



# **North-South Centre of the Council of Europe**



Lisbon, 1 April 2009

## **Concept Paper**

**The role of the North-South Centre in promoting history teaching  
at global and Euro-Mediterranean level**

## Background

While history and history teaching have been a focus for the Council of Europe's work on education since its inception – being mentioned specifically in the European Cultural Convention of 1954 – the political context today (with globalisation, human migration, the development of information technologies and the existence of both dialogue and tension between different cultures and different religions) makes it more significant than ever.

The Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005) stated that: “The Council of Europe will enhance all opportunities for the training of educators, in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history and intercultural education” (III.3) and added the following: “Convinced that dialogue between cultures is also fostered by accurate understanding of history, we endorse the Council of Europe's work in history teaching and related projects, and decide to intensify our efforts in this direction. We encourage more active involvement of civil society in this work.” (III.6)

The Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue, adopted at the closing conference for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (in Faro, Portugal, in October 2005), stresses the need to further develop knowledge and awareness of history, cultures, arts and religions, and to highlight elements illustrating both the historical and the contemporary influence of cultures and civilisations on each other, as well as cultural cross-fertilisation. It also stresses the role of the North-South Centre in promoting intercultural dialogue together with its mission of fostering European awareness of intercultural and development issues – adding a global dimension to the work of the Council of Europe in the field of education.

The current Council of Europe project “The Image of the Other in History Teaching” is part of a cohesive overall effort involving all the Council's activities in the field of intercultural dialogue. The increasing multicultural nature of European societies lends new significance to history teaching and requires, at the same time, a thorough review of its aims and methods, focusing in particular on ways of developing multiperspectivity.

Bearing in mind also the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2001) 15 to Member States on history teaching in 21st-century Europe, the project on “The Image of the Other in History Teaching” has the following aims:

- to promote, by means of educational policy measures and proposed strategies and methods, an approach to teaching and learning history that reflects the increasing cultural and religious diversity of European societies;
- to contribute to reconciliation, acknowledgement, understanding and mutual trust between different cultures and outlooks and to overcome stereotypes and prejudices by promoting the values of tolerance, openness to and respect for others, human rights and democracy.

On 7 May 2008 the Committee of Ministers adopted the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together as Equals in Dignity”. This document now constitutes the general framework of all the activities and programme of the Council of Europe within this domain.

## Recent developments

In 2008 the NSC intensified its work with the History Education Division of the Education Directorate (DGIV) of the Council of Europe. One example was the Centre's participation in the Ad-Hoc Advisory Group for the project "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century" for the preparation of the expert meeting "History teaching in Europe: the image of the Other in the context of globalisation" that was organised in March 2008 in Strasbourg, to which the Centre brought a global dimension. As a follow-up, a meeting on "Images of the Other in History Teaching – the Role of History Teaching Institutions in the North and Global South", was co-organised by the North-South Centre and the History Education Division, in partnership with the Aga Khan Development Network in September 2008 in the Ismaili Centre in Lisbon. This meeting brought together European and Southern experts to discuss new competences in history teaching in growing culturally diversified societies and the possible **development of an international network of history teachers training institutions**.

The conclusions of this meeting were presented at the "Mediterranean Cultural Forum" that took place in November 2008 in Marseille and at the Council of Europe's symposium "Globalization and images of the Other: challenges and new perspectives for history teaching in Europe?" that took place in November/December 2008 in the framework of the project "The Image of the Other in History Teaching". The objective of the meeting was to discuss the impact of globalisation on the objectives and the role of history teaching in Europe, to identify the competences to be acquired by the students and the skills needed by teachers and to identify possible strategies in this context. The symposium gave also the opportunity to further discuss the proposal emerging from the French EU presidency of producing a **history textbook for the Mediterranean**, where the North-South Centre would act as a facilitator of a working group of historians during the 2009-2011 period.

The Centre has also intensified its collaboration with other international organisations in this particular field. This has led to develop new activities on two major and complementary axes:

1. at global level: launching a world-wide dialogue on history teaching in partnership with IRCICA and in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations
2. at Euro-Mediterranean level: facilitating the work on a common history textbook for the Mediterranean as a follow up of the "*Les etats genereaux culturels mediterraneens*" organised in November 2008 by the French EU Presidency.

## NSC activities in 2009-2010

Taking stock of previous activities of the Council of Europe's History Education Division and following up on current developments, the main aim of the North South Centre in the field of history teaching is to provide the space and facilitate the developments of networks among historians, history teachers, history teaching institutes and universities and decision makers in the field of (history) education in the context of globalisation. The following activities are going to be organised in 2009-10 in partnership with various national and international partners.

## 1. Informal Meeting of Historians – Intercultural Dialogue, History and History teaching in the context of Globalisation

The Council of Europe and IRCICA jointly organised a Symposium on “Globalization and Images of the Other: challenges and new perspectives for History teaching in Europe in November/December 2008 in Istanbul. One of the conclusions of the discussion was that intercultural dialogue, as defined in the “White Paper on intercultural dialogue - Living together as equals in dignity” demands a great reflection on history. It was understood that a worldwide dialogue on history research and teaching was necessary and that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of AoC in Istanbul would be a good occasion to make proposals and to start the process of developing a network of historians in this field.

**Aim and objectives:** The meeting will gather historians and history teachers from different parts of the world with a view to having an exchange of views on the role of history and history teaching in the framework of intercultural dialogue; discussing how history teaching can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful future for the next generations; discussing the impact of globalisation on history research and teaching and identifying some orientations for future progress and reforms; discuss and make proposals on how a dialogue between historians and history teachers could be developed at global level and finally, to draft an orientation paper on the progressive setting-up of a network

**Date & venue:** 5 April 2009, at IRCICA, Yildiz Sarayi in Istanbul, Turkey, prior to the Alliance of Civilisations’ 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum on 6-7 April 2009, to clarify needs and to draft a plan of action to be submitted to the Forum itself.

A second follow up meeting is foreseen in January 2010. The venue is still to be decided.

**Organisers:** The meeting is organised jointly by the Council of Europe, the North-South Centre and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA, Organisation of the Islamic Conference) in co-operation with the Alliance of Civilizations.

The meeting will be held in English and in French and simultaneous interpretation will be available during the meeting.

**Expected results:** Experience in setting up and developing of wide networks shows that one should have clear ideas about the aims and a very flexible approach to the building process. In other words the process of setting up is as important as the network itself. This might take time but is essential in order to create mutual confidence, to overcome unavoidable difficulties and misunderstandings and to be sure that all partners identify with the aims and objectives.

The strategy for the setting up the network would be to (1) establish a list and relations with existing international history networks or organisations; (2) start with a limited number of partners that are strongly committed and willing to contribute concretely; (3) set up a light structure whose first objective would be to define precisely the concrete aims and basic methodology; (4) develop the network slowly by co-opting new participants according to the implementation of activities; (5) defining a clear and limited theme/issue, around which a first exercise of exchange and co-operation might start.

The main aim of the network would be to encourage intercultural dialogue among historians and develop awareness on the history of the other and common history through history teaching and learning. The activities that could be foreseen to take place in the context for the network building process are: (1) organising conferences, prepare publications on themes directly related to a global approach of history, (2) fostering research on history of globalisation as such; (3) collecting examples of good and innovative practices on history, intercultural dialogue and globalisation in the classroom or in any other places of history learning; (4) advising for the development of history teaching materials aiming in particular at the acquisition of intercultural competences in this field; (5) advising for the reinforcement of intercultural competences and related pedagogy concerning teacher training; (6) in the longer term, giving support to teacher training seminars.

**NSC budget:** 9 000 Euros for the meeting in Istanbul in 2009 and 10 000 Euros in January 2010 for a follow up meeting.

## **2. Common History Textbook for the Mediterranean**

The French EU presidency organised the “*Les etats genereaux culturels mediterraneens*” in November 2008 in Marseille. One of the workshops - “Memories and Histories” - was designed to give the opportunity to participants to reflect upon the necessity to re-think the Mediterranean history in a new perspective, which would incorporate a long-term vision instead of focusing on current affairs. The discussions were focused on three major areas: (a) the teaching of historical facts; (b) the cultural patrimony of the Mediterranean and the protection of places of worship and remembrance (religious sites, cemeteries etc) and (c) Archives and the Mediterranean (conservation and access). Inspired by the Council of Europe’s previous cooperation with countries around the Black Sea and the production of the “*Black Sea Teaching Pack*” on of the main outcomes of the workshop was to work collectively on a common history text book for the Mediterranean.

**Aim & objectives:** the objective of the history text book project is to develop an ‘educational tool’ elaborated jointly with all the Mediterranean countries, around the issues which define and represent the Mediterranean perspectives with a common ground. It will also expose the idea of a universal ‘training kit’ which would present in a documented and analytical way the positive interactions which tie the Mediterranean banks together.

**The reunion in Lisbon** would allow for a first working meeting of experts to take place and to further elaborate on the collective work leading to the production of this educational tool for the Mediterranean. The meeting in Lisbon would be followed by a second workshop in Marseille in November 2009, organised by the Marseilles-Provence-Mediterranean cooperation committee. The seminars would be divided into two parts (1) a symposium on historiography and issues related to one of the six periods being studied; (2) working groups designed to bring out the main questions to be addressed in the training manual.

**Date & venue:** 12-13 May 2009 in Lisbon, Portugal. The meeting is hosted by the Ismaili Centre in Lisbon and the Aga Khan Development Network.

The meeting will be held in English and in French and simultaneous interpretation will be available during the meeting.

**Participants:** A maximum of 20 historians/experts from Europe and the countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean, taking into account the East-West dimension and (re)integrating the Balkan region in the Mediterranean collaboration. Furthermore, representatives from the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) and the Marseilles-Provence-Mediterranean Cooperation Committee should be invited to attend the meeting.

**Organisers/partners:** The meeting is organised jointly by the North-South Centre (NSC), the History Education Division of the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Aga Khan Development Network in Portugal and with the political support of "*Mission pour la Méditerranée*" placed under the authority of the President of the French Republic.

Moreover, additional long-term partnership and support will be explored with the Marseilles-Provence-Mediterranean cooperation committee, which has shown interested in the project and would like to make its network available, particularly to run a series of conferences in the Mediterranean. The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation had also expressed an interest in the project which would call for having a representative present at the Lisbon meeting in May. The Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia, might also provide some financial and educational support for the development of this educational tool.

**The teaching kit:** The aim of the teaching kit to return to the sources of our common history and avoid creating a new place for remembrance. It aims to take contemporary issues as a basis for examining the past to bring out a history with a universal appeal. The teaching kit should be divided into six topics, corresponding to four traditional periods of history. The benefit of this chronological breakdown is both to underline these different developments on the two shores in their own time frames, and also to bring out a truly Mediterranean time scheme:

- The birth of a crossroads of civilisation;
- The establishment of the Mediterranean idea;
- The Mediterranean and the *translatio imperii* (4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century),
- The Mediterranean on the margin (4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century);
- The Mediterranean world and the process of modernisation (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century);
- The invention of the Mediterranean (19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century)

Rather than being a pedagogical tool aimed directly at pupils, this complementary textbook is addressed to secondary teachers, and more specifically to the trainers of the trainers/educators. Its aim is to enable a change of vision, rather than imposing a new 'truth' which would be merely circumstantial. It is therefore presented as a way of opening up national historical horizons to a truly democratic, Mediterranean perspective. It is meant to offer a reading of Mediterranean history that no national textbook deals with so broadly, and no general history brings out properly at all.

The pedagogical tool will be a product of an international team from every side of the Mediterranean and beyond. It carries within it all the multicultural variety of the national historiographies that make it up.

**Coordination group:** the purpose of creating a coordination group is to have a team of experts that will design the teaching kit and decide on its objectives and the subjects to be covered and secondly to evaluate the project at its various stages, including the final product.

- The coordination group is co-lead by: Gérald Arboit (France) and Mostafa Hassani-Idrissi (Morocco)
- Two technical advisors: Effy Tselakis (Greece) and Gilles Kraemer (Palestine)
- Group of authors with a diverse composition in terms of specialism/expertise in subject-area and regional origins: Béchir Yazédi for contemporary history (Tunisia); Gérald Arboit for contemporary history (France); Mostafa Hasani-Idrissi for modern history (Morocco); Stéphane Douillot for modern history (France); Benedetto Maffezzini for mediaeval history (Italy); Gordien Jonker for ancient/East history (Germany)
- Thematic group for the understanding of words and concepts that have crossed paths on their way from East to West and North to South: Gordien Jonker as project leader (Germany); Charles Coutel (France), Béchir Yazédi (Tunisia); Menachem Klein (Israel)
- Evaluation team: Chris Rowe (United Kingdom); Alain Choppin (France); Laurence Rullan being a secondary teacher (France); Hassan Remaoun (Algeria); Massoud Daher (Lebanon); Chakir Akki being an inspector of secondary schools (Morocco)

**Expected results:** the meeting will provide the space (1) for producing a concrete plan of action for 2009-2010 to work on the teaching kit, including organisation of working seminars, subsidies, distribution and monitoring of the textbook, potential publisher etc.; (2) for a first exchange of views on the contents according to the division of topics and proposed structure of the teaching kit (3) to elaborate on the links between the work of the expert group and the political (educational) decision making process in the countries around the Mediterranean; (4) to identify the administrative and financial support from institutional partners.

**NSC budget:** 20 000 Euros for the meeting in Lisbon in May. In order to have a sustainable approach to the project, it is needed to further explore the French support for the foreseen Mediterranean seminars/working group meetings, mainly through the Marseilles-Provence-Mediterranean cooperation committee and the “*Mission pour la Méditerranée*” placed under the authority of the President of the French Republic.

### **Background documents**

- Council of Europe’s project description “Images of the Other in History teaching” (2006)
- Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe’s Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue - 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (2005)
- Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living as Equals in Dignity”
- Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2001) 15 on history teaching in 21st-century Europe
- French Presidency report: Mediterranean Cultural Forum – [the 10 Mediterranean Cultural Projects] (2008)