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STABILITY PACT

Conference on

“History textbooks and teaching resources
in South East Europe: a future?”

Sinaia, Romania,

6 – 8 June 2002

Report

Strasbourg

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Report by

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The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	7
II. AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE	7
III. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY PRESENTATIONS	8
IV. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PUBLICATION OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS SINCE 1996.....	16
V. A NEW COUNCIL OF EUROPE HISTORY PROJECT.....	20
VI. CONCLUSIONS	22
APPENDIX I: REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS	23
APPENDIX II: PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE	30
APPENDIX III: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....	34

I. INTRODUCTION

The Conference was organised jointly by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education and Research of Romania, EUROCLIO and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research within the framework of the Stability Pact. It was mainly financed by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom through a voluntary contribution to the Council of Europe specifically to support its work on history education in South East Europe.

The Conference was held in the Casino Building in Sinaia and was attended by 32 participants from 13 countries in South East Europe, 10 speakers and organisers, and seven observers - three from Romania, two from Israel and two from the Palestinian Authority. The Chair, Dr Cezar BIRZEA, opened the proceedings by explaining that one of the objectives of this and other Stability Pact conferences and seminars on history, was to forge national, bilateral and multilateral links and partnerships between policy makers and advisers in education, publishers and textbook authors in the region.

Participants were welcomed to Sinaia by Ioan BUCUR, Mayor of Sinaia, Ambassador BACONSKY of the Cultural Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Mr POP and NICOLAE of the Ministry of Education and Research. Mr POP reaffirmed Romania's commitment to continue to work within the framework of the Stability Pact and, in particular, to increase its involvement in the Working Group on History and History Teaching in South East Europe.

Ambassador BACONSKY and Lord Russell JOHNSTON, representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, both stressed the important role which history education can make to regional stability and conflict resolution by encouraging mutual understanding and countering the climate of suspicion and tension which has prevailed at various times in the region's history.

Nicolae NICOLAE encouraged the Conference to think about how history is written and for whom. He noted that much has been done in Romania over the last 12 years to recover the past and eliminate false myths. But "*it is not possible to write history to satisfy everyone who has ever lived*". History is not always consensual and multiple perspectives need to be acknowledged. This was important at all levels of history education, including the school level. He welcomed this opportunity for a sharing of experience and expertise between the history educators of the region and the rest of Europe.

II. AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

The four aims were to:

1. review the state of preparation and publication of history textbooks since the Seminar on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks in European countries in democratic transition" in Warsaw, November 1996;
2. identify recent trends in educational policy as regards history textbooks;

3. look at the function of textbooks in history teaching and the ways in which they can assist learning in the classroom;
4. discuss the use of history textbooks in supporting skills-based approaches to teaching and learning.

Most of the presentations from the keynote speakers focused on aims 3 and 4 and these are summarised in the next section of this report. The central section reviews the main changes which have taken place in textbook development and production over the last five years. This is based primarily on the discussions in the working groups and the personal contributions of the participants. The conclusions of the three working groups are also appended. The final section outlines a new Council of Europe project which aims to address the need for source-based teaching resources, particularly on the history of the 20th Century.

III. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

a. History Textbooks in Romania

The opening presentation was given by Professor Alexandru BARNEA of the Department of History, Bucharest University, with the assistance of Dr Carol CAPITA, also in the Department of History at the same University. He began by focusing on the changes which had taken place in textbook development in Romania over the last decade of the 20th Century. In 1989, textbook publishing had been centrally controlled and there was a single history textbook for each grade. Now there were more than 20 publishing houses and a range of at least four optional textbooks per grade, and, for some year groups, there were at least 10 optional books available.

The first generation of new textbooks emerged in response to the development of new curriculum programmes in 1994-95 and then for high schools in 1997-98. The first new textbook was for the fifth grade and that was published in 1998. This has subsequently served as a model for the development of other textbooks produced for compulsory education.

Professor BARNEA then outlined the process by which new history textbooks are developed in Romania. First, the Ministry of Education and Research issues an announcement that new textbooks are required at specific grades. Then it issues documents detailing the practical requirements (grade, period, content, etc) and detailed guidance on the quality of the product. Then the publishers who wish to develop a textbook for a specific grade develop a draft version for evaluation.

There is a National Committee of Evaluation comprising 100 specialists, 10 of whom are selected at random to evaluate each draft textbook. To minimise bias, none of the evaluators can be involved in textbook writing. A complex scoring system is used to evaluate the draft versions and the criteria include content, quality and cost. A textbook would need a minimum score of 80% out of a total of 100% before it could be approved. If the evaluation is positive without any qualifications then the publishers will be notified to go ahead with production for schools. If the evaluation is

positive but with some reservations, the publishing house will have the opportunity to make revisions and re-submit for the next evaluation round. A number of participants at the conference, particularly some textbook authors and representatives from publishing houses in other countries, raised questions about the cost implications of this system for the publishers since it emerged from discussions that they are expected to bear the development costs without knowing whether or not they will get the go-ahead to market their product.

In 1999, history education in schools came under public and media scrutiny, particularly the coverage of recent history, and proved quite controversial and divisive for a while. This has led observers such as Professor BARNEA to conclude that textbook production in Romania is now influenced by a wider range of variables and influences than it used to be. These include not just the conventional ones, such as educational policies, educational ideas, academic knowledge, editorial expertise, production quality and costs but also, increasingly, teachers' expectations, parental expectations, media pressure, and public perceptions of what kind of history should be taught in schools.

b. Implications of research on textbook development in South East Europe

Dr Falk PINGEL began his presentation by asserting that a lot of data had been collected on the history textbooks currently in use in South East Europe and there now needed to be a shift of emphasis from research to the effective implementation of good practice in textbook design and production. Therefore, the Georg Eckert Institute had decided to launch a new project to facilitate this process by providing scholarships for current and potential textbook authors to visit the Institute and work there for periods up to a month in duration.

He then drew on the existing evidence to identify some patterns and criteria of good practice that authors and publishers might keep in mind when developing the next generation of history textbooks.

Generally speaking, throughout the 1990s, textbook development in the region had passed through three stages:

Stage 1: A process of removing Marxist terminology and frameworks combined with a much greater emphasis on national history. At this stage, the new generation of textbooks is still subject to close control by the State.

Stage 2: At this stage, the emphasis is still very much on presenting history but the design is more innovative and publishers are gearing up for a more competitive market for textbooks.

Stage 3: A broadening of content, new concepts are introduced relating to the processes of historical analysis and interpretation, there is a growing awareness of the need to reflect the diversity and homogeneity of the national population and there is a greater willingness to incorporate historical debates and controversies within the text.

At first glance, the textbooks in most countries have progressed through this developmental cycle to stage 3, although there were clear distinctions that could still be made between developments in different countries within the region. But in spite of the design improvements - more illustrations, use of colour, inclusion of extracts from sources and student activities - Dr PINGEL felt that there was still a strong emphasis on text and on “scientific structure”. The visual images did not always add much to the reader’s understanding of the text and it was not always clear what students would learn from the source extracts.

He also felt that, although there was now more emphasis on social and cultural history, the main focus of most textbooks was still on wars and conflicts and crises, especially the coverage of more modern history. The coverage of conflict and conflict resolution often tended to be presented in terms of winners and losers, victims and perpetrators. Where cultural history was covered, there was a tendency to concentrate on “high culture” rather than popular culture and everyday life in order “*to demonstrate that one’s own country belongs to European culture and tradition*”. He felt that it was important to encourage textbook authors and curriculum planners to avoid projecting the idea of the modern nation state back into the period of the Middle Ages or to even earlier times. He was also concerned about a tendency to treat certain historical periods as if they were temporary interruptions in the normal historical progression of the nation’s history. He had observed that the Ottoman Empire was sometimes treated in this way and, more recently, the former Yugoslavia.

In some textbooks, particularly those produced in some Balkan States, Dr PINGEL also detected a tendency to either neglect regional history, to switch between national and European history, or to present the whole region in a negative and divisive way; a tendency also to be found in some Western European textbooks as well.

Finally, he observed that there was a need for more bilateral and multilateral cooperation in textbook development, and a greater emphasis on the exchange of knowledge and expertise across the region. However, he was aware that there were several constraints which inhibited the up-take of new ideas and innovative practices. Firstly, changes in textbooks are guided by changes in history curricula and textbook authors tend not to be particularly innovative if the curriculum is not or if changes are still under review. Secondly, when authors do get some indication from Education Ministries that a more innovative approach has been approved or is desired then the time lag between the announcement of this change of view and the production of new textbooks is often very short, less than six months, and this does not provide sufficient time for the creation of books that are genuinely different and innovative. Thirdly, he noted that in most of South East and Eastern Europe, teachers are trained to work to the textbook, so there tends to be a considerable time lag between the emergence of new ideas and approaches and changes in classroom practice.

c. The Use of Photographs and the Internet in History Teaching

This presentation was given by Dr Robert STRADLING from the UHI Millennium Institute in Scotland. He began by observing that, throughout the 20th Century photographs, along with moving pictures, helped to shape our image of ourselves and the world around us and provided us with reference points for recollecting the recent

past. Some of these images are icons which instantly summon up and encapsulate a lot of historical knowledge and memories. However, generally speaking, students need to learn how to analyse and interpret historical photographs.

At one level, photographs are simply visual traces of events in the recent past. At another level they often evoke an emotional response from us to those events and they impose meaning on the events without analysing them. That means that, like most other historical sources, they have to be interpreted or “read”. Few photographs of historical significance are neutral. The choice of subject, the selection of camera angle, the manipulation of light, tone, contrast and texture, the conscious and unconscious manipulation of the viewer's emotional responses, and the accompanying caption all serve to encourage us to interpret the photograph in a particular way.

First, students need to know that:

- Photographs which are preserved for the historical record have been subjected to an intensive process of selection at several levels, e.g. by the photographer, the news editor and, finally, the archivist, who has also made a selection regarding which photographs should be retained for posterity.
- Photographs almost always reflect the conventions and expectations of the period when they were taken.
- Photographs are easily edited and manipulated.
- The photographer can have a direct effect on the events that are being photographed. The term “photo-opportunity” may be a relatively recent one but the practice is not. It is important, therefore, that when seeking to interpret photographs, students should think about why the photographer was there and the role he or she has played in “constructing” the photograph.

He then went on to look at a number of ways in which historical photographs could be used not just to support the teaching of particular topics and themes but also to help students to learn how to analyse and interpret an important source of primary evidence on events and developments in the 20th Century.

He began by looking at how photographs can help the student to make links and connections between earlier and later events and “trigger off” historical empathy and produced several examples of how this might be done. When a sequence of photographs was used, they could help to support a narrative and, to illustrate this, he used a sequence of photographs relating to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on 28 June 1914.

A series of photographs, showing the same scene over an extended period of time, could also be a useful antidote to the tendency for curricula and textbooks to compartmentalise the C20th into relatively short blocks of time. To illustrate this, he used a series of photographs of the centre of Berlin from the early 1950s to the 1990s. The same approach could also be used to examine a recurring phenomenon such as refugees, industrial strikes, discrimination against minorities or mass protests. He also

stressed that, whilst using a series of photographs in this way was a useful means of exploring historical change, it was also possible to use them to convey a sense of historical continuity as well.

Photographs could also provide insights into everyday life that are seldom captured by other kinds of sources, particularly written ones. To illustrate this he used a set of four photographs which depicted how typical kitchens had changed during the C20th. Photographs like this were often included in history textbooks to demonstrate the impact of new technology but perhaps what was more interesting about them was that they provided insights into how people's living space had changed over the century, the line between private and public space.

He finished this part of his presentation by looking at how photographs have been manipulated to falsify the historical account or to promote a particular point of view and students needed to understand these processes and to recognise that telling lies with the camera was almost as old as photo-journalism itself.

Dr. STRADLING then went on to discuss the use of the Internet in history teaching and learning and noted that the difference between using the Internet and using textbooks, topic books and source books to develop the student's historical skills is partly one of scale, i.e. a wider range of sources, but also that the approach of the student to sources can be much more like the way an historian actually works and thinks. Where the textbook approach may require the student to answer specific questions about source material, the researcher on the Internet also has to consider important questions about the nature of the sources used as well. The students also need to use effective search strategies which have to be learned and practised. He gave several illustrations of how to help history students develop such skills.

He concluded that the history teacher needs to *model* the application of the skills and approaches required for analysing visual sources and making effective use of the Internet much as the science teacher does laboratory demonstrations of experiments before allowing the students to reach for the test tube and light their Bunsen burners.

d. The experience of EUROCLIO in the preparation of materials in the Russian Federation and South East Europe

Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD began her presentation by explaining that EUROCLIO (the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations), which had been founded in 1993 with 17 member organisations drawn from 14 countries had now expanded to a membership of 66 organisations from 39 countries. Its activities included international conferences, study visits and in-service training seminars for history teachers, publishing a bulletin and newsletter and maintaining a website (www.eurocliohistory.org). In addition, it undertook a number of projects on history education, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands and under the frameworks of the Stability Pact, MATRA and NOVA-DOBA.

She then went on to provide some background information about each of these five projects:

1. The development of history textbooks in the Russian Federation

Working with a group of Russian history teachers, three textbooks had been developed which focused on the second half of the 20th Century:

1945-1955: The post-war decade
Illusion and Disillusion, 1960-1970
Difficult Roads to Democracy

A commercial publisher had now produced 100,000 copies of each book for use in Russian secondary schools.

2. New Ways to the Past

This project had involved working with history teachers in Estonia and Latvia to develop a Teacher Guide on History Education which had focused on political developments in the two countries since the 1920s and also on the effects of the Soviet regime on everyday life in Estonia, Latvia and other countries that had formerly been part of the Soviet Union. The Guide had been published in 2000 in three languages: Estonian, Latvian and Russian.

3. Understanding a Shared Past, Learning for the Future

This is an ongoing three-year project which will lead to the development of a handbook for history teachers entitled: *Change and Continuity in Everyday Life in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia*, which will focus on the impact of the Communist system and the fall of Communism on everyday life over the period 1945-2000. The handbook will be published in four languages: Albanian, Bulgarian, English and Macedonian, and is targeted on secondary school teachers of history.

4. New Times, New History

This is another ongoing project, involving cooperation between EUROCLIO and history teachers in Ukraine, to produce a textbook for 15-16 year-olds with the provisional title, *Ukraine 1901-1939, the period seen through the eyes of an individual*.

5. A Teacher Resource book for history educators in Estonia and Latvia

Another ongoing project which began in 2002 and will be completed in 2004. The main outcome will be an innovative teacher resource book on controversial issues in modern history which will include ready-to-use classroom materials.

All of the projects have also included an important dissemination component, usually in the form of in-service training seminars for teachers and occasional symposia and round tables designed for a wider audience of teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, academic historians, policy makers and the media.

Each of these projects is also systematically evaluated and, in the course of her presentation, Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD provided some evidence from the analysis of evaluation forms. It was clear that the responses from teachers attending workshops or making use of the project materials and textbooks was very positive. Nearly all of the Russian teachers found the project textbooks “*attractive*” and “*interesting*” and liked the emphasis on developing skills and independent thinking. The Russian students who used the textbooks reported that they liked the design and content and a large majority liked the methods. Only around one-in-ten found this kind of innovative textbook “*too difficult*”. Teachers attending the in-service training seminars and workshops were also very positive.

Having illustrated her talk with a number of examples from the textbooks, handbooks and other teaching resources that have emerged out of these projects, she concluded with some thoughts about what makes a good history textbook. It must:

- be challenging;
- be active and creative;
- be academically and pedagogically up-to-date;
- be multiperspectival;
- be suitable for the age groups and ability range it is targeted on;
- use appropriate language for that target group;
- cover the required curriculum;
- be attractive;
- relate to additional materials and resources that can be accessed through ICT;
- offer opportunities for cross-curricular work.

d. A look to the future of textbook publishing

This presentation was given by Jim BELBEN, a publisher of history textbooks in the United Kingdom. He began by providing some background information about educational publishing in the United Kingdom. At present, there were around eight to 12 commercial companies who published most of the textbooks for schools. There was a free and open market, teachers chose the books, publishers and their textbook authors made the decisions regarding content and format, but their decisions needed to be taken within the framework of the National Curriculum for History, otherwise their books would not sell. Textbooks were usually written by experienced and innovative history teachers not academic historians. Generally speaking, history books were well-regarded by school inspectors, teachers and students.

The last 30 years had seen dramatic changes in the form and content of history textbooks. Then, they had been black and white, with few if any pictures, the text was written solely by the author, the emphasis was on providing explanations, sources were not usually included, there might be some questions for the student to consider at the end of a chapter but not many other kinds of practical task or learning activity, and the overall outcome was what Jim BELBEN described as a “finished product”: an authoritative account of the events and chronology to be passed on in its entirety to the

students. Now, textbooks make a lot of use of colour, include many visual images, not just photographs but cartoons, posters, maps, etc. there are usually multiple inputs and perspectives and not just a single authorial voice ; there is a lot of primary source material included ; and a wide range of tasks and activities to provide the students with opportunities to develop and practise their skills and historical understanding. As a result of all of this, the emphasis now was on providing students, not with a “finished product”, but with the raw material with which they can work in order to construct their own historical account.

He then went on to explain why these changes had taken place. First, new technologies had revolutionised textbook publishing making it possible to use formats and techniques that were not available 20-30 years ago. Second, competition within the school textbook market was very keen. Now there were fewer but larger publishers competing for a profitable market and this had led to heavy investment in textbook development and an emphasis on constant innovation. Also, every stage in the development of textbooks had become more professional and specialised: the writing, editing, design and photographic research. At the same time, changes were taking place within education which had had implications for textbook publishing. Publishers were aware that history was fighting to retain its place in the core curriculum. They had to take account of the Education Ministry’s views on history education and what should be covered within the National Curriculum whilst also recognising that it was teachers ultimately who developed and delivered the history curriculum in each school. Also they needed to be aware of what educational research was telling them about how pupils learn history and they needed to be aware that they were producing textbooks and auxiliary materials for a heterogeneous population of students with different abilities, needs and learning styles.

Generally, he felt that the changes had been for the better. The latest generation of textbooks engaged the pupils, empowered the teachers, reflected the process of historical analysis and interpretation and also made a significant contribution to the pupils’ intellectual development. But this kind of design is expensive and more time consuming than the older, more traditional style of textbook.

He then raised a number of issues relating to textbook design and to how textbooks support history teaching in the classroom. Whilst acknowledging that his perceptions were likely to be influenced by the context in which he worked in the United Kingdom and might not necessarily apply to circumstances in all of the countries represented at the Conference, he felt that in textbook publishing “*function should dictate form*”. In his view, the main functions that sources perform in textbooks are to promote genuine enquiry by the students and to assist historical reconstruction. On this latter point he noted that sources were being increasingly used in textbooks - and by history teachers in the United Kingdom - to build a detailed account. Indeed, he also used the term “*scaffolding*” to describe this function. It was not quite so clear whether he thought that source materials also had another function: to present students with a multiplicity of perspectives, particularly if this function did not complement the process of historical reconstruction. On the one hand, he recognised that it was important for students to encounter and understand historical controversies. On the other hand, he emphasised that sources should be used primarily “*for reconstruction rather than relativism*”.

Finally, Jim BELBEN offered some generalisations about textbook development based on his own experience:

- Get the objectives clear;
- Focus innovation on the core elements of the history curriculum;
- Bring teachers into the creative loop;
- Let function dictate form;
- Ensure some element of choice;
- Prefer market approval to government approval;
- As far as possible within normal constraints, take the time to ensure a quality product;
- Let textbooks do what textbooks do best (help to structure lessons, provide material for analysis and discussion, provide opportunities for practising skills, etc).

IV. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PUBLICATION OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS SINCE 1996

The General Rapporteur of this Conference was also General Rapporteur of the equivalent Council of Europe conference on textbooks which was held in Warsaw in 1996, and Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD and Falk PINGEL were speakers there¹. On that occasion, the Council of Europe brought together Ministry officials and publishers - but not textbook authors - from 20 countries. Seven of the countries represented in Sinaia in 2002 also sent participants to Warsaw: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. The rest of the participants who attended on that occasion came from the Baltic States and the former Soviet Republics and there was also strong representation from Central Europe.

Clearly, then, we cannot make a direct comparison between the deliberations in Warsaw and our discussions in Sinaia but, nevertheless, it is still useful to see to what extent some issues are still concerning us and the extent to which new issues and concerns have emerged since then.

So perhaps a useful starting point for such a comparison would be the conclusions from the report on the Warsaw Conference written six years earlier.

1. At that time it was clear that, throughout much of the early 1990s, there had been a strong emphasis in academic history and school history on removing the Marxist-Leninist ideological framework in historical research and history education, recovering or rediscovering national history and incorporating it into the school history curriculum.

¹ For a more detailed account see, Robert Stradling, 'The preparation and publication of new history textbooks for schools in European countries in democratic transition' Warsaw, Poland 1996, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, CC-ED/HIST (97) 2.

2. However, it was also clear that, by the mid-1990s, this reform process may still have been ongoing in some countries, but concern was rapidly shifting towards the problem of textbook supply. Great efforts were being made to ensure that there would be at least one new textbook available at each grade but, even so, some delegates were reporting that there were still significant gaps in provision.
3. Most of the participants in Warsaw were keen that the next generation of history textbooks would contain more illustrations, maps, graphs, use better quality paper and printing and make greater use of colour.
4. The publishers were very concerned about the escalating costs of textbook development.
5. Publishers were also concerned at that time about copyright issues if they started to produce textbooks which included much more source material of all kinds.
6. The ministry officials were mostly concerned about the financial constraints imposed on educational budgets and were not sure whether it would be feasible to make major changes in the design of textbooks if it then put them beyond the reach of schools or parents.
7. In most countries it was felt that the pool of textbook authors needed to be significantly increased. At that stage, it was noted that some of the authors writing the new textbooks were those who had been writing them before the political transition and, in some cases, the old textbooks were still being used in the classroom.
8. There was also a related debate about who should write the textbooks for schools - academic historians or history teachers - with the majority of participants favouring a significant shift to using the pedagogic experience of school teachers.
9. There was also widespread concern amongst the publishers and ministry officials that, without significant changes in initial and in-service training, many teachers would continue to teach in the same way using the text and ignoring the source material, assessment exercises and enquiry-based learning activities.
10. As in Sinaia, there was much discussion about the criteria used by textbook evaluation committees. There was a general view at that time that the two key criteria being applied then were to:
 - ensure congruence between the official curriculum and the textbook;
 - ensure that books were factually correct, objective and unbiased.
11. There was some discussion about multiperspectivity and some participants felt that this might be achieved through textbooks developed by bilateral or multilateral teams drawn from different countries. But, at that time, the

majority of participants were concerned that multiperspectivity would lead to relativism where any perspective could be treated as if it was equally valid.

12. There was a clear consensus that textbooks should not encourage stereotypical, xenophobic or racist thinking.
13. Participants at that time were also agreed that national history texts should be sensitive to the past and present experiences of minorities.
14. It was also widely felt that textbooks should promote the use of good language and be written in language appropriate to the age and level of the pupils.
15. Finally, participants felt that textbooks should be challenging and help the student to think more deeply and critically about history.

A number of these issues and concerns were also expressed here in Sinaia, six years later. In some of the countries represented here, these issues have been resolved, at least to a degree. In some others, these concerns are still dominating discussion while, in others, there are signs that the nature and form of some of these concerns are changing. Also, it is apparent that some new issues and concerns have emerged.

So let me go through these issues and concerns again and this time review where we are now.

Recovering and re-discovering national history. Professor BARNEA touched on this issue in his keynote presentation. But it seems from the discussions in the plenary sessions and in the working groups that we are all becoming more aware that most of us live in multicultural societies and that the notion of writing a grand narrative of the nation's history in an objective and unbiased way is problematic. Several participants, as well as those giving plenary presentations, talked about multiperspectivity, particularly, though not exclusively, when teaching about sensitive and controversial topics and events. Compared with 1996, there now seems to be greater awareness that the role of the textbook author is to find an appropriate pedagogical strategy for handling the sensitive and the controversial rather than to make authoritative judgments and pronouncements about who was right and who was wrong.

It is clear that at least some of the new generation of textbooks now emerging are moving away from the conventional chronological survey approach characteristic of the grand narrative. We saw examples in Sinaia of thematic approaches, textbooks which focus on a single topic or theme and textbooks which incorporate dimensions of history, including the social, cultural and intellectual, which often call for very different approaches to the content from that which often prevails in the coverage of political history.

Textbook supply. Here the issue seems to be gradually shifting from one of ensuring that there is one textbook for every grade to one of ensuring that there may either be more than one textbook to choose from or that the history teacher has access to alternative or auxiliary materials as well. However, this development is clearly not happening at the same rate in every country represented here.

Textbook design. Some of the issues associated with textbook design that were raised in Warsaw also emerged again here. More visual material, more extracts from documents and other primary source material, and more student exercises. But the discussion is also shifting away from the technicalities of textbook design towards the pedagogical issues: how best to make use of photographs, maps, extracts from documents, etc. in order to help students learn critically to analyse and interpret historical evidence.

Textbook development costs. This is clearly still a widespread problem. Undoubtedly the increased use of all kinds of source material alongside the text increases production costs and this problem is heightened when publishers are expected to submit complete books in competition with other publishers for official approval. It may be that in the more populous countries of the region the potential market for a school textbook is such that it is worth the initial investment even though there is a risk of not getting official approval. But it is less clear that the risk is worthwhile in smaller countries. It also seems to me that there is now much more concern being expressed about how to ensure that fair competition actually operates in the textbook approval procedures.

Concerns about copyright. This was not mentioned as frequently at this Conference as it was in Warsaw but that may be because there was no specific question on it for discussion during the working group sessions in Sinaia. However, some publishers and textbook authors did raise the issue and perhaps this is something that the Council of Europe can help with at a number of different levels, including putting useful information and guidance on its website. But also the Council of Europe is planning a new project which might be of some help here and I will return to this presently.

Price of textbooks. There were mixed opinions here. Some participants expressed the view that, in their country, textbooks were reasonably priced; in others, it seemed that the average price was regarded as high. This is clearly a particular problem where parents and pupils are expected to purchase the books and where the books are targeted on the older students in the non-compulsory phase of education.

Who writes textbooks and is there a sufficient pool of expertise. The whole question of whether school textbooks should be written by academic historians or by school teachers is clearly still a live issue six years on. There seems to be a Catch-22 problem here. Publishers and ministry officials say that teachers do not have the expertise and experience to write textbooks but many of the academic historians who do write these books write in a language and style that is not appropriate for pupils and have little or no idea how young people learn or how history teachers teach. The solution appears to be a capacity building programme where NGOs like EUROCLIO and international organisations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, in collaboration with the publishers, run some training workshops for teachers who are interested in becoming textbook writers.

The need for changes in initial and in-service training. This issue also came up in discussions here as well as in Warsaw six years ago. When textbooks and other resources are not being used by teachers in the ways that were intended, then, it is very easy either to blame the teachers or the teacher trainers. Of course, in some of the countries, the infrastructure for in-service training is not well-developed or adequately financed. In other countries, it seems that the publishers, the Ministry of Education

and the local education authorities have a joint responsibility to use the infrastructure effectively in this way. A point which Falk PINGEL stressed in his presentation. Curriculum change and innovation requires an integrated policy and structured and systematic planning to ensure that curriculum planners, inspectors, teacher trainers and school authorities are working together. It also requires effective consultation with the end users: the teachers and their pupils. I would emphasise here a point made by Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD in response to a question at the end of her plenary presentation. When some teachers in the Russian Federation were provided with training in how to use the new generation of student-centred, activity-based textbooks, and then provided with opportunities to trial the new resources in their classrooms and then provided with opportunities to give feedback to the authors. The response was very positive and the teachers did not seem to experience problems in adopting these innovative approaches.

Textbook criteria. It appeared from the working group discussions that the range of criteria for evaluating and approving textbooks is broadening. Compliance with curriculum requirements is still regarded as central, so is cost. But curriculum requirements and objectives seem to be broadening to incorporate a wider range of learning outcomes which, in turn, have implications for the textbook's pedagogical or didactical approach. So criteria now increasingly make references to:

- the skills development of the students;
- multiperspectival approaches to the use of sources;
- the underlying humanistic, pluralistic and democratic values that should underpin the approach and language of the book.

There was also a lot of discussion here about the technical quality of the textbook. Finally, earlier in this Report, I referred to a new Council of Europe project that has been recently proposed and I want to return to it now because I think it has implications for a number of the issues and concerns we have been discussing at this Conference.

V. A NEW COUNCIL OF EUROPE HISTORY PROJECT

Last year, the Education Committee of the Council of Europe decided that a new history education project should be implemented which would:

- Emphasise contemporary history and the history of recent conflicts;
- Analyse issues relating to migration and minorities;
- Set European history into a global context;
- Incorporate the education for citizenship dimension.

Whilst it is important that this new project emphasises contemporary events and conflicts it is also essential that it takes a historical approach. That is, that it seeks to help students to understand the roots of these recent events, conflicts and developments. Young people get much of their information about contemporary events from the mass media which lacks that historical, longer time perspective.

It was also felt that the new project should not just concentrate on conferences and seminars; it should initiate the production of a series of practical and tangible end-products.

It was also emphasised that the new project should:

- Focus on events or developments which had an impact on the whole of Europe;
- Encourage teachers to take a comparative perspective;
- Contribute to the development of young people's historical understanding and skills;
- Encourage them to examine events and developments from a multiplicity of perspectives.

The central idea would be to focus on a relatively small number of years in the C19th and C20th, which are taught in most European syllabuses, which represent significant turning points for the development of contemporary Europe and which, to some extent, helped to sow the seeds for recent conflicts and problems.

At the time of writing the “turning-point dates” have not been agreed yet, but the ones under consideration are:

1848 The year of revolutions.

1871 Completion of the unification of Germany and Italy, the undermining of the 1815 settlement and the re-emergence of war as an instrument of national policy.

1913 Balkan Wars and the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire.

1919 Re-drawing of the map of Europe at the Paris Peace Conference and the growing demands for self-determination.

1929 The Great Crash and its impact on Europe.

1945 Yalta and Potsdam and a new re-structuring of Europe.

1989 The break-up of the Soviet Union, the Velvet Revolution in Central Europe, the start of conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Now, obviously these key years were selected for their political significance but we also wanted to help students to put political events into a wider economic, social and cultural perspective regarding what was happening across the whole of Europe.

So we plan to set up small teams of history educators across Europe who will collect suitable primary and secondary source material relating to their countries and regions on those years which are of particular significance to their country and region. These source materials could be documents, photos, oral history, audio-visual clips, etc. With this documentary material, they will be asked to produce summaries, with quotes,

translated into English, French, German or Russian so that they can also be used by teachers in other countries.

Then, there will be a central editing team who will sift through all of this source material and select elements of it for inclusion on CD-ROMS. This source material will be organised into three levels:

Level 1: illustrative support material, pictures, photos, statistics, quotes from key figures, etc.

Level 2: primary source material for students doing enquiries with guidance on how to do this.

Level 3: material gathered together on the same event or development to reflect multiple perspectives.

There will also be accompanying booklets for teachers on various ways of using the material in the classroom.

Those are the bare bones of the new project. Obviously, there are several stages which we will need to go through before the project can be implemented but I think it may go a long way towards helping teachers, textbook writers and publishers to access useful source material of all kinds that can be used comparatively.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This was an extremely well-organised Conference, held in very pleasant surroundings with a group of participants who contributed a great deal to the plenary and working group sessions. Particular thanks are due to the hosts and local organisers, the keynote speakers, the Working Group Rapporteurs and Chairs, the Secretariat, and especially the observers from Israel and the Palestinian Authority for their wholehearted engagement in our Conference and their willingness to discuss their own circumstances and problems in such an open and constructive way.

Overall the Conference has served as a kind of stocktaking exercise on the changes that have taken place in the development and publishing of history textbooks in South East Europe over the last five years or so. To that end, it is clear that significant changes have occurred since 1996, and undoubtedly since 1989. But there is still scope for further developments in the role and procedures of textbook commissions, the production techniques, the pedagogic functions of textbooks and the ways in which teachers use history textbooks in the classroom.

APPENDIX I

REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

Session 1

These two questions were discussed in their professional groups (i.e. as ministry officials, publishers or textbook authors)

1. What makes a good textbook for:
 - Lower secondary pupils?
 - Upper secondary pupils?
2. Does the current generation of textbooks meet these criteria?

Sessions 2-4

These questions were discussed in mixed groups with participants from all three professional categories.

1. Who decides which textbooks will be used? Are decisions left to market forces, or competitions or are there official procedures for approving or recommending books?
2. If there is some kind of procedure for the approval or recommendation of books, are the criteria transparent to publishers, authors and schools?
3. What have been the main changes in textbook publishing over the last five years e.g. in terms of content, style, layout, use of colour, typography, production techniques, price, etc.?
4. Have changes also taken place in the ways in which history teachers use textbooks and other learning materials to support teaching?
5. What guidance are student teachers receiving in their initial training regarding the use of history textbooks and other learning resources?
6. What kinds of changes do you want to see in the next generation of textbooks? What sort of timescale is realistic for their development?

SUMMARY OF THE REPORTS FROM THE FIRST SESSION

Summary produced by Carol Capita

During the discussions related to the first question, it became apparent, through the critique of present textbooks, that the criteria for making/selecting good textbooks are the following:

- a good relation and balance between sources and author text;
- an optimum relation with the curriculum;
- the variety of sources (with a stress on visual data);
- student-centred;
- communicative, pointing towards other media;
- offering assessment items.

An important point was that all participants in the group considered that adequacy to the age of students, layout and language are important, and that additional materials (i.e. teacher guide, etc.) might prove to be beneficial. Also, textbooks should be realistic in terms of content; the relation between the content and the available time-scale was considered to be critical.

In relation to the teaching of sensitive issues, the participants discussed the quality of sources (e.g. avoiding the use of violent images²) used in presenting such topics, and if the textbooks should give judgments on the content presented³.

The second question was considered to have no answer, although the critique of the current situation seemed to be an answer. As a result, the main points are the following: compliance to the curricula; increase in the number of sources; strengthening the didactic aspects of textbook development.

Summary produced by Robert Stradling

There was some debate within the professional working groups about whether it was necessary to differentiate between upper and lower secondary when considering what makes a good history textbook. However, after discussion it became apparent that, in some countries, there was an issue about producing textbooks which were appropriate to the age of the student. Two points were made about this. Firstly, there was concern about the need to ensure that the language level was appropriate to the students. Indeed, it was pointed out that, in most of the countries, language and language level was often one of the criteria for evaluation and approval of history textbooks. Secondly, there was a feeling that there needed to be a different balance between text and illustrative material for the two age groups, with the younger students using textbooks with more photographs, cartoons, posters, maps, etc.

² There is an agreement between “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Turkey not to use photographs that are too violent when presenting Turkish history.

³ The participants were not clear whether the author’s text should give ready-made (moral) judgments or not, or if these should be built via sources.

There was also a recognition that good textbooks, regardless of whether they were produced for lower or upper secondary levels, should pose challenging questions for students, i.e. questions which encouraged them to interpret and explain events and developments and not just descriptively reproduce what happened and when. Colleagues from Israel also emphasised the importance of encouraging students to *ask* questions and not just be in the more passive role of answering them.

It was also generally felt that good textbooks should provide the teacher with opportunities to use them in a variety of different ways depending on how he or she intended to approach a particular theme or topic.

When discussion turned to the issue of whether or not the current generation of books met the criteria for a good textbook which had emerged earlier in the discussion, some concern was expressed about the balance between text, particularly narrative text, and the other components of a good textbook: source material, illustrations, student activities and assessment exercises. It was felt that there was still a heavy emphasis on content, in spite of changes in textbook design, and many teachers still taught to the author's text, regarding the other components as optional. In this respect, it was also widely felt that evaluation or approval committees often applied their own criteria inconsistently, putting emphasis in practice on the content and on knowledge acquisition, and much less stress on the other criteria relating to quality design and to the pursuit of other learning objectives.

REPORTS FROM SESSIONS 2-4

Report of Working Group 1

Rapporteur: Dr Laura Capita

The procedure was the following: the representative of each country presented the situation, then other participants made comments and asked questions.

Questions 1 & 2

The participants seemed to agree on the following:

- all the countries, there are procedures for approving and/or evaluating textbooks before entry on the market.
- The procedures are designed at the level of Ministries of Education, and they include institutions and mechanisms of approval. Institutions included: expert commissions for the evaluation of publishers' draft manuscripts; pedagogical institutes that establish criteria or even evaluate textbook proposals. The mechanisms involved included the presentation of the criteria, the production of the project (in several cases, 25% of the textbooks), evaluation, approval.
- Once approved and introduced into the system, the textbooks are used for a relatively long period of time (in general, at least five years). For compulsory education, these are either bought by the ministries of education, so that there is some influence on the price of textbooks (with the exception of Croatia and Slovenia); or bought by parents (the latter applies mostly for the High School level,

but in some countries for all levels). The ministries either establish the actual price or establish the upper price limit.

- The representative of the Tabernakul Publishing House in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” presented a particularly interesting example for discussion since it is responsible for the translation of textbooks for all the minority groups in that country.

Question 3

The participants agreed that progress has been made in the production of textbooks. The improvements related particularly to new pedagogical approaches and ideas, the increase in the number of photographs and other sources, the decrease of the space devoted to author’s text. The most obvious and visible changes have occurred at the level of layout, paper quality and other technical aspects. The representative from Albania presented an illustration of the experimental development phase for a new history textbook.

Question 4

The members of the working groups identified at least three types of textbook usage:

- non use in the classroom – the teachers preferring to present their own discourse based on textbooks, including the new ones;
- the use of textbooks for the learning tasks and activities and for stimulating debate and discussion;
- minimal use of textbooks and opportunities created for the introduction of other sources (film, Internet, etc.).

It has been stressed that younger teachers are more interested in the use of didactical materials (not just textbooks but also other resources), and that publishing houses are now more interested in supporting the teachers to use the textbooks. (In Israel, authors have to promote their textbook).

The group concluded that the changes, although evident, are not enough, and that ministries have to do more to support and help teachers to use textbooks and other learning materials.

Question 5

It became apparent that, in initial teacher training, little is done to teach future teachers to use textbooks. This seems to be the result of a lack of university staff qualified to teach such skills to the students.

Question 6

The changes in textbooks are viewed in a broader context that includes curricular changes and teacher training, both strongly linked to the textbook issue. There is a great need to establish joint ventures for the training of teachers in the use of textbooks. Other suggestions included:

- more clear-cut criteria concerning the graphics, layout and the printing of textbooks;
- the introduction of specialists in printing/publishing into the evaluation committees.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 2

Rapporteur: Mihai Manea

Question 1

Central approval of textbooks operated in all of the countries represented in this group. In some instances, this was done by a single person, the Chief Schools Inspector or the Inspector for History (Secondary); in other cases, it was done by a committee. The procedures were thought to be quite bureaucratic. They also had serious cost implications for publishers. In some instances the textbook committee required to see at least 25% of the finished product before giving approval and in other cases they wanted to see the whole book.

Question 2

There appeared to be major differences between the participating countries in terms of the specificity and transparency of the criteria applied in evaluating and approving textbooks. In some countries, the criteria were not at all transparent, while, in one country, even the number of pages per topic was pre-specified. The main criteria were curricular.

Question 3

The main changes were technical, particularly in terms of textbook design: better quality paper and printing, more illustrations, use of colour. Authors and editors in some countries reported that they had appreciated external advice from NGOs and international organisations. But there was a need for training programmes for new authors.

Question 4

It was not clear whether the new textbooks had had much influence on classroom practice yet. It was felt that in-service training was needed for all history teachers in how to make the best use of the new textbooks in the classroom.

Question 5

Little or no guidance was provided for student teachers. The use of textbooks tended not to feature in the initial teacher training of history teachers.

Question 6

It was generally felt that textbook approval should be done by an independent committee and not by a single school inspector. Now that technical and design features had improved, it was essential that the next generation of textbooks should do more to encourage the development of students' historical understanding, critical thinking and skills. Some of the group also favoured a greater diversity of approaches within textbooks, not just chronological but also thematic, however it was recognised that this depended to some degree on the curriculum framework for history. Finally, the group agreed that it would like to see more multiperspectivity in textbooks.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 3

Rapporteur: Dr Carol Capita

Question 1

There seems to be a twofold mechanism: while the criteria for textbook production and the institutions involved (usually, commissions that work autonomously, but under rulings developed by the central school authority) are public, the final selection seems to be in the hands of the teacher. He/she is the one that makes the final decision about which of the available textbooks and other materials will be used in the classroom. As such, most countries in the region have a mixed system in which the number of textbooks is either established by the state, or left to the commitment of the publishing houses. In some cases, however, there is still a one-textbook system.

Question 2

The textbook approval commissions work on the basis of criteria established by the central school authorities (in some cases, these criteria are negotiated within a World Bank Project). The criteria are made known to the publishing houses and teams of authors (and to the general public via the web site of the central authority). In rare cases, teachers are asked for feedback (one instance was given of where this feedback can influence the process of revising the curriculum).

Generally speaking, the criteria seem to fall into several main categories: content (and compliance to the curriculum guidelines and syllabuses), printing and layout, the didactic approach (sometimes included in the previous category) and price. The last criterion seems to be more influential in countries with economic problems (and tends to lead towards a greater degree of central control).

Question 3

The changes that took place in the last few years seem to have been radical; in some cases, this period witnessed changes to the entire education system (e.g. the translation from “imported” textbooks to local development of educational materials). The scope of the changes that occurred seem to be global, from procedures of approval to content, layout, printing quality and price. The more significant changes occurred in relation to content, layout and didactic approaches. Two models are emerging: radical changes in content with old didactics, or content remaining constant but with new didactics. These developments seem to be influenced also by the composition of the teams of authors: while diversity is increasing, the contribution of academics is, at least in some cases, more content-oriented. Teacher guides (as annexes to the textbooks) are a possible way of amending this situation.

Question 4

The major problems facing the improvement of classroom activity are financial and teacher training. In the first category, underpayment of teaching staff seemed to be important in both recruitment of teachers and individual professional development. At the same time, financial limitations make additional classroom materials a desideratum still to be achieved. While some projects aimed at additional classroom materials are unfolding, textbooks remain the staple tool in classrooms. Finally, the limited financial means put a significant stress on in-service training capacities.

Where free market economies are in place, prices and salaries are not such a problem, but the ageing teaching staff is considered problematic. It is apparent that teacher training has to go hand in hand with the introduction of new curricula and textbooks; the practical (classroom related) aspects have to play a more significant role (say, through pilot projects in schools).

Question 5

Although initial teacher training is provided in all countries, it is mostly theoretical. In most cases, theory is overshadowing practical activities in schools and the administrative structures limit the impact of initial teacher training on the system. Hence, practical activities in schools (via partnerships between initial teacher training institutions and schools) should be increased.

Question 6

Briefly stated, the conclusions of the working group are the following: textbooks should be discussing and solving conflicts. They should be acceptable for all parties involved; content should go hand in hand with didactics – the focus on content has to be balanced by modern, student-centred approaches to teaching and learning. Textbooks should also allow for individual learning, and enable the teacher to decide on the relation between students’ needs and the application/use of the textbooks – diversity of information, of sources and approaches should be sought; it is very difficult to establish a time-frame for the introduction of these changes. A sensible timescale is necessary for a proper modification of the education systems.

APPENDIX II

PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE

Wednesday 5 June 2002

Arrival of the participants

20h00 Dinner

Thursday 6 June 2002

09h30 – 11h00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Cezar BIRZEA, Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences of Romania

Opening of the Conference by:

- i. Nicolae NICOLAE, General Director, Pre-university Education Department, Ministry of Education and Research of Romania
- ii. Teodor BACONSKY, Ambassador, Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania
- iii. Romulus POP, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Education and Research of Romania
- iv. Alison CARDWELL, Head of History Education Section, Council of Europe
- v. Ioan BUCUR, Mayor of Sinaia

Opening presentation on "The present situation of history textbooks in Romania" by Professor Alexandru BARNEA, Dean, Department of History, Bucharest University

11h00 – 11h30 Coffee break

11h30 - 13h00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Cezar BIRZEA, Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences of Romania

Presentation on "Implication of the research on textbook development in South East Europe" by Dr Falk PINGEL, Georg Eckert Institute for History Textbook Research, Germany

Discussion

Introduction to working groups by Dr Robert STRADLING,
United Kingdom

13h00 – 14h30

Lunch

14h30 – 16h00

Working groups - Session 1

- Ministry officials;
- Textbook authors;
- Educational publishers.

16h00 – 16h30

Coffee break

16h30 – 18h00

Plenary Session

Chair: Dr Cezar BIRZEA, Director of the Institute of Educational
Sciences of Romania

Presentation on "The use of Internet and photographs in history
teaching" by Dr Robert STRADLING, United Kingdom

Discussions

20h00

Welcome reception offered by the Ministry of Education and
Research of Romania, Foişor Palace

Friday 7 June 2002

09h30 – 11h00

Plenary Session

Chair: Dr Cezar BIRZEA, Director of the Institute of Educational
Sciences of Romania

Presentation on "The experience of Euroclio in the preparation
of materials in the Russian Federation and the South East
Europe" by Joke van der LEEUW ROORD, Euroclio

Discussions

11h00 – 11h30

Coffee break

11h30 – 13h00

Working groups - Session 2

13h00 – 14h30

Lunch

14h30 – 16h00

Working groups - Session 3

16h00 – 16h30

Coffee break

16h30 – 18h00	Working Groups - Session 4
19h30	Dinner
Evening	Preparation of conclusions and recommendations by the chairs and rapporteurs of the working groups and the general rapporteur

Saturday 8 June 2002

09h00 – 9h45	Plenary Session
	Chair: Alison CARDWELL, Council of Europe
	Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations by the rapporteurs of the working groups
	Presentation by the general rapporteur of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Conference
9h45 – 10h00	Coffee break
10h00 – 12h00	Plenary Session
	Chair: Alison CARDWELL, Council of Europe
	Closing speeches
	- Presentation on "A look to the future of textbooks publishing" by Jim BELBEN, Humanities publisher, John MURRAY, United Kingdom
	- Lord Russell JOHNSTON, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
	- Liliana PREOTEASA, General Director, Pre-university Education Department, Ministry of Education and Research of Romania
	- Radu DAMIAN, State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Research of Romania
	- Alison CARDWELL, Head of History Education Section, Council of Europe

12h00 - 13h00	Lunch
14h00 – 18h30	Visit to Peleş, Bran Castle and Braşov
Evening	Cultural evening offered by the Ministry of Education and Research of Romania

Sunday 9 June 2002

Departure of the participants

APPENDIX III

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