

PARTICIPATION OF HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHERS IN INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES: THE CASE OF EUROCLIO*

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In recent years there have been several international in service training courses that are available for teachers which are supported by the European Council or some other International organizations. Such International in-service training courses provide great opportunities for teachers to improve their educational skills. This article aims to show to what extent history and social science teachers participate in such courses and encourage teachers to apply and attend them. In this chapter the EUROCLIO annual in -service training courses are used as an example.

The European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) is a NGO based in the Netherlands, and has about 60 member History teachers association and organizations from 46 countries. 17 national and regional associations of history teachers decided to establish EUROCLIO at a meeting in Strasbourg in November 1992. EUROCLIO had its first official meeting in April 1993 at a symposium on 'The Teaching of History since 1815 with Special Reference to Changing Borders' organized jointly by the Netherlands Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe. EUROCLIO identified itself as an independent organization without political, philosophical and religious affiliations (Slater, 1995). The establishment of EUROCLIO can be seen as a result of changing views about History education and history in Eastern and Western Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain and at the end of the Cold War. After the Cold War new textbooks have been written and teachers have been re-educated. Since history education has more influence than any other subject on people's views about other states and people, in the new period the importance of the development of multi perspectivity, mutual understanding and international cooperation has increased (Leeuw-Roord, 1998). EUROCLIO which was founded in such an international conjuncture aims to strengthen

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the position of history in the curriculum of schools throughout Europe. EUROCLIO promotes innovation in history education and the intellectual freedom of history educators, and aims to enhance mutual understanding, sharing information and cooperation between history educators in Europe (Slater, 1995). A history educator, Ruth Watts from the UK claims that the most significant development from the work of the Council of Europe in history is the birth of EUROCLIO (Watts, 2000, 176).

In order to reach the aims stated above, EUROCLIO has organized international annual professional training and development courses for history educators in various countries since 1993. Recent themes of the courses have been, changes in the learning and teaching of history in the decade of educational reforms; building from the local to the global perspective in school history; using history skills, values and concepts, human rights in history, heritage and national identity, European citizenship, ICT in history lessons and multiculturalism. At the 2005 and 2007 EUROCLIO annual conferences I was the only Turkish participant. When I noticed that there was not enough participation from Turkey I contacted EUROCLIO to gather information about all their annual courses since 1993. I asked about course topics, number of participants and how many Turkish participants have attended these annual courses. The table below which was sent by EUROCLIO shows the numbers of participants and from which countries they have come from to attend these events each year. When the table is examined it is clear that more than 100 educators from 35 different countries participate in these events every year. People from many countries including the USA, Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, France, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldavia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tataristan, Turkey, UK and Ukraine have participated in the conferences. Most of the participants are history teachers or social science teachers in elementary or secondary schools. Apart from teachers, textbook writers, academics, teacher trainers as well as bureaucrats from the ministry of education of various countries participate in these meetings.

These annual events usually take five days. On the first day of the courses, officials of the host country such as the president, minister of education or some top level academic welcomes the participants and gives brief information about the history of that country and its education. Throughout the rest of the week there are some school visits in order to introduce the host country's educational system and history lessons to the conference participants. The participants visit different schools in small groups. After

a briefing by the head teachers of the schools concerning the school and the national education system, the participants are taken to different classes where they find an opportunity to observe history lessons and to ask students and teachers different questions. During the visit it is aimed to observe history or social science classes but if such classes are not available during the visit the participants can observe other classes as well. During the school visit the school's resources and other facilities are introduced to the participants, also the participants visit the teachers' staff room and have a chance to talk with other teachers at the school. During the week one day is reserved for visiting the museums and important historical sites of the country. While historical places and museums are being visited, various information about the history of the country is introduced. The educational facilities of the museums and sites are also introduced. The visits show concrete examples of using museums and historical places in history teaching.

Table 1. International Conferences of EUROCLIO 1993-2010

1993	Glasgow, Scotland	<i>Concepts and Skills in History</i> , 62 participants from 4 countries
1993	Leeuwarden, The Netherlands	<i>History Teaching since 1815 with Special Reference to Changing Borders</i> , 150 participants from 35 countries
1994	Glasgow, Scotland	<i>Concepts and Skills in History</i> , 40 participants from 8 countries.
1994	Bruges, Belgium	<i>Problems in the Learning and Teaching of History</i> , 40 participants from 25 countries
1995	Berlin, Germany	<i>Teaching about the Potsdam Conference and its Consequences</i> , 70 participants from 30 countries
1995	Toledo, Spain	<i>Philip II and his Time</i> 100 participants from 6 countries
1996	Neuchâtel, Switzerland	<i>History Teaching: a Key to Democracy?</i> , 65 participants from 30 countries
1996	Jurmala, Latvia	<i>Explore the Unknown Europe. History and History Education in the Baltic States</i> , 50 participants from 15 countries
1997	Budapest , Hungary	<i>Preparing for the 21st Century. Principles for the Design of History Syllabuses</i> , 102 participants from 31 countries
1997	Pècs, Hungary	<i>The Youth and History project. Challenges and Implications for the Teaching and Learning of History</i> , 70 participants from 37 countries
1998	Helsinki, Finland	<i>History Teaching and Information Technology – Will IT enhance History Teaching</i> , 105 participants from 39 countries

1998	Coleraine, Northern Ireland	<i>The past in the future, Information technology in history education and Education for Mutual Understanding</i> , 25 participants from 5 countries
1999	Edinburgh, Scotland	<i>Heritage and National Identity – Key Concepts in History Education?</i> , 108 participants from 37 countries
2000	Lisbon, Portugal	<i>Remembering and Commemorating History</i> , 112 participants from 35 countries
2001	Tallinn, Estonia	<i>A Changing World, the Significance of Everyday Life in the Learning and Teaching of history with a Focus on the 20th Century</i> , 140 participants from 35 countries
2002	Prague, Czech Republic	<i>A Rich and Varied Diversity. The Learning and Teaching of Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in Europe</i> , 140 participants from 39 countries, 1 participant from Turkey
2003	Bologna, Italy	<i>School History on the Move. Changes in the Learning and Teaching of History in the Decade of Educational Reforms</i> , 195 participants from 38 countries
2004	Cardiff, Wales	<i>Belonging to Europe – Small Nations, Big Issues</i> , 118 participants from 32 countries, 1 participant from Turkey
2005	Riga, Latvia	<i>Gaining Equilibrium? How to balance Local, National, Regional, European and World History</i> , 160 participants from 43 countries, 1 participant from Turkey.
2006	Valletta, Malta	<i>Using History Skills and Concepts to Promote an Awareness of European Citizenship</i> , 160 participants from 43 countries, 3 participants from Turkey
2007	Bled, Slovenia	<i>Human Rights Education: Lessons from History</i> , 160 participants from 43 countries, 1 participant from Turkey
2008	Bristol, England	<i>Multi-ethnic Histories as a Vehicle for Values, National Character, Identity and: History Teaching and Ethnic Diversity</i> , 123 participants from 38 countries, 1 participant from Turkey
2009	Nicosia, Cyprus	<i>Taking the Perspective of the Others: Intercultural Dialogue and Teaching and Learning History</i> , 120 participants from 35 different countries, 2 participants from Turkey
2010	Nijmegen, Netherlands	<i>A Bridge Too Far? Teaching Common European History Themes, Perspectives and Levels</i> , The Conference will be held from March 22-28 2010 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands

During the rest of the week, different workshops and lectures take place after breakfast until dinner time. While experts from different countries speak about their topics that are based on that year's agenda, in the workshops

practitioners from different countries make presentations about different aspects of history education and participants get the opportunity to share their experiences from their own countries. Before the conference the participants are asked to bring samples of materials, textbooks, assessment tools etc. from their countries. These materials are displayed for the whole week and they are shared and compared. On the last day of the programme a cultural farewell party is organized. At this party there is a musical and folklore presentation which introduces the culture of the host country. The participants get the opportunity to further learn about the folklore and culture of the country as well as getting rid of the stress of the week. Apart from officially planned activities the participants do find opportunities to have further discussions during the meals and tea breaks as well as the free hours after the dinner. It is also possible to meet and speak with the officials of the country during the receptions that the ministry of education or universities of the country gives.

It can be said by participating in such in-service training courses, the educators further develop their many skills and become able:

- 1- To learn about the developments about education around the world.
- 2- To benefit from the knowledge of international education experts about the current problems of education.
- 3- To compare their country with others by seeing examples of education methods in different countries.
- 4- To learn about different cultures by making new friends from different countries.
- 5- To find possible partners for other European Union projects.
- 6- To learn about the culture and history of the host country.
- 7- To learn about the current political and daily events of the visited country.
- 8- To be motivated to learn a foreign language or further develop their knowledge of a foreign language.
- 9- To reduce any mutual biases and prejudices and to know each other better.

The annual conferences of EUROCLIO are part of the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme, Comenius/Grundvig catalogue, so teachers can apply for grants to attend the meetings. The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is a European funding programme which supports education and training across Europe. The LLP provides funding for all stages of lifelong learning; for activities at school, at college, at university, in the workplace and in the community. Lifelong Learning programmes provide educational improvement opportunities without any cost to anyone

from primary-secondary education students to adults, from professional education apprentices to university students, from people who are in need of main skills to education professionals. The LLP is made up of several different programmes offering a variety of opportunities. It provides opportunities for schools and colleges to introduce or strengthen the European dimension in their curriculum. Comenius in-service training grants are available for staff involved in school or further education to attend a training activity in any of the 30 participating countries across Europe. The Comenius programme focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary schools. It is relevant for all members of the education community: pupils, teachers, local authorities, parents' associations, non-government organisations, teacher training institutes, universities and all other educational staff. Many participants of EUROCLIO activities participate in these events by using Comenius grants. Comenius and other LLP activities of the European Commission in Turkey are handled by the Center for European Union Education and Youth Programmes, the Turkish National Agency which works under the Turkey State Planning Organization. According to the information on the National Agency web page Turkey joined the European Union Education and Youth Programmes as a "full member" in April 1 2004. Turkey joined the Lifelong Learning programme which started in January 1 2007 again as a "full member". Lifelong Learning and Youth programmes which cover a 7 year period that will last until the end of the year 2013 will accept applications 5 times each year.

Although the grants the National Agency provides change according to the type of activities, for in-service training courses the grant covers the visa fees, course fees, travel and accommodation costs. For example the course application fee for the EUROCLIO in-service training courses is 1000 Euro including accommodation. When travel costs and visa fees are included, the total expenses become about 1500 Euro. When this number is considered alongside the average salary of a teacher it is clear that this Grant is important. In the Grant opportunities that are provided by European Commission, first priority is given to those have not been to any foreign country or have no foreign language experience and to those who work in regions and institutions with socio-economical disadvantages. A participant who has scholarship from Comenius cannot benefit from it again for three years. In order to benefit from any LLP courses a knowledge of one of the following languages is needed: English, French or German. The actual reason for the low amount of participation from Turkey is the lack of any foreign language experience. In order to participate in personal in-service training courses a person has to prove that he/she has language skills in English, French or German. If

trainee teachers are to be informed about such opportunities during their undergraduate or PGCE degree, they will be motivated to learn a foreign language. If academics who participate in such events make presentations to their students about the activities they participated in and how teachers can join such activities, their students will be motivated to follow international developments and to learn a foreign language.

Another reason for the low participation in international activities is the lack of self confidence. It is possible to observe that some educators, even if they know a foreign language, are shy and humble in this matter. Some teachers are using their lack of practice as an excuse. However it is possible to meet participants in international events with different levels of foreign language. While there are participants that can speak English very fluently, there are also participants whose language skill is just enough to follow the courses. So people should try to attend those events since it is the only chance to improve their foreign language practice. Another reason for the lack of participation in such events can be seen as due to the lack of information that teachers have about such opportunities. Actually after I shared my experiences and knowledge about such opportunities with social science and history teachers around me, I have observed that they know nothing about such opportunities or how to apply for to those grants. It is clear that if National Agencies and the Ministry of Education make more effort to announce such opportunities, there will be more participation in such international events.

In this part of the article some practical information for those who might be willing to participate in future courses of EUROCLIO and other courses that are part of the LLP programme will be given. It is possible to find detailed information about both LLP/Comenius and EUROCLIO programmes in www.euroclio.eu web page. It is also beneficial to constantly check the web page of National Agencies. For detailed contact information of national agencies for all countries can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc1208_en.htm. In the UK the LLP programmes are managed by the British Council and ECOTEC. The joint website www.lifelonglearningprogramme.org.uk serves as a portal for information on all Lifelong Learning programmes and funding opportunities for people from the UK. In Turkey people should check the web page www.ua.gov.tr for details. In those web pages it is possible to learn about educational activities of the European Council, the application procedures, the application dates and assessment criteria for applications, as well as other opportunities. Since all National Agencies have different criteria and application dates, those who wish to participate in such events should check those pages regularly and act with care. Not only social studies and history teachers, but teachers from all

subjects can participate in various in-service training courses that are held in various countries in English, French or German languages. It is possible to reach a list of all the activities that teachers and education professionals can participate in under LLP programmes via the following link <http://ec.europa.eu/education/trainingdatabase>. In addition to that, many international organizations provide many grants for teachers and academics to attend. One should be a good internet user to search for those opportunities. For instance in Turkey it is possible to reach a list of available international course grants and their application dates from the Ministry of Education International Affairs General Supervisor's Office web page: <http://digm.meb.gov.tr/> by clicking the "in service training" link.

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