

GOING BEYOND PRIDE AND PAIN?

“History that Connects the Balkans” 3rd EUROCLIO Regional Summer School
18-23 July 2017 Vlorë, Albania

2nd Annual Meeting of the Standing Working Group on History Education



Public Report



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Introduction

We are in a very pleasant forest high in the Albanian mountains, yet close to the Adriatic coast. We are 78 civil society representatives, history educators and policy makers in the field of history education, from 17 countries. Most of us, however, are from the Western Balkan countries. EUROCLIO – the European Association of History Educators, together with CDRSEE – the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe and the Anne Frank House, all experienced implementers of innovative history education programmes, have brought us together. The Albanian Association of History Education (ALBNA) made it possible on the ground, in cooperation with their local partners. Those of us that are working in civil society to progress toward a history education that promotes mutual understanding, human rights and democracy, were selected and subsequently supported by the EU TACSO programme.

In an intensive four-day programme, we get to know each other on personal and professional levels, we reflect on achievements we have reached in the field, we learn and we strategize ahead. We are challenged to think about the ways in which history, all that has come to pass to date, in our region, and beyond, falls subject to manipulation and distortion, what the consequences are of an elaborate weaving together of national narratives on pride and pain, and what opportunities we have – through policy and action – to foster innovative and responsible history education.

We get to experience the rich nature and heritage of Albania through on-site learning, hospitality and, above all, the available space for open discussions and reflections. What follows is a detailed account of our journey on these four days. We seek to build on this experience, and we are thankful for the resources invested in making such an event possible.



Aims and Objectives

The event has been set up as a capacity-building event providing transnational transfer of knowledge and experience. Through lectures, workshops, discussion groups and study visits, participating history and heritage educators were stimulated to implement innovative teaching practices in their classroom and/or museum/site/institute and to work towards a framework for a common approach for dealing with history. Participants improved their knowledge of cultures and get acquainted with new educational contents, services, and methods. Participants of similar EUROCLIO events have signalled afterwards that they felt inspired and stimulated to share with colleagues and students what they learnt and contribute to follow-up events and online community building.

Aims:

1. To look back at decades of work on regional cooperation in history educators through the lens of the teachers' voice, collected in the ePACT Needs Assessment, and develop strategic planning with key policy makers and civil society actors for a history education for sustainable peace, inclusive societies and new skills.
2. To build the capacity of educators and their associations for the teaching and learning of responsible history that goes beyond the traditional focus of pride and pain.
3. To compare and contrast perspectives on social and cultural local history and heritage.
4. To enable dialogue and cross-community and trans-border networking.
5. To support projects, initiatives and processes which aim to develop new approaches for responsible history education.

Contributing to reforms

In addition to the individual aims, the Summer School also supported more structural aims or seeking synergy and promoting interplay between policy and practice toward reforms in history education in the Western Balkans. EUROCLIO has been and remains involved in multiple projects in the (Western) Balkans. One of these projects is a partner project together with the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE), called **ePACT - Education Partnership for Advocacy, Capacity-Building and Transformation**. CDRSEE and EUROCLIO have launched this new cooperation initiative with the goal of building on past achievements and working towards a partnership of multiple actors to enhance the impact on education systems in the Western Balkans. ePACT aims to facilitate a forum where ideas for reforming education and schools in the region can be developed to enhance critical thinking skills and active citizenship. These two competencies are key drivers for the development of a vibrant civil society that protects and defends democratic values, gender mainstreaming, environmental protection and a culture of non-violent conflict resolution.

Standing Working Group on History Education

Within this project EUROCLIO and CDRSEE bring together educational experts, representatives from History Teachers Associations and representatives of educational authorities in the Western Balkans within the framework of the ePACT Standing Working Group on History Education. During the first meeting of this group in June 2016 in Vienna, the experts entered into a collaborative and engaging reflection on best ways to conduct a wide-ranging needs assessment that will shed light and increase understanding on areas and ways of making history teaching more relevant and constructive, centering on the need to gather a

substantial evidence base while serving the needs of policy makers to identify gaps, needs and opportunities.

During the summer school the expert group convened for the second time. This time to discuss the result findings from the Needs Assessment that is conducted in spring 2017 throughout the region to plan future actions and present ideas for implementation following the recommendations.



On 19th July, our event started with an open session to identify and share challenges and expectations.



On 22nd July, our event ended with an immersive experience of Albanian culture through music, dance and food.

Conference Content and Proceedings

Day I: Opening Session

Wednesday 19th of July 2017 was the first official day of the Summer School event. The registration opened at 08:30 and words of welcome were given by Vojsava Kumbulla, the president of the Albanian History teachers' Association and Loa Steinnun Kristjansdottir, the President of EUROCLIO – the European Association of History Educators. They both emphasized the importance of hosting this event in Albania and praised the initiative taken by Ms Fatmiroshe Xhemajli to convince all stakeholder to take this decision.

Jonathan Even-Zohar, EUROCLIO Director, provided a key note presentation entitled **“What’s wrong with Pride & Pain?”** which in addition to introducing the mission of the association, also noted a wide range of issues with the ways in which national history education systems instill a sense of collective identity in students. Be that as it may, he noted that promoting a sense of false collective pride, or collective victimization to a large degree distorts perceptions of history. After opening up questions on the purpose of history education in which these pride and pain elements matter, including remembrance, inclusion, media literacy and global/local citizenship, he concluded, in response to his provocative title: “Nothing. But, in History Education – we need to consider (1) the effect on closed identity building, (2) How it ‘preserves’ conflict, (3) the political instrumentalisation which occurs and (4) the relation of national identity building with (global) citizenship.”



Jonathan Even-Zohar talking about Pride and Pain in history education.

The opening session was finalized with an integrated icebreaker activity, led by Judith Geerling, EUROCLIO Senior Project Manager. The method applied was the rotating speed-date. Two lines of people opposite of each other were formed by asking people to create a line on the basis of hair-color, going from light to dark. Then the lines standing opposite each other would step to the center and started to get to know one another in a few minutes time. Once a 3-4 minute conversation was done, the lines moved sideways to allow for new connections.



World Café “Sharing Experiences – Establishing a Common Base”

This session, at the outset of our event, served the purpose of exploring all the rich contexts and experiences collected in the room, and somehow bringing them together on a common moment, and a new point of departure for the four days of work that were still to come. The World Café method, well known in civil society organizations, is less known in the world of education, so explicitly choosing it as the session method harbors also a capacity to transfer convention methodologies from civil society to education. Moreover, in an international setting, it serves the important purpose of ‘mixing’ the participants. It was moderated by Jonathan Even-Zohar, EUROCLIO Director and consisted out of 3 questions:

1. What does History mean for (y)our societies today?
2. What are some of the challenges and opportunities you face in your work in history education?
3. What would you like to take back with you from this summer school?

The session was done with 6 or 7 different tables. Each table had a fixed coordinator. The aim was for the participants to brainstorm about the answers to the questions and to write them down on the flipcharts. For each question the participants moved to another table with participants from a variety of countries. During the feedback session the coordinators presented their flipcharts.

The outcomes were very rich and proved the participants had engaged creatively and openly with the questions addressed.



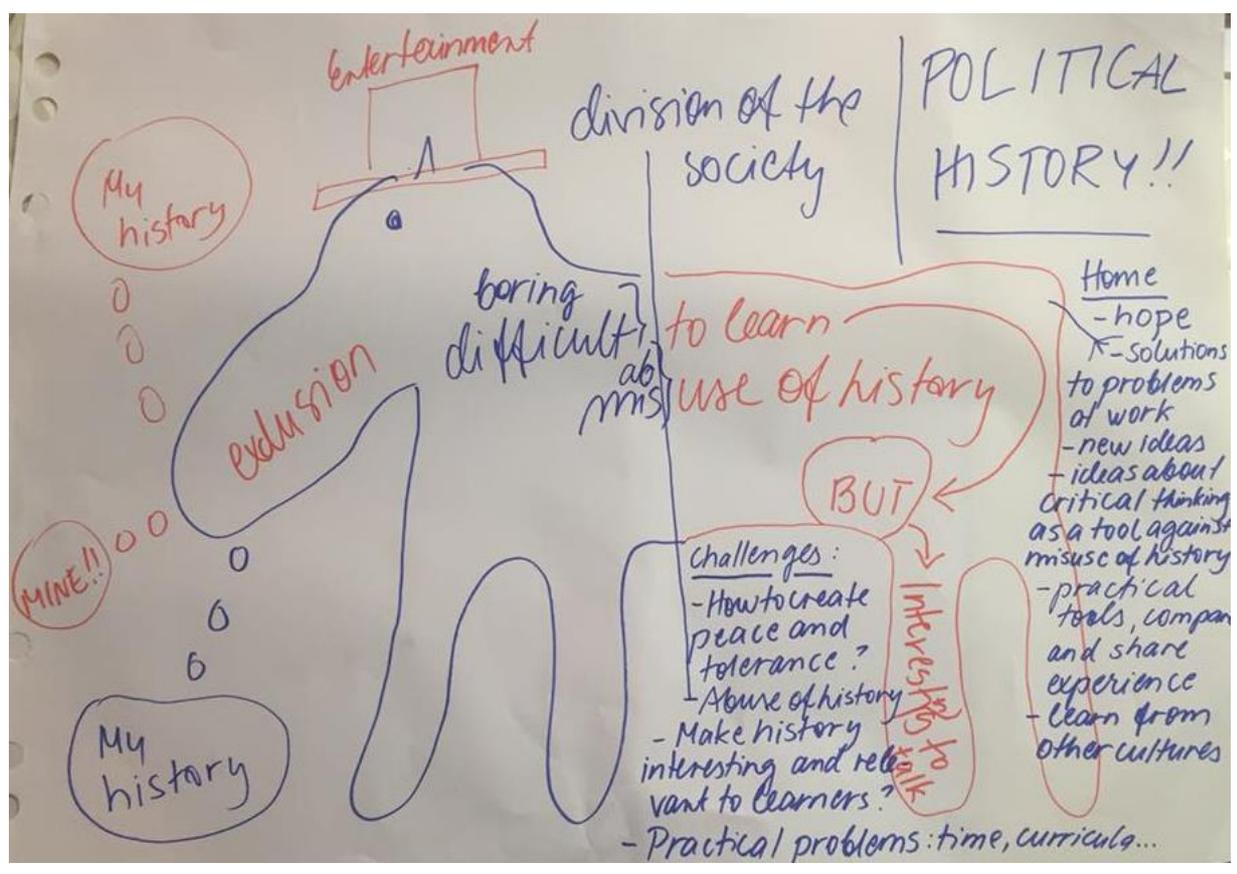
To the first two questions, responses which were reported back by the table coordinators all stressed the divided, and divisive nature of history education in this region. The political gains made by actors outside of education, often clear-cut propaganda, and was clearly seen as a major challenges for history education.

Also differences in age among history educators were said to influence attitudes and methodologies used. Educators and civil society representatives alike emphasized the crucial role that associations of teachers could, or should, play in ensuring the subject is not effectively hijacked for nationalistic purposes. Yet, how this can best be achieved was identified as a big obstacles. Policy makers in education hardly consult educators, and there are various levels of governance which stand in the way of effective reforms.



Regarding the expectations for the summer school and the individual participants it was highlighted that in fact many had not yet been in Albania, and were hoping to make new connections, obtain new insights and extend their knowledge of this country. Moreover, civil society representatives expressed their expectation was also to reach out better to educators and their associations and be better able to prepare for new advocacy and reform targets.

- Division / Divisive
- Barrier to Peace
- learn from mistakes ^{compare, unify}
- Nation ^{identity} - Building, borders
- simulate national pride.
- serves political agendas. ^{political legitimacy.}
- PAST, boring.
- History, multicultural, changes.
- Not inclusive.
- profit making, economic gains money laundry.



Panel “Innovative Approaches to History Education for Mutual Understanding”

Panel members were Jonathan Even-Zohar from EUROCLIO project *Learning a History which is not yet History*, Antonis Hadjiyannakis from CDRSEE project *Joint History Project 2* and Lina Jurjevic from Anne Frank House project *Historia Istorija Povijest*. EUROCLIO Board Member and history educator and researcher from Northern Ireland Sinead Fitzsimmons moderated this panel. The central aim was to bring together key organisations in the development of history education on the regional level in South East Europe.



Panelist Lina Jurjevic (Anne Frank House), Jonathan Even-Zohar (EUROCLIO) and Antonis Hadjiyannakis (CDRSEE)

In addition to presenting their initiatives and achievement, the panel members were asked to reflect on these projects in terms of the extent in which the expected objectives were reached. There was also space for sharing of unexpected challenges and unveiling how such ‘behind-the-scenes’ challenges were met. As a final key topic, there was attention on how policy makers could support such initiatives more, in seeking to make them more sustainable and generate wider impact.

The session raised a lot of questions, and in a way opened an opportunity for a kind of ‘accountability’. The field for regional cooperation on history education is not that large, and many of the projects and initiatives presented were somewhat known in the room. Being able to open perspectives and sharing in a relaxed and open environment helped to create a more shared understanding among all stakeholders in the room on where the three presenting organisations stand in terms of planning their next steps, and how they seek and need to involve educators and other civil society partners, present in the room, and beyond. The

overall conclusion of the panel discussion was that teachers are very much open to reforming the curricula, but support of policy makers is needed for a sustainable change.

WORKSHOPS How to teach about sensitive histories: Case Studies on innovative approaches

Three parallel workshops were planned in the afternoon of the first day, as a natural continuation of the panel, they were designed to share the practices in an active form with the participants.

- CDRSEE *Joint History Project 2* project, moderated by Artan Puto and Antonis Hadjiyannakis
During this workshop materials produced within the CDRSEE Joint History Project 2 were presented. The materials addressed the communist past of Albania.
- Anne Frank House *Historia Istorija Povijest* project, moderated by Ivana Gabalova and Lina Jurjevic
The aim of the workshop was to provide innovative teaching methods for teachers. One of them was also practiced during the workshop. Participants had to choose a card, present this card to the rest of the participants and put it on the timeline.
- EUROCLIO *Learning a History which is not yet History* (LHH) project, which is about halfway the project time-span had the authors moderate a session in which they presented the draft database of existing resources on the wars in the 90s and the materials collected so far. The aim of the workshop was to answer questions on what the challenges are, how to find appropriate materials and collect recommendations.



*Workshop by Anne Frank House
Artan Puto*



Learning a History which is not yet History project team member Natasa Kostic explaining the workshop assignment to some participants.

Intercultural evening

In a conference with such diverse regional representation it is key to instill a sense of cultural community and stimulate mixing amongst the different set groups. This is why EUROCLIO Vice-President and Chairman of the History Teachers Association of Macedonia, Mr Mire Mladenovski, opened the intercultural evening by playing a famous melody from the region, and stimulating everybody to sing their own language version of this song, at the same time. The evening itself celebrated the diversity of food and drinks in this region, as all participants had brought with them some sample products. A very relaxed and open cultural atmosphere led the participants into a comfortable end to an intensive day, but with keeping the common purpose alive.



Day II: Content Sessions and On-Site Learning

On the second day of the event, it was time to go further into the content, including a blend of action research, presentation of leading civil society organization in Albania and field work.

Presentation & Open Spaces: When we asked the history teachers themselves...

Presentation and group work “When we asked the history teachers themselves” was at the start of the day. This was a presentation of the ePACT Needs Assessment results, presented by Dea Maric (University of Zagreb) and Rodoljub Jovanovic (University of Amsterdam).



This was followed by an interactive session, applying some elements of the facilitation method “Open Spaces”. During this session survey questions and graphs of statistical results were spread across the room. Each person could pick one set of statistics and form a group with the others, to engage in an act of interpretation into the meaning and significance of the results available on the survey questions. It was good to get the participants up and moving, as well as being able to take their groups outside, to fresh Albanian mountain air, to enable new thoughts and ideas to be expressed and shared fluently. Afterwards all participants returned to the plenary setting and each group presented their results, including with concrete next steps, ideas and needs. The ePACT researchers benefited a lot from this session, as it enabled them to see how the target group, and stakeholders, relate to the findings and from them distills meaning. The researcher’s central concern, that such survey research remains abstract and detached from the educators’ and peers’ realities was hereby met. For participants, many of which had earlier in the year been involved in the production, evaluation, dissemination or simply filling out of the Needs Assessment Survey, it was an interesting peek into the draft results.





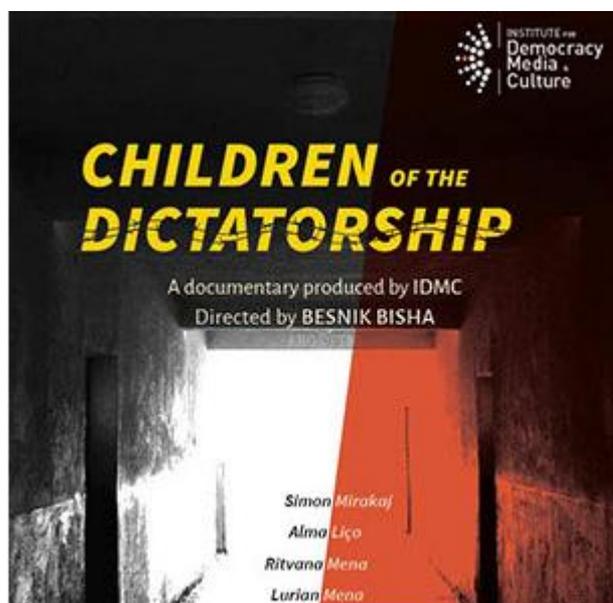
Presentation & Screening: Communist crimes and dealing with the past in Albania

Workshop done by Jonila Godole and Gentian Dedja, *Communist crimes and dealing with the past in Albania*.

Jonila Godole, Director of the Institute for Democracy, Media and Culture first introduced herself and the admirable work of the civil society institute.



Then she explained the activities which have been undertaken to promote dealing with the difficult past in Albania. One of these ways to promote dealing with the past in Albania is the documentary “Children of the Dictatorship” produced by the IDMC, directed by Besnik Bisha. Jonila Godole and her assistant Matilda Karcanaaj showed us the documentary and afterwards teachers, experts, NGO representatives and/or policy makers could respond to this documentary and think of a way how they would educate the youth about the communist past. The film put individuals in the centre, and was able to bring the horrible fate they suffered at the hands of the regime, but did not aim to shock. For many participants it was a first more in-depth thinking about this particular history.



After the morning sessions, the participants went by bus, and then boat to the island of Sazan. This island houses a large former military base of the communist regime. Due to unexpected logistical complication, it was not possible to reach the island on time for a proper visit. Upon the arrival by two boats to the island, the army officers stationed on this island did not permit the conference further entrance, to great disappointment of everybody.



Picture of a ruined Bunker on Sazan island posted to the "history that connects" Facebook group "All ideologies wanted to last forever and use any means to protect "the truth".

Day III: On-Site Learning: Perspectives on History in Albania

Friday 21st of July 2017 was a full day of on-site learning in Apollonia and Berat. We first visited Apollonia: the ancient site and monastery. The group was split into two groups with two guides and was guided also through the museum of the monastery where we could observe the old artifacts. The visit to the fortress and old town of Berat was rather challenging, due to the 40+ degrees on that time of the day. It speaks volumes to the endurance and motivation shown by the participants that all followed the guided tour, also asked questions, took pictures and enjoyed learning about this relatively unknown, yet important city in medieval regional history.



After a very long day, the evening programme consisted out of a dinner talk by Ambassador Bernd Borchardt (Head of the OSCE presence in Albania). In his **dinner talk**, entitled *Transitional Justice—its relevance and German experiences after 1945 and 1990*, he urged the audience to look at the experience of Germany not as a *fait accompli* of Dealing with the Past, but as a real history born out of fair, but strict process of transitional justice, as well as ongoing critical attitudes toward totalitarian past.



The final session of this long day, has become something of a EUROCLIO tradition, which is to ask participants to volunteer in hosting a **pub quiz**. This means that a select few team up to make knowledge questions, and the rest of the participants seek to create mixed teams to be able to best complete, and win the evening. As an organization always seeking to promote that there always are different viewpoints on events in the past, the pub quiz is somehow a nice flipping of this, because, in this quiz, the jury is “always right”. On this evening, there were several questions that were purposefully controversial (such as the dates of independence of countries), and even if not all the participants in the summer school were historians, the hot feeling of competition and enjoyment reached its aim: regional cooperation.



Day IV: Regional Dialogues



The last full day of the event was meant for shared action planning, as well as learning. The day with short reflections on the dinner talk with Ambassador Bernd Borchardt, in which participants were able to bring about some points of friction they felt with his talk. One question, from a colleague from Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example put forward the need to not only develop models of transitional justice and seek contexts in the world today where these apply, but to avoid anachronistic viewpoints and respect difference between now and then, between Germany after national-socialism and other post-totalitarian situations.



Toward shared planning of all stakeholders

Following this, the event continued with the Country-based Dialogue tables for action planning, in national groups. The session was moderated by Jonathan Even-Zohar. The following questions were answered on a flipchart by the national groups:



- What will we in “country” take forward from the recommendations?
- Which activities on the horizon can be used for working?
- In which areas would we like more Regional Cooperation?

The participants were invited to arrange themselves at country tables and work out their ideas on a worksheet with a horizontal line for one year in time and a vertical line ranging from the concrete to the aspired on top. This enabled groups to, now after a week of intense mixing, find out how they upon return to their countries might continue to cooperate. Not only were the tables very active in sharing, discussing, planning and deciding, but they were also motivated to go around all tables, and find out how they might play a role, individual or collective, on the cross-border level.

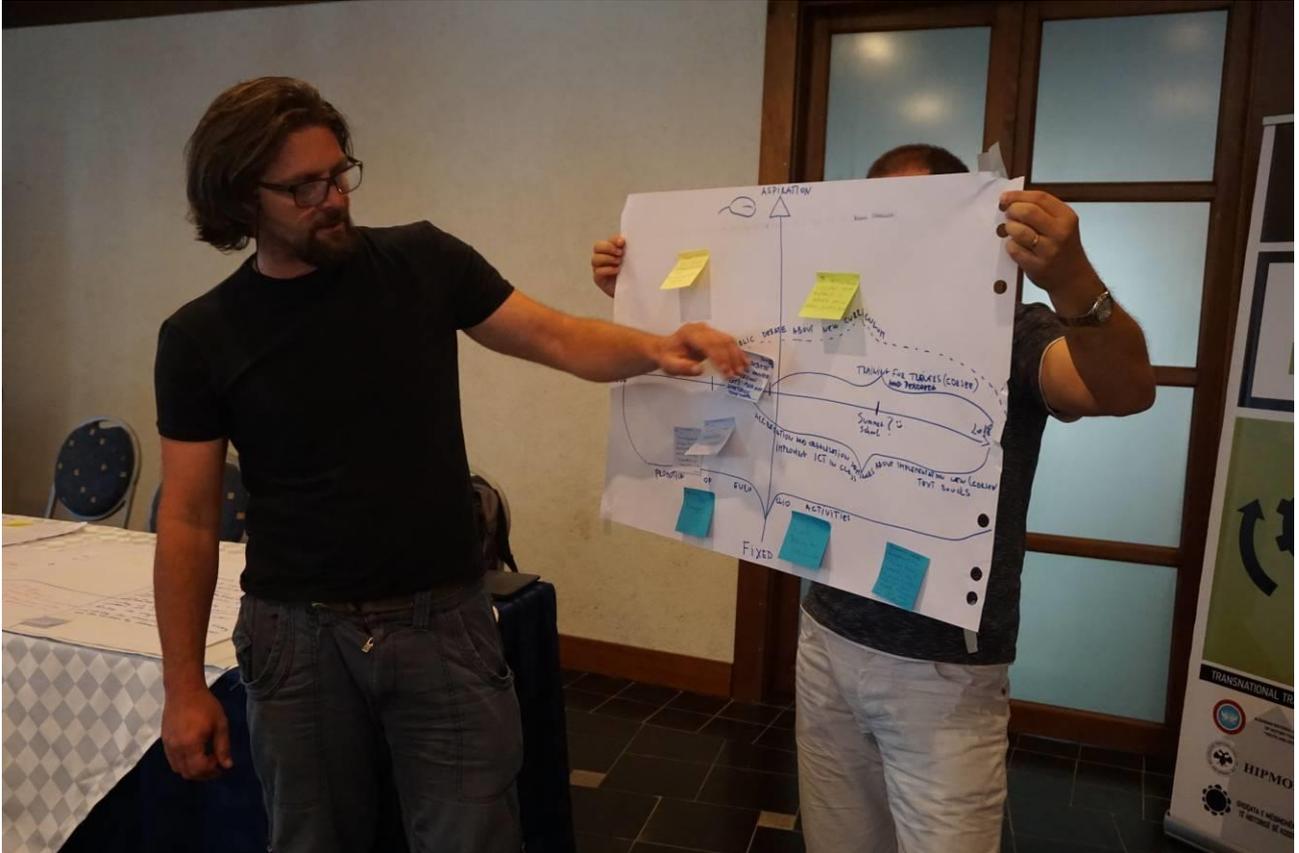
Later on feedback on the national flipcharts was provided by interactive communication in mixed country groups. Afterwards each country presented its flipchart in front of the groups during the wrap-up. The presentations showed us that many new plans and collaborations between the involved countries were on the horizon.

Some recurring, strong, ambitions were to work for the facilitation of cross-border teachers exchanges, either bilateral or multilateral. The newly established Regional Youth Cooperation Office was mentioned several times as a possible important player to stimulate further exchange on the topic of history. Many representatives of history teachers associations also made fixed plans for representation and expressed their desire for cooperation, for example the Association of History Teachers of Macedonia and ALBNA- the History Teachers Association of Albania, have clearly defined the need to work closer together. Exploratory ideas were also floated for the Associations from Kosovo and Serbia to seek out ways to cooperate.

EUROCLIO has after the summer school transformed these posters into draft National Action Plans and has also shared these back with the participants. It will seek to further monitor and support implementation of these plans, and bring them back to next years' summer school to assess progress and achievement.









Perspectives on History and Society: Dealing with the Past and the Holocaust

Presentation Claudia Vollmer (OSCE Albania) *Review on the Work the OSCE has done in dealing with the Past in Albania*. During her presentation Claudia Vollmer explained to us about the activities in Albania between 2015-2017 for the project Dealing with the Past in Albania. She discussed events in schools, a theatre play, film and panel discussions on public broadcaster, regular stakeholder coordination meetings on topics such as oral history, places of memory, curricula and school books and other additional activities such as seminars and conferences for historians.



Afterwards parallel workshops on Holocaust Education in the region followed.

1. Lina Jurjevic and Ivana Gabalova from the Anne Frank House
During the workshop the focus was on the roles people adopt in conflict situations (victim, perpetrator, bystander, resistance/helper) and their dynamics.
2. Goran Sadikarijo from the Holocaust Fund of the Jews from Macedonia
This workshop presented the Holocaust Fund project entitled "Holocaust through the Prizm of the Children Eyes". During this session the aim was to look at how to enable children to interact with difficult topics such as Holocaust.

Plenary conclusion and reflections followed through an interactive peer evaluation. The plenary conclusions were followed by a wrap up from Jonathan Even-Zohar and Mire Mladenovski.

The week was celebrated with a festive dinner with live music and folkdance performance. On the next day 23rd of July 2017, goodbyes and departure of participants followed.

Conclusions

The EUROCLIO Summer School „Going beyond Pride and Pain?“ helped to extend the shared understanding on the importance of critical history education in the Western Balkans. With the participants coming from such a wide range of practices, including teaching, training teachers, researching, managing projects and civil society organisations engaged in dealing with the past, and so on, the event's aim to seek out possibilities of concrete cooperation in the next year did succeed, but was not centrally captures. Many small talks were held, many so-called 'shadow meetings'.

Summer School as a Learning Event

The frame "summer school" effectively positions this event as a moment of learning. Educators being the prime target, and with the timing being right at the end of the school term, the event was ideally situated to be a moment for reflection and planning ahead. The workshops hosted during the event were highly evaluated, and 91% of the respondents expressed the common learning that they were able to achieve. The general question about the use of such learning in the day-to-day work may remain, but as one participant said, "I recommend this summer school because useful, information obtained is applicable, allows sharing of knowledge and experience in the field of history teaching." The event however did not manage to fully align the learning objectives in the on-site learning programme. In such events, local organisers wish to show to the participants the rich heritage of their country. EUROCLIO seeks to frame this always within a clear on-site learning programme. Transportation delays and logistical challenges did not permit a decent visit to Sazan island, which really was regretful. In addition the day to visit the other sites, despite the good quality of the guides and rich contents, was too intense. The complex recent past of Albania was explored to the extent of the movie screening by IDMC and the wider conversations which took place within workshops, but it would have been needed to provide more contextual information to the participants.

Summer School as a Networking Event

With special support and appreciation to the TACSO People-to-People programme, the networking aspect of this summer school was extremely rich. It was felt that on national, regional and European lines there were opportunities to network, and the most commonly used term in the evaluations was "exchange". People truly got to know one another, had time and focus to drive an agenda of cooperation and, ultimately, were able to plan common work on the national and regional levels. Moreover, the provision of socio-cultural programme, aimed to break the ice and facilitate sharing and exchange, succeeded to the extent that at the end of the week nearly everybody had spoken to everybody. At the organisational level, the civil society organisations present held many meetings on the margins in which they discussed better cooperation within existing projects, upcoming events and future plans. It would go too far for the purpose of this report to expand on these meetings, but suffice it to say that not a lunch, dinner or break opportunity was lost on further networking. Ultimately, the concept of the summer school to shape a platform for meeting among policy makers, practitioners and civil society leaders was visible in the National Action Plans which came out of the meeting.

Summer School for Co-Creation

Having received the content-rich and interactive programme, participants did go a long way in seeking co-creation of future action and policy planning, as mentioned already is evident from the the National Action Planning on History Education. There would however be need for more opportunities, including better preparation, for actual co-creation of educational content. The theme which was chosen to approach the content was Holocaust Education, but the two workshops provided in this sense were designed to facilitate learning and reflection. In the future, EUROCLIO would need to see how space in the programme is required for co-drafting and co-creation of educational contents.

Annex I: List of Participants

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Annex II: References

The event has a number of outputs which can be further shared:

1. Programme
2. Evaluation Report
3. National Action Plans on History Education (available on request via EUROCLIO)
4. Presentations given at the event are available here: <http://goo.gl/pVf8GE>

