reconciliation of the candidate State with its neighbours".

6. Conclusions

81. Unlike mathematics, science or languages, history is for the most part an interpretative discipline. *Historical thinking* is therefore central to history education, whereby learners progressively acquire competences to analyse historical evidence and debate complex ideas about the past, which enable them to better navigate and understand the challenges of the present times.

82. In 2018, the Council of Europe published a set of guiding principles on quality history teaching in the 21st century[37] which we have taken a step further in chapter 3 of this explanatory memorandum in order to disseminate these 10 key ideas among policy makers and to promote them for the future work of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.

83. First, it would seem important to make history curricula flexible in order to provide more time and autonomy to teachers to gradually move away from knowledge-based teaching towards learner-centered and competence-based teaching. In my view, teaching the complex history of democracy and developing democratic practices, attitudes and values in the classroom would be key to helping young people understand and value them later in life as active citizens. I also believe that we should open a European perspective in history education in our respective countries by identifying common historical themes that could be viewed from similar or different perspectives.

84. Multiperspectivity is fundamental to understanding different standpoints which often result from a specific historical context. When analysed in the classroom and considered together they create a nuanced and deeper understanding of the *historical dimension* of any event. In our increasingly diverse societies, it would be crucial to learn about cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity and interactions to avoid mono-cultural curriculum. Interactive pedagogies which acknowledge cultural differences and multiple identities among learners in a class would be necessary to create a safe and enabling environment where sensitive and controversial issues could also be openly discussed. Such learning processes represent a first step towards a constructive dialogue, respect, and better mutual understanding to overcome prejudices and biases in society.

85. Teachers are key to these processes. They need support and recognition within national education systems. They need multiple opportunities for professional development and exchange (including international exchange), they should be allocated free time and opportunity to access different teaching resources and guidance – including the Council of Europe guiding principles and methodologies – that are available in local languages. In this context, it would be essential to include the Competences for Democratic Culture in teacher education and professional development.

86. To support these new interactive learning processes, links between formal and non-formal education should be expanded. For example to encourage out of school activities through partnerships with cultural institutions (museums, archives, cinematheque, etc.) and to invite historians, authors, protagonists from various fields, linked to history, arts, literature, human rights associations or NGOs, to share their experiences with the class. The winners of the Council of Europe Museum Prize[38] and the European Museum of the Year Award scheme[39] illustrate the growing capacities of museums to create tailor made outreach programmes with schools, to broaden knowledge and understanding of past and contemporary societal issues and to explore with young people the ideas of democratic citizenship.

37. https://www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching.
38. Museum Prize (coe.int).
39. www.europeanforum.museum.

87. In the current context of rapid digital shift due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of information and communication technology could provide considerable support to build co-operative learning – supported by tools such as cloud computing, videoconferencing, interactive online platforms, wikis and blogs – including international collaboration with young people from other schools, countries and cultures.

88. In conclusion, I would advocate closer co-operation with the European Union with a view to developing adequate programmes to fund innovative pilot projects that promote quality history education based on the guiding principles developed by the Council of Europe and to make such guidance and the results of pilot projects accessible to practitioners in local languages. As a stimulus, I would also propose to create a special honorary label or a prize that could be delivered to member States that endeavour to implement such innovative practices in history education.