

# **Responsible History Education as a Tool for Historical Reconciliation? EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators as a Case Study?**

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**Abstract:** Many academic theorists of history and history education have been writing about reconciliation through the learning and teaching of history. However there is little empirical information nor about the practical applications neither about the implementation of such approaches. In this contribution, I would like to have a closer look at EUROCLIO's working methods in areas with internal political, ethnic and religious tensions such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Rumania, Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey, and in countries and regions which have experienced recent violent conflicts such as Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. I would then like to explore the question if the work of EUROCLIO could qualify as example for reconciliation through teaching history and if its approach builds a teaching and learning of history that supports sustainable political entities.

## **Introduction**

Many academic theorists of history and history education have been writing about reconciliation through the learning and teaching of history. However there is little empirical information about the practical applications and about the implementation of such approaches.

In this contribution, I will take a closer look at EUROCLIO's working methods in areas with internal political, ethnic and religious tensions such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Rumania, Russia Ukraine, and

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Turkey, and in countries and regions which have experienced recent violent conflicts such as Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. I will then explore the question if the work of EUROCLIO could qualify as example for reconciliation through teaching history.

Educating young people is a responsible task of a society. History education has always been used to enhance the national sense of belonging of younger generations. In the late 20th century areas with internal political, ethnic and religious tensions such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Rumania, Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey, and also countries and regions which have experienced recent violent conflicts such as Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, the Republic of Macedonia have demonstrated that historical interpretations of recent and distant events in the past still play important roles in the public and political debates, and easily fuel tension and conflict.

Directly after the Fall of the Wall, a group of history education professionals understood that it was therefore time to have a common critical look at the traditional approach to school history and to increase the innovative quality and the sense of responsibility of history educators. They founded in 1993 EUROCLIO, the European Association for History Educators with the mission to promote and support the development of innovative and responsible history education, strengthening peace, stability and democracy. The Association propagates an approach to history education that smoothes out the ragged edges of nationalism and other ideologies, deconstructing historical myths and negative stereotypes and putting traditional enemy-images into perspective. It promotes the sound use of history education towards building and deepening of democratic societies and therefore tries to connect across boundaries of countries, ethnicities and religions. Over time, building on the practical work carried out within numerous projects, EUROCLIO has been able to define and constantly refine an innovative history education methodology, also applicable when addressing more difficult, sensitive and controversial issues. The Association represents, in 2011, 73 organisations from 46, mainly European, countries sustaining an international network of at least 25,000 historians and history, citizen and heritage educators, servicing each year at least 5,000,000 students and pupils<sup>(1)</sup>.

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(1) Retrieved from <http://www.euroclio.eu/mambo/index.php>.

In order to achieve its ambitions, EUROCLIO believes that school history demands responsible well-rounded professionals. It chose as an independent civil society organisation to work primarily with the professional group (namely teachers, teacher trainers and advisors and curriculum developers targeting on history, citizenship and heritage education). All the work of the Association is based on three pillars: intense professional capacity building, resulting in the development and implementation of innovative, class-room applicable teaching materials; national and trans-border networking and the creation or strengthening of sustainable and professional national, regional and local History Educators Associations in all European countries and beyond. These organisations act as multipliers of the EUROCLIO work on the national level. Unfortunately such associations do not exist in Lebanon.

EUROCLIO projects bring together history and citizenship educators across national, cultural and religious borders to explore the sometimes painful past in a safe environment and through a professionally guided and closely monitored process. In creating a carefully designed methodology and a stable working environment, it has been possible to bring professionals representing different communities involved to gather and produce collaborative results. The exemplary teaching materials for history and citizenship classrooms are published in many languages such as Albanian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Croatian, Estonian, Georgian, Macedonian, Latvian, Rumanian, Russian and Serbian and are important outcomes of such collaborative work. Generally the produced materials are very well received by the educators and the students. External reviews and press coverage are mostly positive, although opponents, especially in Russia, have sometimes sounded alarm bells over the lack of patriotic attitudes of the authors<sup>(2)</sup>.

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(2) See for positive reviews: Cole (Ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past, History Education and Reconciliation*, 2007, p. 277; Ingraio, C., & Emmert, T. A. (Eds.) (2009). *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies, A scholars' initiative*, (p. 410). Perdue University Press; Cole, E. (2010). Education in the Shadow of history, *Education, history education and their place in historical justice*, (p. 10), unpublished Utrecht Edited Volume Chapter, draft, 3 May 2010.; Barton, K. C. (2007). *Evaluation Report on EUROCLIO project 'Macedonia: Retelling the History'*. University of Cincinnati. [http://www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php/macedonia-retelling-the-history-national-projects-221/materials-national-projects-231/cat\\_view/61-national/48-2006-2007-macedonia-retelling-history/419-reports-and-information](http://www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php/macedonia-retelling-the-history-national-projects-221/materials-national-projects-231/cat_view/61-national/48-2006-2007-macedonia-retelling-history/419-reports-and-information); The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbooks Research organised in 2009 an international Seminar on "BiH between 1992-1995" in which a team member of the EUROCLIO project in Former Yugoslavia contributed extensively <http://www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php/georg-eckert-institut-associated-members-920/658-sar-> =

Although these history text and resource books are used to this day as complementary materials by many, their predominantly function is in depth development of professional capacities. In all EUROCLIO projects in politically sensitive contexts, and in particular in the projects in former Yugoslavia countries, participants managed to grow their own and genuine awareness for the innovation of history education and the supranational perspective. By fighting the instrumentalisation of history education for petty political objectives, these projects promote the essence of school education, continuous seeking and questioning, and represent a step towards less segregated societies. Since 1991 over 13,000 history, heritage and citizenship educators are trained to develop innovative material respecting diversity and to implement the material in the classroom.

The projects are based on trust building among educators participating, who belong to divided societies and/or countries which were recently at war. In Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, Former Yugoslavia, Latvia, Georgia and Central Europe this has been enacted with a high level of success- both governmental and international recognition has recognised the transformation of the target group in their thinking and teaching skills. Bringing together representatives from teaching communities of the ‘victims’ as well as ‘perpetrators’ and ‘bystanders’; ‘the oppressors’ and ‘the oppressed’ and creating a safe environment for them to work together, the approach creates sustainable working and personal relationships to emerge across conflict divides.

In each project EUROCLIO identifies key people estimated to have developed sufficient ownership of the process of innovating history teaching in a responsible way and to have the capacity to act as multipliers of the project outcomes, via the sharing of experience and expertise with their colleagues. Based on the educational materials developed within the project, they are able to train other people via lectures and interactive workshops in

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= [ajevo-qbosnia-and-herzegovina-between-1992-1995q](http://www.trouw.nl/opinie/commentaar/article3124781.ece/De_pijn_van_Srebrenica_kan_slechts_helen_door_erkenning_en_educatie_.html). See Dutch online newspaper Trouw, 12 July 2010, about EUROCLIO’s work in Former Yugoslavia [http://www.trouw.nl/opinie/commentaar/article3124781.ece/De\\_pijn\\_van\\_Srebrenica\\_kan\\_slechts\\_helen\\_door\\_erkenning\\_en\\_educatie\\_.html](http://www.trouw.nl/opinie/commentaar/article3124781.ece/De_pijn_van_Srebrenica_kan_slechts_helen_door_erkenning_en_educatie_.html); see *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*, 2010, by several United Nations offices and the Council of Europe, which include the publications developed within the projects “Retelling the History” ran in 2006-2007 in Macedonia and “Integration of Society in Estonia” ran in 2002-2004.

their own country and abroad, in other contexts where EUROCLIO is dealing with controversial and sensitive history. The core group of educators identified in each project also establishes dialogue with national educational authorities, media and other civil society organisations to advocate curricula changes and follow-up partnerships to widen the impact of the project.

### **Methodology and the projects**

The EUROCLIO methodology promotes an approach to history as a multi-layered and complex reality based on interpretation. In contexts where history has been instrumentalised for political purposes, this represents a radically new way to address historical knowledge. The projects seek to help history educators answer the challenges this new approach implies by developing alternative complementary classroom materials. Through the study of various sources, students discover multiple narratives and learn how to distinguish between facts and opinions, between evidence-based information and propaganda. Traditional assignments for the history lesson are questioned and engaging activities requiring empathy, communication and team work are introduced. Such approach is potentially valid in many other fields related to the education of young people, since it aims primarily to develop their skills and attitudes. History works in this sense as a lever for a broader educational innovation. In this conception, history, citizenship and heritage education is directed towards developing democratic competencies in an active learning manner, adhering to the key and transversal competencies, formulated within the EU education framework<sup>(3)</sup>.

The projects in problematic political contexts foster a teaching of history that enhances critical thinking and the willingness to question simplistic narratives, as well as promotes empathy skills and the ability to disagree about interpretations of the past and their implications for the

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(3) See the key competencies defined by the EU Agency for Lifelong Learning: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf).

present without resort to violence. The teaching resources created by inclusive teams of history educators illustrate how these skills and attitudes can be developed among students. Rather than remember the details of specific (and potentially ideologically charged) historical narratives, the materials ask students to investigate questions and develop their own conclusions, based on original historical sources directly linked to the questions, which further reinforces a critical, rather than ideological, approach to history. The focus on the recent past, often neglected by the curricula and favoured by students according different research projects, allows students to be more involved in the collection of evidence, thus fostering active learning (Grever et al., 2011).

In order to implement a responsible and innovative approach to history education in politically sensitive contexts, the projects are conducted in a highly inclusive and collaborative manner. Key processes of participative and collaborative work are the collaboration within the project management team between EUROCLIO professional project managers and local volunteer coordinators from the national History Teachers Association; the setting up of teacher-led writing teams to create new educational materials; the transnational cooperation and peer-learning with educators from other countries. The evaluation methods used in the projects include the assessment of the project activities by local and foreign participants based on an anonymous evaluation form, the external reviewing of the educational material developed within the project by a history didactics expert, and the conduct of formal and informal interviews with project team members and leaders (conducted individually, in small focus groups, and in whole-group discussions). This diverse feedback allows a constant refining of the methodology within a given project as well as from one project to the other.

However methodological changes cannot stand alone. Responsible and innovative teaching history also requires new ways to address historical knowledge. This means a much better balance between geographical dimensions and political, cultural, economic and social perspectives, as well as a shift towards a more global perspective. There is now more emphasis on everyday life history and the Islamic world. Concepts such as migration, gender, mutual inclusiveness, human rights, diversity and environment have become relevant within curriculum debates in Europe, but are implemented to various degrees. Even not earlier discussed white spots such as national crimes against humanity, colonialism and slavery are



slowly entering the European curricula.

EUROCLIO is active in promoting these shifts in both the methods and the contents of school history aiming to implement a new paradigm of history education, based on learning history as an open narrative rather than as a closed positivistic discipline. EUROCLIO does not advocate an educational approach white-washing and sanitizing problematic national and global narratives of the past, in order to get a non-controversial, rosy picture. However the history it promotes has become more multidimensional and complex and consequently less one sided, biased, and politicized. This can be exemplified by the recent active workshops taking place within the EUROCLIO project on ‘*Experiences and Perceptions of Migrations in Europe*’ (2009-2010)<sup>(4)</sup>. Clear ready for the classroom results are prepared in the EUROCLIO *Historiana* project, the cross border and comparative educational web tool, with as first theme *People on the Move* about migration<sup>(5)</sup>. The first materials are expected halfway this year.

## Discussion

Is there in a different approach when it comes to addressing history in areas with internal political, ethnic and religious tensions or in countries and regions which have recently experienced violent conflicts? I think not. Basically all history is multi-perspective and therefore controversial, fully acknowledging that some topics are (far) more sensitive than others. However our experience in several projects taught us that sensitive history can be addressed with the same methodology. In Cyprus, EUROCLIO organised trainings in 2008-2009, where a Greek-Cypriot trainer and a Turkish Cypriot trainer ran a workshop together about the year 1571, when the island was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. This event is in the Greek national memory considered as one of the national disasters. In Russia, a country with a Russian centric national narrative, the team of *Mosaics of Cultures* invented in 2003-2005 an way to teach the unknown concept of multiculturalism<sup>(6)</sup>. In Former Yugoslavia, a chapter on the hidden history

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(4) Look for details about this project on <http://www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php/overview-connecting-europe-306> A final report is to be expected in 2011.

(5) At the moment only a website about the project is available [www.historiana.eu](http://www.historiana.eu)

(6) *Mosaic of Cultures*, school history book (320 pages) on teaching about the Russian =

of the existence of forced labour camps and the atrocities committed by the Tito regime in 1944 and 1945, was in 2008 included in the book without big debates between the team members from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia<sup>(7)</sup> In Macedonia, a EUROCLIO project *Retelling the History* designed an exemplar curriculum on the history of the recent Independence, including a chapter on the violent inter-ethnic relations, which almost led to a civil war in 2001 (Mladenovsk et al., 2007). As team members, we observed the use of these materials by 15/16 year old mixed students from 4 ethnically divided schools from Skopje. The resources were an inspiration for them and led to remarkable creative thinking, when asked to design programmes for different political parties which based their constituencies on different ethnic groups. Their capacity to develop emphatic programmes was amazing.

History education according the method carefully developed by many seems to allow addressing very sensitive themes. However, extra attention has to be paid to the working environment of professionals working in situations where past events are still very emotionally loaded. As stated before, trust building is consequently a basic concept, as only under stable and responsive conditions within the professional group dealing with a sensitive and often painful history becomes possible. Therefore extra attention is also required for the use of emotionally loaded language and narratives. We advocate thinking about the use of impartial concepts and adjectives. In some cases this leads to the design of tasks for students about the sensitivity of certain concepts or language. In the project with Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, the concept Yugoslavia initially led to heavy emotions between Serbs –*we have to use it*- and Croats-*we should avoid using it*-. However eventually they concluded that a task to make students in the region reflect on the emotion that the use of Yugoslavia evokes, would lead to an important learning outcome.

New high quality helps history education to distance itself from the traditional and often stereotypical grand national narratives. In August 2010, in Lviv, Ukraine, a group of colleagues were working hard to open the

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= multicultural society, 3000 copies. Also available on CD-Rom and Teacher Manual, 2005.

(7) Innovative regional teaching modules for the implementation of active teaching and learning approaches and critical thinking: *Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Country. Every Day Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia between East and West 1945-1990*. Available in Bosnian, Croatian, English and Serbian.



conventional Ukrainian school history and to acknowledge in the learning and teaching of history the multicultural character of Ukraine's past and present society (retrieved from <http://www.novadoba.org.ua/history/?c=multicultural>). They used (new) academic research as expert views in the interesting teaching modules collection they were developing. However traditional stereotypical presentations were still not critically addressed. I noticed general images as Ukrainians are victims; Poland, Russians and others were responsible for the fact that Ukraine had such a large Jewish population; the Jews used to be rich and did not have to pay taxes like all others and last but not least Ukrainians were the autochthon population, all other peoples were migrants. With such historical knowledge one can hardly expect that history education could offer innovative inclusive approaches. The work of *the Network of Concerned Historians* (NCH) including their code of ethics for historians is not yet generally acknowledged as the fundament for historical studies<sup>(8)</sup>.

The ability to disagree about interpretations of the past is an issue we try to address, when working in areas with political, ethic and religious tensions and conflicts. In projects on *Integration of Society* in Estonia and Latvia in 2002-2004, the inter-ethnic teams looked for a series of topics, which are very differently interpreted in the Estonian, Latvian and Russian speaking communities. The Estonian resource book *History is not only History - the Past is not yet history*<sup>(9)</sup>, dared to address sensitive questions such as '1940- Occupation or Voluntary Uniting with the USSR?', and 'the Soviet Republic of Estonia, An Independent or a Marionette State on a classroom level? The Latvian project produced *We in Latvia. Six themes. Methodical Supplementary Aid for History Teachers*<sup>(10)</sup>. One of the themes in this book was 'Identity', aiming on developing the understanding about multi-ethnic factor in historical development of Latvia and the Baltic States and the changing identities of the population throughout time (p. 32). In this chapter the stereotypes in the current Latvian society about 'ours' (Latvians), who were fighting against the 'others' (so called invaders,

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(8) De Baets, A. (2008). *Responsible history*. With a Foreword by Jürgen Kocka, President of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, 2000–2005. Please find the code of ethics [http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content\\_files/file/et/148.pdf](http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content_files/file/et/148.pdf)

(9) *History is not only Past, the Past is not yet History*, Teacher resource book, published in Estonian and Russian.

(10) *We in Latvia, Six themes, Methodical Supplementary Aid for History Teachers*, published in Latvian and Russian. p. 32.

starting already in the early ages) were addressed through critical thinking approaches.

What certainly is needed, if we really want to address difficult pasts, is time, as we experienced, especially in post conflict situations like Former Yugoslavia. Only after four project years, in the very last meeting of the editing team, the joint Bosnian, Croat and Serbian team decided that the building of the Kosovo crisis could not be left out (p. 54). This team of history educators and historians has always stressed that their understanding and mastering of innovative approaches to the subject were prerequisite for their ability to ultimately being able to address this extremely sensitive issue. And mind you, when it happened, it was in the period that the independence declaration of Kosovo was pending.

Work on controversial and sensitive history certainly also requires sincere civil courage from the participants, as professionals under these circumstances run easily the risk of being attacked by local colleagues-academic historians and history educators alike- as well as by politicians or media. The President of the Macedonian History Teachers Association was very courageous when he took the initiative to present the results of the interethnic project *Retelling the History* in November 2007 in the National Macedonian Historians Conference, a bulwark of Macedonian nationalism. However despite scepticism and several walk outs, he was able to convince many, that the model used in the project to convey a common narrative was a sound one.

In order to prevent negative pressure on the professional groups, while working on sensitive history, project teams are working in (relative) silence. Only when the local team feels confident to tell its story, contacts with local educational authorities, politicians, opposition historians and media are developed. This quiet procedure, by the way, also avoids accusations of foreign interference.

And finally, dealing with sensitivity requires, more than in any other situation, means respecting the seven procedural values, such as respect for reasoning and truth, as proposed by Dr Robert Stradling in his *Handbook on Values for Life in a Democracy*<sup>(11)</sup>. We expect our project team members to have a positive attitude and abide to these rules. Some would see that as

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(11) Dr. Robert Stradling, *Handbook on Values for Life in a Democracy* (Strasbourg, 2007). He gives and explains 7 concepts: dignity, reciprocity, fairness, tolerance, freedom, respect for reasoning and respect for truth.

preaching for the converted, however many are only bystanders before they start to work together. We have learned that people who from the beginning oppose to learn and to change are not our target group.

However is this approach enough to also qualify as example for reconciliation through teaching history? Several scholars have recently individually developed benchmarks which they consider valuable for a reconciliation process. I would like to follow Elizabeth Cole in her introduction to *Teaching the Violent Past*. She quotes Hein and Selden when she argues that content and methodology can promote long term reconciliation by enhancing critical thinking, willingness to question simplistic models, empathy skills and the ability to disagree about interpretations of the past and their implications for present social issues without resort to violence (Cole, 2007, p. 21). She promotes with several others a history education, which develops students' ability to approach the past with scholarly detachment, as a tool to reconcile conflicting pasts (Cole, 2007, p. 22).

David MacDonald writes in his chapter of *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies* under the title *Living Together or Hating Each Other*, also about the role of history education (Ingaro, 2009). He argues that there is a need to challenge the dominant negative national narratives and to also stress the more positive experiences of living together. In all our work we indeed try to widen the traditional story. In the book on the Yugoslav history the group therefore also presented topics such as sports, the film culture and tourism.

David MacDonald continues to look for further elements which should support the reconciliation opportunities and stresses, quoting Biro and Milin, the importance of friendly relations between the members of the different ethnic groups. Again, in the various mentioned projects, this is what certainly is happening. On one trip we crossed the border between Bosnia/Serbska in a bus with the Croatian team members. The border police ask them what they had been doing, and they told him that we had been working on a common history textbook with colleagues from Bosnia and Serbia. He asked if it was possible even to talk to each other. The answer was, while all were laughing, of course, we are not only colleagues, we are friends!

The Peace Building Initiative writes, often quoting Elisabeth Cole, that 'the transmission of memory and history in a post-conflict period can play a significant role in evolving new identities of citizenship' and 'having a sense

of a shared history is a central component in the formation of identities and what is generally referred to as the reconciliation process. National and international researchers generally agree that a fundamental goal of history education is to "transmit ideas of citizenship and both the idealized past and the promised future of the community." It is not surprising, then, that reforms to history education are nearly always specifically about changing the representations of the political community's past "to promote tolerance, inclusiveness, an ability to deal with conflict non violently, and the capacity to think critically and question assumptions that could again be manipulated to instigate conflict. It is often complemented by the concept of 'peace [or peace building] education' which seeks to support "an educational process that allows students to articulate, accommodate and accept differences between and within groups [...]. This entails a distinct two-fold process that nurtures and constructs positive inter-group relations while marginalizing and deconstructing negative inter-group relations." History education occupies a specific place in the reconciliation process in that it reaches beyond the elite level and becomes "part of people's lives, and also part of the mid-level and grass-roots institutions, such as schools, whose workings relate more closely to the lives of average citizens"<sup>(12)</sup>.

Mirroring these ideas to EUROCLIO's work, when working in areas with political, ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts, it looks that we abide many of the requirements laid out by academic experts. However even a five year project with Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, was only able to start addressing the minor controversies in the region. The big ones related to the Second World War and the Wars of the Nineteen Nineties remained untouched. And although many among our colleagues in the region feel now ready to address the Second World War in school history, they are still hesitant directly to tackle the wars of the Nineteen Nineties<sup>(13)</sup>. They are aware that, as Elisabeth Cole (2010, p. 2) put it during her lecture in Utrecht in May 2010, it will be a big challenge to fulfil the legitimate request of victims, that their suffering should be acknowledged in textbooks and at the

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(12) About this project: Novadoba, (n.d.) retrieved from <http://www.novadoba.org.ua/history/?c=multicultural> in Ukrainian and <http://www.euroclio.eu/site/index.php/projects-mainmenu-125/current-projects-mainmenu-32/we-and-the-others> in English.

(13) Project proposals to address these very sensitive topics are submitted by EUROCLIO to the EU, the OSCE, the UN Alliance of Civilisations, and Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unfortunately it takes most donors very long to decide if they would like to fund these projects. The danger is that the momentum gets lost.

same time not to burden a new generation with new fuel to prolong hatred and willingness to fight. We are only at the beginning to find a workable approach for classroom use.

However many warn with the Peace Building Initiative that "history education potentially can promote reconciliation, a certain stage of reconciliation needs to be reached before textbooks can be revised, the public can accept these revisions, which challenge narratives held dear by certain sectors of the population, and teachers can challenge discredited narratives and stereotypes and risk controversy in the classroom." (International Association, 2007-2008). Unfortunately this grass root work is recurrently unpopular as it is generally not reflecting fashionable, and often populist, political stances. In Russia the liberal attitude of the Nineties has disappeared, and a new battle between government and historians and history educators is fought to interpret the recent past more positively<sup>(14)</sup>. In Georgia the government promotes the writing of a new textbook to inform the students about Russia's negative influence over the last 200 year on the developments in the country<sup>(15)</sup>. And also in Former Yugoslavia, certainly the present governments of Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia are not eager to introduce textbooks with a more balanced approach. And the decision of the Israeli Ministry of Education to exclude events such as first Lebanon war and the Oslo Accords from the textbooks, while more recent events such as the peace accords with Jordan as well as "Jewish immigration into Israel during the last 30 years of the 20th century", should be included (Kashti, 2010).

There is still much work to do, and I fear also it will never be finished.

## Conclusion

After almost 20 years of projects implementation, EUROCLIO has been able to establish sustainable relations with other organisations active in the field of reconciliation and peace-building, such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the European Union, etc. These major players

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(14) See articles about the creation of a Commission to 'counter attempts to harm Russian interests by falsifying history' by president Medvedev in May 2009 in History in the News on the [EUROCLIO Website](#).

(15) See the announcement of such initiative on the website of the Georgian Ministry of Education in March 2010, <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=670&lang=eng>.

regularly request EUROCLIO expertise and involve the Association and its members in their wide-scale initiatives. However international and local politicians, media and donors are often interested in instant result and spectacular projects, which immediately have to tackle the most sensitive and controversial topics. They are using concepts such as quick start projects, which last for a maximum of three years, and are envisioned as quick solutions for the existing problems, also for history teaching. It is unfortunately not easy to convince these politicians, media and donors that a more step by step approach has far more sustainable results. It is an important task for those professionals within EUROCLIO and beyond, who want to continue the present pathway, to continue to find successful ways to convince international and local politicians, media and donors that the new way to address school history really can contribute to sustainable Peace, Stability and Democracy.

Hasty instant solutions are not possible in education. Changing habits and beliefs are delicate, sensitive and time consuming assignments for those involved. However, I do believe that EUROCLIO has offered a successful model for many history educators in Europe to address innovative, and often controversial, content as well as innovative, collaborative, active, meaningful and effective ways of learning and teaching. If history education professionals recognize that their work matters, they are more than willing to develop a history teaching that supports a sustainable world.

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