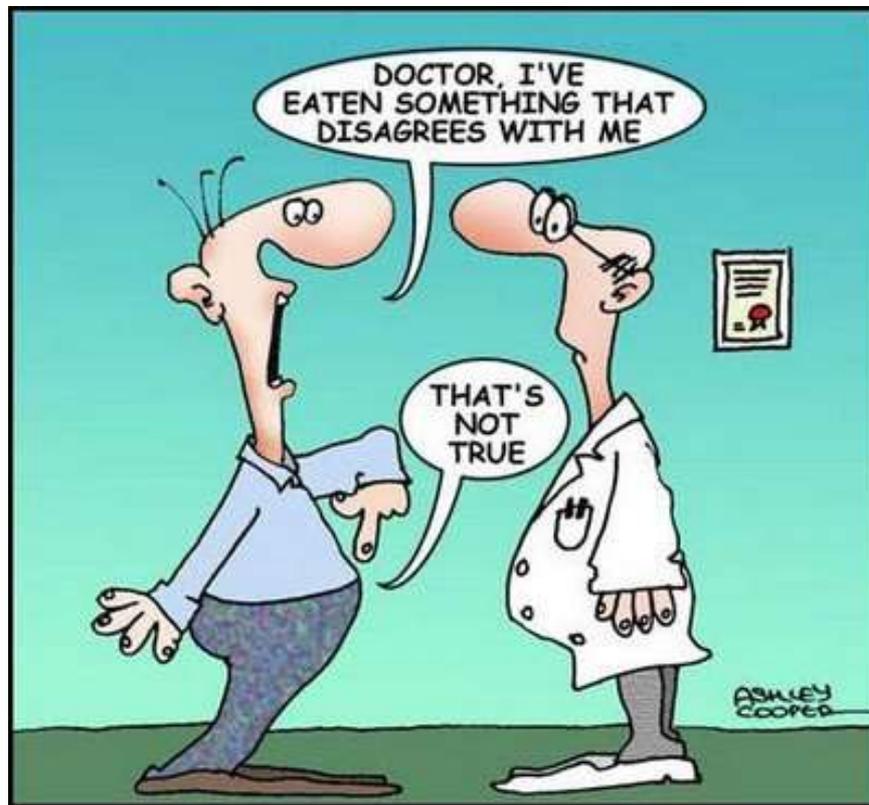




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## REPORT

# Learning to Disagree

THIRD JOINT SHORT-TERM STAFF TRAINING

17 - 20 JANUARY 2019, MAYNOOTH, IRELAND



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## About the Learning to Disagree Project

The Learning to Disagree project aims to respond to the needs of educators who experience difficulties in addressing sensitive and controversial issues in their classroom, in responding to students who express extreme opinions, or in assessing students' social and civic competences. The project offers training and support materials to history and citizenship educators to overcome these difficulties and enable them to facilitate debate, dialogue and discussion in their educational practice. The core idea of the project is that students acquire those social and civic competences that enable them to interact with people that they (fundamentally) disagree with, in a constructive manner. The project will help students to acquire skills such as the ability to listen, to respond to what others are saying, to use neutral language, and to consider alternative interpretations. These are important life skills that will have a positive impact on students also beyond the school environment.

In this project, EUROCLIO works together with four partners:

**Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Germany** is a publically funded institute with 150 employees. It conducts applied and multidisciplinary research into textbooks informed primarily by history and cultural studies.

**Education for the 21st Century, Serbia** is a non-profit organization, established in September 2011 in Belgrade. Its aims are to support the promotion of human rights in Serbia and the Southeast Europe region and spread the values of the EU among students, teachers and professors.

**The Mount School in York, UK** is an Independent School for girls and boys from 511 and for girls only from 11-18 years old. It embraces a commitment to education, sustainability, equality, simplicity and trustworthiness.

**The National University of Ireland Maynooth** is one of Ireland's fastest growing universities with a strong tradition of teacher education. The University is committed to engage in questions affecting education and society and to a diverse and interdisciplinary approach to the study of education.



## Executive Summary

The training in Maynooth, Ireland took place from 17 to 20 January 2019, organised by EUROCLIO and our local partner National University of Ireland Maynooth. This was the third training in a series in the framework of the Learning to Disagree project. For the training **19** history and citizenship educators were present from the following **14** countries: **Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom**. This includes staff of the project partners, and a core team of Historiana volunteers that has been working on the content within the project. During this training, they continued to work more intensively on the project results, including activities based on historical content that will be featured on Historiana<sup>1</sup>, teaching strategies, and assessment tools for social and civic competences.

This meeting was conducted within the framework of the EUROCLIO-led Erasmus+ project “*Learning to Disagree*” (L2D) which runs from September 2017 - August 2020.

The 3-day training consisted of a variety of activities including a presentation about new developments for EUROCLIO’s educational webplatform Historiana and about the curriculum reform process in Ireland. In addition, there were trainings on classroom activities and assessment of activities, and work sessions to further develop the focus and content of the topics ‘People on the Move’, ‘Borders’ and ‘Surviving under Pressure’, and an introduction on the fourth topic ‘Cultural Heritage’.

The main aims of this meeting were:

- To peer-review the developed perspectives and provide inputs for further improvements and focus for the learning.
- To work together on the methodologies and assessment tools for the Variety of Viewpoints.
- To integrate the main findings of the Needs Assessment in the development of the educational materials.
- To be trained in which teaching methods and strategies could fit well with certain topics, and how to secure historical and critical thinking when dealing with opinions and perspectives.
- To enhance knowledge of assessment in relation to history curriculum reform processes, looking at the case of Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Historiana is a webplatform build by EUROCLIO that Historiana offers free historical content, ready to use learning activities, and innovative digital tools made by and for history educators across Europe. For more information see: <https://www.historiana.eu>



- To be trained in which types of assessment could work in the context of the particular cases developed.
- To agree on the cases, the pedagogical approach and the structure of the additional Variety of Viewpoints that will be developed (topics 4/5).
- To learn about the specific context of Ireland in relation to teaching about sensitivities and controversies.

## Results

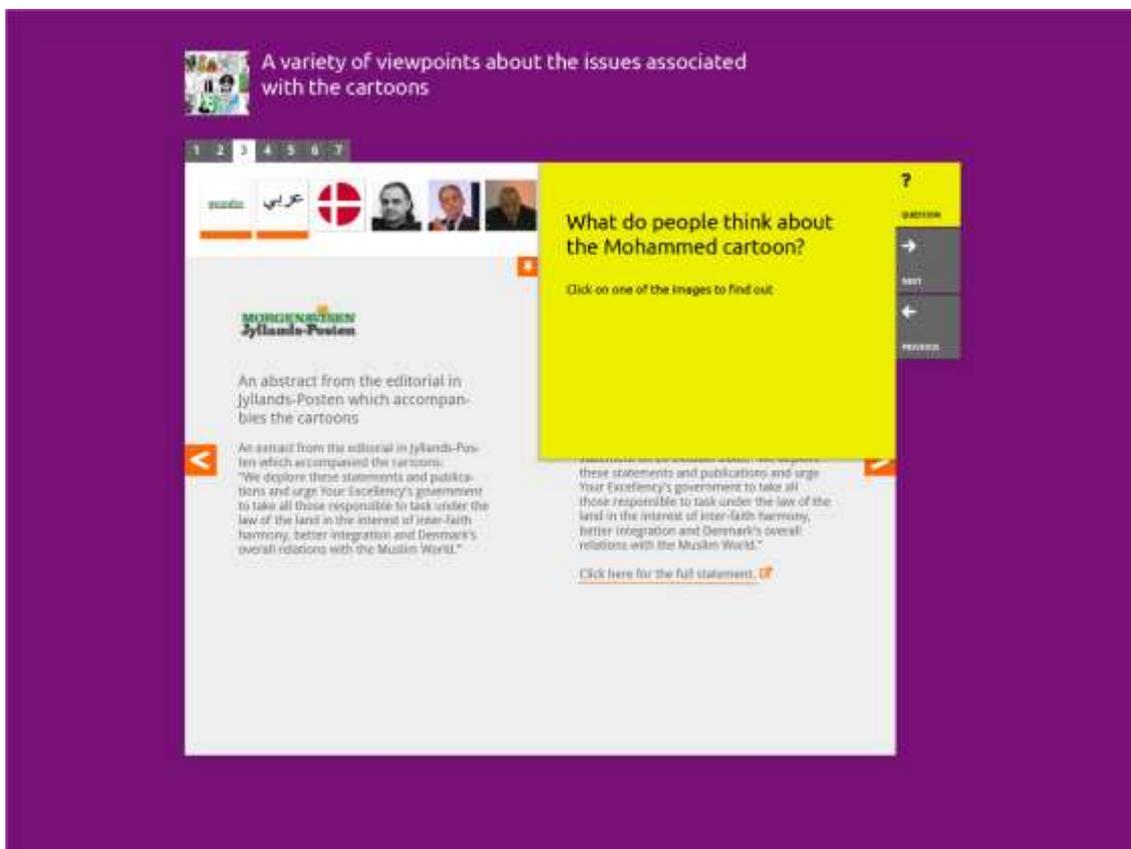
The training in Maynooth resulted in a further exchange between educators from across Europe, on experiences and methods related to Learning to Disagree. Participants tried out concrete methods of debate, dialogue and discussion applied to exemplar content of the topic 'People on the Move'. They made steps in the focus of the cases that will be developed with varieties of viewpoints under each of the topics, and worked further on learning activities that could accompany this. The first steps were taking in the development of the fourth topic 'Cultural Heritage' with an initial focus on changing street names in Belgrade as a case.



## Programme

### Historiana: Variety of Viewpoints tool

The developed educational resources in this project will feature on the webplatform Historiana. EUROCLIO project managers Jaco Stoop and Judith Geerling presented the most recent designs for the “Variety of Viewpoints” tool that is planned to be included in the Historiana eActivity Builder. The tool has evolved from a “Variety of Viewpoints” presentation tool, to a “Compare and Contrast” tool. The idea is that in the Compare and Contrast tool, students and teachers can select two viewpoints [text] from a selection of maximum twelve, and compare them. The added value of this tool would be to enable textual sources to be explored in the eActivity Builder, which is currently focused on visual sources.



*Screenshot of student view of the tool 'Compare and Contrast'*

The project team discussed the possibility of adding some sort of evidence files to accompany the different viewpoints in the ‘Variety of Viewpoints’, to help students assess the reliability and validity of the claims made in the different perspectives. For instance some legal quotes and perspectives could be added, as well as some statistics.

## Learning to Disagree: the case of Ireland

### History Curriculum Reform in Ireland

At the moment of this training, Ireland is in the middle of a big reform process of the history curriculum. We seized the opportunity to learn from this process and hopefully contribute a bit by inviting Denise Nolan, Ireland National Officer with the Junior Cycle for Teachers History Team, to present the latest developments on reforming the history curriculum in Ireland.

Denise Nolan showed the structure, principles and key skills required for successful learning by students. The participants discussed how to teach students to use skills as working with evidence and developing historical consciousness, and to apply these to a specific case such as the history of Ireland. An example of how this can be applied in the classroom was to look at two paintings and placing them in the bigger picture to show the historical value of these sources and to help understand historical context.



*Denise Nolan giving the presentation on the history curriculum reform in Ireland*

### ***On-site learning: city walk Dublin and visit to Dublin Castle***

For the on-site learning programme the group travelled to the capital Dublin. Especially with the developments related to Brexit and the insecurity around a possible renewed border in Ireland, the relationship with the UK is very sensitive at this time.

In a *city walk* the group visited places of significance for Irish recent history, including monuments for victims of the **Dublin bombing attacks** during *The Troubles* (the Northern Ireland conflict on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland that started in late 1960s and ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998).



The group also visited the ‘**Spire of Dublin**’, a modern stainless steel pin-link monument in the place that used to host the Nelson’s Pillar. The Pillar included a statue of Horatio Nelson, completed in 1909 and was surrounded by controversy from the start. Nelson was an Englishman, and honouring him on such a prominent central location of Ireland caused some stir amid growing Irish nationalistic sentiments. The pillar was destroyed in 1966, possibly due to an IRA bombing attack in the framework of the Troubles. The replacement process took many years due to the sensitive nature, and eventually it was decided to build the Spire of Dublin.



**Dublin Castle** continues to play a highly significant political role in Ireland today after it was the seat for British power. During the war of independence in Ireland following the Easter Uprising the Castle was the centre of British efforts against the separatist Irish movement. In 1922, following Ireland’s independence, the castle was handed over to the new Irish government. Still

to this day it is the only place in a country that does not fall under the British rule that has a throne to the British queen. The participants had a bespoke tour of the castle, focussing on the teaching of sensitive and controversial topics in the Irish context.

## Active learning: work on Variety of Viewpoints

### Topics 1-2-3: People on the Move, Borders, and Surviving under Pressure

Plenary presentations on the results of the various group work sessions enabled all team members to learn about the progress in topics they have not been involved in. Afterwards, the core team, divided in different groups, further developed the learning materials. Each of the three topics addressed will consist of *Variety of Viewpoint* cases: collections of perspectives and opinions from politicians, citizens and (international) organizations related to the topic. Accompanying lesson plans based on the Variety of Viewpoints will be developed, and the initial work on this was discussed.

The first topic, *People on the Move*, refers to migrants and refugees: how are they perceived? Why do people decide to move? The topic aims to challenge the students to become (more) aware of the language and images used to refer to migrants and refugees. Lesson plans will focus on questions such as how migration is perceived and how it can be managed. Parallels between different stories of refugees in different situations and times will be drawn to show students the similarities, and to provide them with knowledge on refugee's experiences.

The topic *Borders* focuses on changing, controversial borders, borders that raise questions pertaining their legitimisation. Kosovo, Ukraine, Crimea and Northern Ireland will be developed as case studies to illustrate border issues in different ways, and to be able to give perspectives from different situations.

Lastly, *Surviving under Pressure* looks at people in situations where they have to struggle to survive, due to different reasons. Here you can think about living under totalitarian regimes or during times of war or occupation. Lesson plans will be developed on surviving during a famine, during occupation or as a discriminated minority.

#### **Topic 4: Cultural Heritage**

Marko Suica and Lidija Zupanic-Suica of Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, presented their preliminary research and ideas on the fourth content topic for which “Learning to Disagree” will develop content: contested cultural heritage. The issue of renaming streets in post-Yugoslav Belgrade (Serbia) will be one of the case studies within this topic.

The team members will start to work on this topic in the fall of 2019, and start by collecting perspectives and other materials related to this topic before the August meeting. During the meeting in August, there will be working sessions on this topic using the collected sources and perspectives.



*Marko Suica presenting topic 4 - Cultural Heritage and the case of street name changes in Belgrade*

## Needs assessment

The educational resources are not developed in a vacuum. Therefore, a Needs Assessment is foreseen to assess what educators need in order to help their students to acquire social and civic competences through dialogue, debate and discussion on contested issues. The needs assessment will be used to set the priorities for the development of the educational resources and the training package on how to use these resources that is also foreseen in this project.

In the last short-term staff training in August 2018, the participants filled in the draft survey, based on which the survey for the needs assessment was updated and distributed. The survey was made available online in October last year and **117** participants coming from **26** countries answered the survey. Researchers Barbara Christophe and Maren Tribukait from the Georg Eckert Institute presented the preliminary results of their research into the needs of educators regarding debate, dialogue and discussion on controversial history in the classroom.



*Maren Tribukait and Barbara Christophe presenting the preliminary findings of the Needs Assessment research*

One of the important findings in the needs assessment was that history teachers were hindered in addressing controversial issues. A lack of resources representing different viewpoints and one-dimensional textbooks were perceived as the biggest constraints in teaching about controversial issues. The full research report will be published and is expected in the fall of 2019.

## Active learning: Teaching Strategies

As part of the project a teacher's guide will be developed that looks at teaching strategies using some form of dialogue, debate or discussion. Helen Snelson of Mount School York is responsible for this guide. Going through the content that has been

developed so far, Helen gave suggestions for activities that could be developed, in the framework of the project, such as ‘Understanding an opinion in depth’.

*This is an activity to show students how much easier it is to understand and engage with different perspectives in a topical discussion if they have deep knowledge of the context.*

In this example she looked into content that was developed on the 1991 Vlora Cargo Ship in Bari. *For example, if students were starting to work with the topic of the 1991 Vlora Cargo Ship in Bari they could start with the viewpoint of Alessandro Leogrande published in 2016. This is rich in assumed knowledge. By researching what each aspect meant / referred to students would then have an excellent knowledge base from which to move on and look at the variety of viewpoints on the Vlora and discuss them in context.*

She developed some possible learning activities for in the classroom, based on the materials that were collected for the topic *People on the Move*. The developed activities are really focussed on having the class interact with the perspectives, and then with each other to discuss the different ways the sources can be used. The activity was tried out in a classroom in Ireland by Majella Dempsey (Maynooth University).



*Helen Snelson presenting teaching strategies and team members doing an assignment*

The activity was made with draft, un-edited content. It was therefore no surprise that the findings of the try-out showed clearly that we need to be more considerate about the amount of text we provide for each perspective, and how much context is needed for perspectives to be clear. Especially because we work in a transnational setting, and not all students have the same understanding of certain things. At the same time it was very helpful to see the content being applied to real class-room methods that you can use in secondary school history lessons. It gave the team

members a better idea of how they could look at their own developed content and turn this into lesson ideas.

### Active learning: Assessment tools

As part of the project we will also develop a Teacher's Guide on the Assessment of social and civic competences. Assessment, methods and content are developed in parallel and in a holistic way throughout the project. Based on the learning activity created by Helen Snelson, Majella Dempsey and Anthony Malone of Maynooth University developed accompanying assessment tools, which Majella also piloted in a classroom in Ireland.

For assessing competences it is important to understand there are four broad dimensions of competences. Values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. Following this explanation the concept of the teacher's guide was presented, and Majella and Anthony gave a sample session on refugees, using the teacher's guide. They stressed that assessing competency means that you need to be clear what it means to be competent at given levels of learning. This includes clear learning objectives for each lesson, but also specifying clearly what success looks like (i.e. success criteria).



Anthony Malone presenting the Teacher's Guide on Assessment

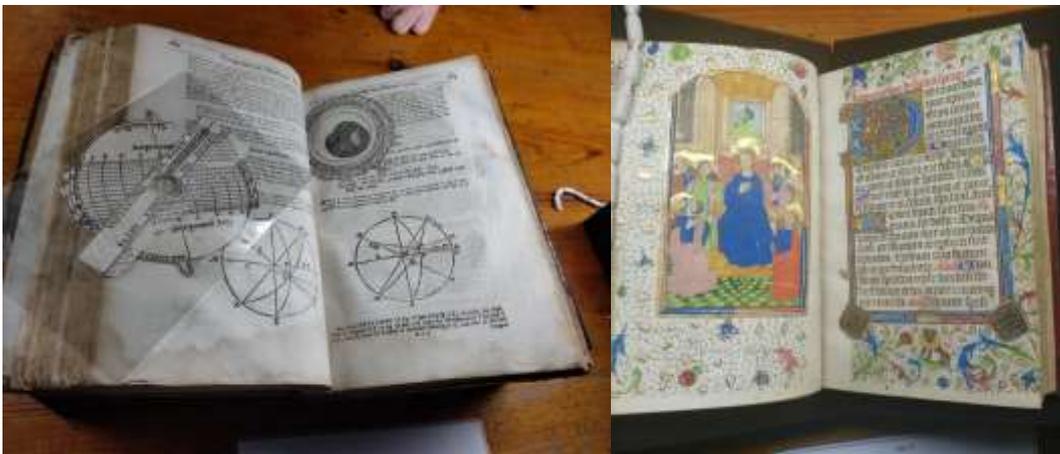
On assessment Anthony and Majella explained how important the phrasing of questions can be to help with realizing learning outcomes. One very useful handout contained help to formulate questions for thinking skills with students. For instance when you want to evaluate 'Applying', you can think of questions such as: *What examples can you find of...?* or *How would your organise... to show...?* They also gave tips on how you can plan a lesson that includes formative assessment. All this guidance can be found back in the Teacher's Guide that will be made available online in the beginning of 2020, in 12 languages including English.

## Conclusion & next steps

The training provided very useful insights into controversy and sensitivity in the context of Irish history. Major steps were taken in the further development of both the Variety of Viewpoint cases (content) and the accompanying learning activities. First steps were taken in tackling the fourth and final topic Cultural Heritage.

Certain main decisions were made and conclusions reached, including:

- The content needs to have a clearer and more specific focus.
- The text (viewpoints) need to be shorter, and difficult terms need to be explained so students will better understand.
- The visual that accompanies the viewpoint should not enforce stereotypes, but instead give a surprisingly different image of migration.
- We can have different combinations of perspectives with a different focus.
- In addition to having timelines accompanying cases, in helping to contextualise the information, we should also consider providing some maps.
- Changes in street names can also be the result of a bottom-up positive movement, in contrast to a top-down or negative movement. Consider having examples of both in the eventual materials.



*Some books from the Russell library of the National Library of Ireland Maynooth*



## Participants

- Angela Bermudez (Spain)
- Ann-Laure Lieval (France)
- Anthony Malone (Ireland)
- Ayse Bilgic (Turkey)
- Barbara Christophe (Germany)
- Burcu Cıngay Culha (Turkey)
- Helen Snelson (United Kingdom)
- Jaco Stoop (The Netherlands)
- Judith Geerling (The Netherlands)
- Juraj Varga (Slovakia)
- Lidija Zupanic-Suica (Serbia)
- Majella Dempsey (Ireland)
- Maren Tribukait (Germany)
- Marko Suica (Serbia)
- Matej Matković (Slovenia)
- Reili Reintal (Estonia)
- Valerio Bernardi (Italy)
- Vassiliki Giannou (Greece)
- Zsolt Vódlı (Hungary)



*Part of the participants during the tour at Russell Library and social activities*