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The European Content of the School History Curriculum

Report

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Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1992, a comparative study of history teaching and history curricula in the 12 member states of the European Union was undertaken by the author for the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE). The research had three main objectives which were to:

- provide comparative data on the history being taught to 12-16 year-olds in lower secondary education;

- assess the feasibility of carrying out large-scale, cross-national studies of the school curriculum (in all subject areas and not just history);

- identify possible topics and projects for collaborative research.

The research drew on five main sources of information:

- Official curriculum documents (including any syllabuses, guidelines on assessment, and any guidance provided by official or advisory organisations on teaching approaches and pedagogy. There are considerably more than 12 education systems within the European Union, because of federal structures in some states and the fact that, in some countries, responsibility for education is devolved upon provincial authorities. Also, some countries still have selective education and produce different syllabuses for different types of school. As a result, the 12 member states produce between them over 100 official curriculum guidelines for history teaching.

- A review of [i] published research findings on history teaching, mainly at a comparative level but with some evidence from a limited number of national studies; and [ii] recent literature on trends and methodology in comparative educational research.

- Correspondence with experts on history teaching in a number of European countries. This group included: school inspectors, government officials, historians and professors of history teaching and didactics.

- Responses from the 12 EURYDICE National Units (of the member states of the European Union) to questions on the teaching of history in secondary education in 1986 and 1988.

- The working papers of a series of conferences on history teaching and history textbooks which were organised by the Council of Europe over the last 40 years.

In a small-scale exploratory study such as this, it is inevitable that the researcher's use of these sources of information will be selective. Most correspondents were kind enough to respond in English or provide English translations or summaries of official documents. In other respects, access was limited to those languages in which the author and his colleagues had some fluency (English, French, German and Spanish).

II. THE AIMS OF TEACHING HISTORY

In the past, a central aim for history teaching in the first years of secondary education, particularly if history did not feature much in the primary school curriculum, has been "to communicate a sense of heritage", usually through the narrative mode. But, three factors have led to an array of broader social and educational aims for history. First, there has been the influence of the new history movement in the 1970s and '80s with its emphasis on historical processes and the methodology of history. Second, there has been a desire on the part of curriculum planners to respond to and reflect changes in society and in Europe as a whole. And, thirdly, the capacity of history to be, in Stuart Hughes' phrase, "an inclusive, mediating discipline" with a potential for helping us to understand any phenomenon which has a history, has meant that some guidelines and syllabuses now incorporate multi-cultural history, women's history, environmental history, the history of science and technological history. These developments have reflected the emergence of aims related to breaking down stereotypical thinking and prejudice, developing positive attitudes to the environment, and contributing to greater mutual understanding between communities in conflict.

The following list of aims and objectives comprises the ones which were most frequently found in the curriculum documents reviewed. They are to:

- help pupils understand the present;
- understand the origins of contemporary problems;
- develop a sense of identity (local, national, European);
- pass on the cultural heritage;
- give pupils knowledge of other countries and cultures;
- develop a sense of history and historical consciousness;
- train the mind by means of disciplined study;
- ensure that all pupils leave school with a broad and well-rounded education;
- introduce them to the distinctive methodology of history and what is involved in understanding and interpreting the past;

- prepare students for further study of the discipline;

- contribute to better international and community understanding;

- prepare pupils for democratic participation and citizenship;

- arouse students' interest in the past.

Essentially, these aims can be categorised into three broad purposes for history teaching:

i. acquiring knowledge and understanding of the past is part of what is involved in becoming an educated person;

ii. developing an historical perspective and understanding;

iii. acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills as a means to some other end: socialisation, preparation for citizenship, better international understanding.

In essence, what we have here is a broadly humanist position (the contribution of history to general education), an instrumentalist position (history teaching as a means to an end) and an approach which emphasises induction into the discipline of history. There has been a long-standing debate between historians, history teachers, curriculum developers and officials regarding the validity of pursuing these different educational and social aims through school history. Some argue that it is no part of the school's function to produce a generation of prospective historians; while some others argue that history should be taught for its own sake and is not and should not be useful or relevant in the same way as science, mathematics, technology or modern languages can be. In practice, however, it is clear that the history curricula adopted in most of the education systems of Western Europe not only reflect these different positions but attempt to pursue all three aims through the same curriculum framework.

It is not just the teaching of national history which has been subject to shifts of emphasis in contemporary thinking. Discussions about the content and focus of European history within the school curriculum have also reflected wider political debates and concerns. It is my impression that, over the past 30 years, there has been a gradual shift away from a strong emphasis in history teaching on the common European heritage, towards an increasing focus on the emergence of European economic and political cooperation and then, more recently, as "the Europe of regions" gained prominence on the international agenda, there has been a greater emphasis on what is often referred to as "unity through diversity": the pursuit of common goals whilst preserving and promoting the political, cultural and linguistic diversity of contemporary Europe. Now the emphasis is shifting again. The Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member states of 1993 stressed the need to strengthen "programmes aimed at eliminating prejudice in the teaching of history by emphasising positive mutual influences between different countries, religions and ideas in the historical development

of Europe". This is not to say that there is no longer any interest in developing the European dimension of the curriculum in order to teach young people about the cultural heritage which they share with the rest of Europe. It is more the case that the emphasis has shifted.

These broad aims are usually to be found in the statements of Ministers of Education when they meet together at the Council of Europe or the European Union. Their public commitment to teaching European History on these occasions is not always apparent in the curriculum guidelines which their own Ministries produce for history teachers. In this respect, it is usually necessary to deduce the aims of teaching European history from the content which is selected for inclusion in syllabuses and from the textbooks which are authorised, recommended or most commonly used. Then, it would seem that European history is included in the national history curricula as a means of developing:

- a greater sense of European identity and understanding of a common cultural heritage;

- more tolerance for diversity between peoples of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds;

- an appreciation of the growing political and economic interdependence amongst European nations;

- an understanding of the historical origins of current developments towards greater political and economic cooperation and understanding.

In this respect, the distinction between teaching about European history and teaching for European awareness is inevitably blurred. A distinct but related set of objectives has usually focused on the need to teach about the past in order to understand the events and developments taking place in contemporary Europe, particularly those which transcend national borders and those which impinge on all our lives. Here, the teaching of history in schools is often perceived to be a necessary antidote to the rather simplistic, partial and ahistorical interpretations of current events which are usually offered by the mass media. The role of history teaching in these circumstances is to show that the ongoing events and developments are not just the result of recent actions and policies and that their roots can be traced back to much earlier times. There is one other group which promotes the enhancement of European history within the school curriculum. Although they may recognise that it is legitimate to teach history in order to understand the present, and some will argue that the history curriculum often has a social and political function, they would also argue that it is essential to teach some European history to all children for its own sake.

III. EUROPEAN HISTORY IN THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

1. An overview of current trends

A number of clear trends were visible in this review of provision:

i. The European dimension is usually introduced into the curriculum in order to shed light on the country's own national history. So, for example, the rationale for the French history guidelines for the first and second cycles in secondary education states explicitly that the emphasis should be on national history with the histories of other countries being used to offer a perspective on French history. Other countries' syllabuses and textbooks tend to focus on those aspects of European history where their own nation has made a significant contribution: France and the Enlightenment, Italy and the Renaissance, Germany and the Reformation, England and the industrial revolution, Spain and Portugal and the explorations of discovery. However, this tendency seldom involves looking at how other countries and peoples might have perceived events and trends in the home country.

ii. It is also the case that very few history syllabuses or textbooks look in detail at any period in the history of another country. There are some exceptions. For example, the history guidelines produced by the Ministry of Education responsible for the French-speaking Community in Belgium state that students, in the third year of secondary education, will look at absolute and representative government in France, England, the United Provinces, Russia and Eastern Europe. In year four, they look at the revolutions in France, the United States, Germany and Italy and how the ideas of those times influenced the revolutionary movement in Belgium.

iii. Even where the history of other countries is introduced, it tends to be in a fairly limited way. For example, the list below of topics and themes, which are most likely to appear in each country's curriculum and which relate to other countries, is more revealing for its omissions than its inclusions:

> **France**: Absolutism and the Ancien Régime, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and Empire, World Wars I and II.
>
> **United Kingdom**: Reformation, absolute monarchy and the emergence of parliamentary democracy, Castlereagh and the Congress of Vienna, the industrial revolution, colonialism, trade, World Wars I and II, the decline of power since 1945.

Germany: Thirty Years War, Reformation, Prussia, unification, Mittel Europa, colonialism, World War I, the rise of National Socialism, World War II, post-war "economic miracle", reunification.

Italy: Ancient Rome, the decline of the Roman Empire, banking, Renaissance, unification, Rise of Fascism, World War II, post-war reconstruction.

Spain: Islam and Christianity, Ferdinand and Isabella, the explorations, the Inquisition, trade, Imperial Power, Civil War, Fascism, post-Franco democracy.

Portugal: Mediterranean trade, the explorations, Henry the Navigator, Magellan, colonial power, loss of colonies.

Benelux Countries: commerce, banking and trade, the key cities, relations with Spain and England, Reformation, Art, World Wars I and II, membership of the European Union.

Greece: Antiquity, Byzantium, World War II, membership of the European Union

Denmark: Vikings, migrations and invasions, trade, relations with the Hanseatic League, relations with Norway and Sweden, relations with Germany.

Ireland: (rarely covered) migration of the Celts, Vikings, relations with England, membership of the European Union.

Central and Eastern Europe: the Habsburgs, the Balkans pre-1914, World Wars I and II, the Warsaw Pact and the Cold War.

Russia: Peter the Great, World War I, the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union, Lenin, Stalin, World War II, Cold War, the break up of the Soviet Union.

In recent Council of Europe conferences and seminars, there has been some concern expressed by representatives from Central and Eastern European countries about the way in which their countries' histories are ignored by Western European history curricula. This is understandable given the above list. However, on the basis of this analysis, there would seem to be good grounds for the representatives of most Western European countries also expressing concern about how their histories are covered by their "neighbours". Generally speaking, when we look at the curriculum of the 12 member states of the European Union,

we find that the international dimension is dominated by England, France and Germany before the mid-20th century and by the USA, the Soviet Union, China and Japan post-1945.

iv. Nevertheless, there are a number of European topics and themes which are widely taught to secondary pupils in European education systems. The most commonly taught ones are listed below.

Aspects of European History widely taught in secondary schools in Western Europe	
Greek antiquity	The rise of nation states
The Judaeo-Christian tradition	Enlightenment
Rome and the Roman Empire	Napoleonic Empire
Byzantium	Congress of Vienna
The early invasions and migrations (eg. Goths, Huns, Vandals, etc.)	Nationalist movements in the 19th century
Eastern and Western Christianity	Colonialism
Rise of Islam	Ideologies in the 19th century
Carolingian Europe	World War I
Later invasions and migrations (Vikings, Saxons, Angles, etc)	Communism, Fascism and National Socialism
The Crusades	World War II
Renaissance (14th - 15th centuries)	post-1945 political and economic cooperation
Reformation and counter-Reformation	
Voyages of Discovery	

v. The balance of coverage between national, European and world history varies from country to country. Generally speaking, the countries which give most coverage to European or regional history are either small and, of necessity,

politically and culturally sensitive to their larger neighbours, or their history is inextricably linked culturally, linguistically and politically with a region, for example, Germany and Central Europe. However, it is always dangerous to generalise. Some of the countries where the curriculum is predominantly national and inward-looking are also small. Recently, concern has been expressed in some of the countries where a relatively high proportion of the curriculum is European rather than national, that the balance has tilted too far in that direction and that students are not acquiring an adequate understanding of their own nation's history.

vi. Much teaching of European history actually focuses mainly on regional rather than continental history. That is, the focus is on the history of North West Europe, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, Central Europe, the Baltic or Scandinavia. By contrast, some of the guidelines issued by German Länder have a broader perspective, reflecting that country's unique historical position in middle Europe. This tendency sometimes reflects a recognition that a common culture, language and history transcends national borders or that a country's history has shaped and been shaped by events and developments in neighbouring countries. The emphasis on regional rather than continental history also reflects a convention which has been firmly entrenched in the field of curriculum development since the 1970s. That is, that the teacher should start with the students' immediate environment and gradually broaden the scope to national, regional and global history: referred to by some, following Jerome Bruner, as the spiral curriculum and by others as a history curriculum based on concentric circles. In practice, this usually means that students spend a very limited amount of time looking at the history of their home town or village; most of their curriculum is taken up with national history, and there is a limited amount of time for examining the interaction of national history with regional history and for the coverage of world history. Generally speaking, this global dimension is usually restricted to 20th Century developments and, where appropriate, the home nation's colonial past. Perhaps, the time has come to question the assumption that young people's interest in history is aroused primarily by focusing on the more geographically local aspects of European history. Through the mass media, many young people in Western Europe are currently being exposed to more information and visual images about nations which are geographically remote from their own, such as Bosnia and Chechnya, than they are about their neighbouring countries. This information may be incomplete, inconsistent and possibly one-sided but many of the young people watching or listening to news programmes want to understand what is happening there. What they lack is an historical perspective to enable them to interpret the information provided on their television screens.

vii. There is very little coverage of the history of Eastern Europe within the curriculum guidelines and syllabuses of education systems in Western Europe. There is some coverage in some of the German syllabuses but, even here, the focus is more likely to be central rather than Eastern Europe. This is in marked contrast with some of the curriculum guidelines now emerging in Eastern Europe which seem to exhibit a wider European perspective, giving almost as much coverage to developments in the west as they do to their own regional history. For example, the proposed secondary school history programme for Slovenia illustrates this trend very clearly. Beginning with pre-history, it goes on to survey European and world history right through to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia since 1989. The following abridged extract illustrates the proposed treatment of the High and Late Middle Ages.

Abridged extracts from the proposed Slovene history programme

The known and unknown world around 1000: political, ethnic, cultural and historical map; geographical horizons of Europeans. Western Europe after the disintegration of the Frankish Empire; Arabic and non-Arabic Spain; South Eastern Europe; Byzantium, the Slavs; the Near East, the Chinese, Japanese, Central and South America.

Tripartite structure of European society: peasantry, aristocracy and clergy, etc.

Spiritual world in the Middle Ages: Christianity, the Schism and religious sects, Islam, etc.

Catholic Europe: consequences of the Schism, borders of Catholic Europe, the Crusades, the Inquisition, medieval universities, chivalry, the Romanesque and Gothic;

The European east (Byzantium), the west (France, England), the south (Italy) and the north (Germany and the Baltic) in 12th - 14th Centuries.

The Slavs: Mongol invasions; the Balkans; the ethnic, social, spiritual and cultural image of the Slav and non-Slav worlds, ethnic borders, colonisation and its impact on ethnic composition.

The Slovenes: disintegration of "Carinthian society"; ethnic and social composition of the population in the Slovene lands. The Holy Roman Empire.

Social, demographic and economic growth of Europe to the 14th Century; feudalism, social and economic crisis, crises of the Catholic church.

Development of European kingdoms and nations.

Social and spiritual changes in the Slovene lands and neighbouring countries; peasants and town dwellers; aristocracy and the formation of historical regions of Slovenia; monasticism.

Changes in the spiritual outlook of west Europeans in the 14th and 15th Centuries, early forms of capitalism, the rise of science, spread of printing, etc.

[Abridged version of an English translation supplied by Professor Peter Vodopivec, University of Ljubljana]

viii. While most of the curriculum guidelines reviewed start with pre-history or Antiquity and go right through to the 20th Century, there are significant gaps in the coverage. The Northern Ireland curriculum has little to say about the 18th Century; the first cycle of the Portuguese curriculum indicates a rather sketchy

coverage of the Middle Ages and skates lightly over the 19th Century. Generally speaking, there is usually some coverage of Classical Greece and of the Roman Empire, and their joint influence on the development of European civilisation. The treatment of the Middle Ages is often fragmented: population movements and invasions, the decline of Roman influence, feudalism, the crusades, the Renaissance. Coverage of events and developments in Europe from the late Middle Ages to the mid-18th Century is limited. There is usually some sporadic coverage of events, trends and movements which were either pan-European or had important consequences for regions within Europe. For example, the voyages of discovery, European expansion into the New World, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and so on. However, in most cases, these developments tend to be looked at from a national perspective. There are also interesting differences between the curricula in terms of when particular periods such as the Renaissance, the Reformation and even the Middle Ages began and ended. Some of the concepts which help to define these periods, such as feudalism, are also used in different ways.

ix. When modern European history is covered in the school curriculum, its treatment is often quite different from the treatment of national history. Since the late 1970s, the emphasis within the secondary school curriculum on political, military and diplomatic history has been reduced, with a concomitant increase in the coverage of social, economic and cultural history. However, this trend is not so apparent in the treatment of 20th Century history. The relationship between economic development and political development, and the spread of ideas and technology tends to be given far less emphasis than the politics of international relations and the emergence of supra-national institutions. The treatment of these institutions appears to be rather descriptive and ahistorical and it is worth noting that concern about the limited educational value of this rather static approach has regularly emerged at Council of Europe conferences since the mid-1970s. There is also a growing tendency, within history curricula, to emphasise the significance of 20th Century events and developments rather than to focus on causal and contributing factors. For example, the more recently devised syllabuses tend to refer to "the significance of the first (or second) world war", "the significance of Yalta (or Potsdam)", and, no doubt, the next round of syllabuses will require students to learn about "the significance of the break-up of the Soviet Union".

x. The nearer the syllabus gets to the 20th Century the shorter the time-scale for looking at European themes and developments. When studying the first millennium, it is not unusual for students to look at a period consisting of three to four centuries and syllabuses often take the first three to four centuries of the second millennium as a block. After that, the time-scale begins to narrow and, from the early 18th Century onwards, the time-scale for looking at European or national history is seldom more than 50 years. This does raise the important question of whether students are able to recognise what Braudel referred to as "la longue durée" and other historians have called "the historical traces" through this approach. If one of the purposes of the history curriculum is to help young

people understand the present, then it is doubtful whether it is possible to explain some of the developments currently taking place in parts of Europe if teaching is restricted to such a short time-scale.

2. Definitions of Europe and their implications for history teaching

As students of European history have frequently observed, Europe is both an area and an idea. Amongst geographers, there is widespread agreement that Europe is bounded by the Arctic Ocean to the north, the Atlantic to the west, the Ural mountains and the Ural River to the east, the Mediterranean to the south and south west, and the Black Sea and Caucasian Mountains to the south east. However, the geopolitical or territorial boundaries of Europe have seldom, if ever, coincided with these geographical ones. Indeed, in most periods of history, the territorial boundaries have been considerably smaller, shifting with each successive conquest, invasion, population movement, re-conquest or settlement of previously uninhabited land.

Even in contemporary times it is questionable whether everyone who lives within the geographical area of Europe would regard themselves as European. The break up of the Soviet Union, since 1989, highlights this very clearly. Whilst a Muslim state, such as Azerbaijan, and large Muslim communities in the Caucasus and Kazakhstan may look to the Middle East and Central Asia because of cultural and religious ties and shared political aspirations, there are also large Russian communities east of the Urals and in the Asian Republics who look to the west culturally, politically and economically. So, perhaps the first point that needs to be established here is that "the idea of Europe" does not necessarily coincide with the geographical or geopolitical boundaries of the European continent.

A second, related point, is that definitions of Europe extant in any historical period have tended to reflect the political, social and demographic circumstances and aspirations at that time. In each era, the historically conditioned "idea of Europe" has reflected the themes and features which its proponents at that time regarded as being common to Europe. This is not the place to look at these different "ideas of Europe" in any detail. The implication, which I wish to draw from this point for the development of history curricula, is that pupils can be encouraged to look at the idea of Europe itself in a historical way.

A third point, that also needs to be established, is that not only has the idea of Europe changed over time, but also there have been periods in European history when several "rival" concepts of Europe have existed at the same time, either because of the fragmentation of an empire or because an external threat has been repulsed. This seems to be the case in contemporary Europe. Whilst institutional frameworks intended to promote greater European cooperation and integration have tended to take the nation state as a "given", we have also seen the emergence, over the last 25 years, of countervailing tendencies which propose and promote rather different "ideas of Europe". First, there has been a growth of cross-national groups and movements drawing their membership from across Europe on such issues as the environment and human rights. Second, there has been a resurgence in the political, economic and cultural aspirations of linguistic and ethnic minorities in Europe which are encapsulated in the phrase: "Unity through the recognition of diversity". These aspirations are not confined to Western

Europe. For example, one of the slogans of the Croatian Democratic Alliance (HDZ), during its 1990 election campaign was, "Croatia into a Europe of Regions"; while the election slogan of the Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, in the same year, was "Return to Europe", which Vaclav Havel subsequently explained as a return to certain ideals and values concerned with respect for human rights, freedom of conscience, freedom of choice, academic freedom, democratic processes and cross-fertilisation of art, literature and music.

From the perspective of textbook and curriculum design, there are parallels here with the notion that the idea of Europe is historically conditioned. There is scope, within the history curriculum, for focusing on the reasons why alternative definitions or ideas emerge at the same time, as well as at different times in history. Indeed, some of the syllabuses reviewed for this report do identify certain periods in European history where competing ideas of Europe are apparent, but most do not.

The current debate amongst academics regarding the teaching of European history, and current trends in the writing of textbooks on European history, reflects two alternative perspectives. The first approach stresses that the identity of Europe can only be defined by reference to its common history and cultural heritage:

- the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition;
- Judaeo-Christian beliefs and ethics;
- a common artistic heritage;
- a shared architectural heritage;
- the emergence of the nation state throughout Europe;
- shared historical experiences (e.g. feudalism, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the industrial revolution, etc.).

In recent times, this "idea of Europe" has dominated much of the thinking about the possibility of a European history textbook. One such example ("Histoire de l'Europe", Delouche, Paris 1992), aimed at students between the ages of 16 to 18 (upper secondary), presents a chronological survey of European history from prehistoric times to the present written by an international team of 12 historians. Three principles underpinned the selection of the content: elements of similarity, one civilisation with various cultures, and common European phenomena. Each chapter represents a block of time, and as the survey gets nearer to modern times, so the periods covered get shorter. So, for example, the penultimate chapter covers the period 1900 - 1945 and the final chapter focuses on the post-1945 era.

The review of syllabuses and curriculum guidelines carried out for this report identified very few examples of a secondary level syllabus which offers such a comprehensive survey of European history. As noted elsewhere in this report, the main emphasis of these syllabuses and guidelines is on national and regional history. However, the history syllabus produced by the Ministry of Education for Luxembourg comes closest to this model. In lower secondary education, the students receive two hours of history teaching per week for three years. The curriculum for 12 year-olds begins with the prehistoric era, and goes through to the break up of the Roman Empire; the curriculum for 13 year-olds starts with the high middle ages and goes through to the Congress of Vienna, while the final year begins with the industrial revolution in Europe and goes through to the crisis of socialism in Eastern Europe. Another model, which has been adopted in one or two countries (e.g. Portugal), is to focus in more depth on a number of periods (or "patches") of particular significance to European history: the impact of urbanisation on the civilisations of antiquity; the voyages of discovery, the collapse of the ancien régime, Europe between the two world wars, Europe's position in the world since 1945.

The strengths of both models - the comprehensive survey and the selective survey (or "broad sweep of history") - are that they offer the pupil:

- an overview of European history;

- a means of relating what was happening in their own country at a given point in time to what was happening elsewhere in Europe at the same time;

- a sense of the chronology of European history.

However, there are a number of potential problems with this approach particularly if (a) the historical survey is highly selective and (b) the main intention is to make pupils aware of Europe's common culture and heritage.

First, there is the risk that pupils will be given the impression that there is a linear development of Europe's history from antiquity to modern times; that the essential elements of contemporary European civilisation can be traced directly back to their roots. At this point, advocates of this view often find it useful to quote Paul Valéry: "Any land which was successively Romanised, Christianised and subjected in the mind to the discipline of the Greeks is completely European". This seems to be a rather romanticised and unbalanced view of European history. It leaves out of account those parts of Europe which, for significant periods of their history, were untouched by one or more of these influences. It also fails to take account of those periods when these philosophical and cultural traditions were virtually lost to large parts of Europe and were recovered through somewhat circuitous means: the translation into Latin of the writings of Aristotle, Euclid and other Greek philosophers by Arab scholars whose work gradually found its way into Western Europe via Moorish Spain and Norman Sicily.

Second, and following on from the previous point, there is a tendency with this approach to portray European history as "an unfolding and continuous narrative" from earliest times to the present day. The risk here is that the pupil comes to see events and developments which do not follow the pattern of the over-simplified, sequential story line as aberrations or of lesser significance to the overall picture.

Third, this approach to European history often fails to take account of the external influences on European cultural, philosophical and scientific history. For example, the wide-ranging impact on European development of the change from Roman to Arabic numerals and the influence and the impact of Arabic works on the theory and practice of navigation in Europe. Similarly, it is hardly a coincidence that the major Christian heresies tended to emerge either on the peripheries of Europe or in those areas which offered most opportunities for contact with other civilisations.

Finally, this approach tends to put a lot of emphasis on cultural and political history and the history of ideas. Textbooks and syllabuses, which adopt this perspective, tend to underplay social and economic history, perhaps because a focus on these dimensions would tend to highlight diversity rather than commonality and also because it would be more difficult to provide the breadth of coverage that this diversity would entail.

This brings me to the other main "idea of Europe" which has influenced recent debates on how to teach European history. This is the notion that what characterises Europe - its unique particularity - is its diversity: the different ethnic groups and nationalities, the variety of languages and dialects, the different ways of life, and the variety of local and regional loyalties. Whilst this perspective perhaps gives greater emphasis to the "darker side of European history" - tribalistic conflicts, nationalism, xenophobia, intolerance, genocide and ethnic "cleansing" - than the perspective which focuses on the unifying forces in European history, it also highlights the political and economic dynamism, the creativity and the cultural fertility which seem to flourish when tensions and conflicts exist between Church and State, religious and secular thinking, the new and the traditional; when political, economic, cultural and religious power are fragmented rather than centralised; and when the unifying forces associated with a common cultural heritage are not just assimilated but become fused with local traditions and circumstances.

As yet, there are few examples of textbooks or syllabuses which closely follow this approach, although the report on the Teachers' Seminar organised by the Council of Europe at Donaueschingen in 1991 ("New Approaches to History Teaching in Upper Secondary Education", Donaueschingen, November, 1991) discusses one such approach to the development of a textbook. This is a collection of source materials on European history put together by Hangen Schulze and Ina Ulrike Paul, who are based in Munich. The approach is broadly thematic and is structured around pairs of conceptual opposites such as hegemony and balance, freedom and despotism, belief and reason, unity and diversity, the old and the new.

Although the review of curriculum guidelines and syllabuses did not identify an approach to the diverse particularities of European history as comprehensive as the approach adopted by Schulze and Paul, there are numerous examples of syllabuses or guidelines where the teacher is required or encouraged to:

- compare and contrast events, developments, phenomena or different ways of life at different periods in their own country's history with the equivalent in other European countries or regions;

- look at how events and developments in their own country's history have influenced or been influenced by what has happened in other parts of Europe;

- look at how national or local events and developments, at a given point in history, were experienced or perceived elsewhere in Europe. For example, in France, the history curriculum for the second cycle (pupils aged 11-13) focuses specifically on the French Revolution and the Empire. In the rationale for the curriculum guidelines, history teachers are recommended also to look at how other countries perceived these developments on the grounds that this will "balance the national viewpoint";

- examine how European rivalries, conflicts and divisions (economic, political and religious) have affected national history. For example, in Northern Ireland (which is a distinct education system within the United Kingdom), pupils are required to examine the economic, political and religious rivalry between England and Spain in the late 16th Century and look at its impact on two other nations: the Irish and the Dutch;

- conduct longitudinal studies of the historical roots of contemporary relations between nations, ethnic groups, religious groups, or regions;

- compare and contrast ways of life (urban life, agricultural life, trade, communications, traditions) within Europe in different historical eras.

The emphasis, in this perspective on diversity, is on helping the pupil to understand how different historical forces (cultural, social, economic, political and religious) interact with each other; and how historical phenomena, which appear to be common to the whole of Europe or the larger part of it (e.g. feudalism), transform and are transformed by local and national traditions.

If such an approach (i.e. focusing on diversity and mutual influences through comparison, cross-section studies and longitudinal studies) is genuinely integrated into the curriculum in a systematic way, then it can help to draw pupils' attention to the dynamic forces which have influenced and shaped their own country's history and that of Europe too (or at least a part of it), and it can contribute to developing a better historical understanding of what is happening in Europe today. However, in practice in most education systems in

Europe, this approach has not been systematic or an integral element of the curriculum. In most cases, the pupils are only occasionally required to take a comparative approach, or to take a longitudinal perspective over an extended period of time.

There are also some potential risks associated with this approach. Any curriculum design strategy, which focuses on diversity rather than commonality, encounters major problems regarding the selection of content. Should pupils be taught about events and developments in another country or region simply because they provide a good basis for comparison and contrast, regardless of whether those events have any real meaning for the pupils? In most cases, selection of content is usually based on the criterion of significance for national or regional history. The risk here is that pupils will tend to acquire an atomised and fragmented picture of European history rather than an overview. There is also the potential risk with the comparative approach that the unique and the particular in a nation's or region's history is subsumed by the need to focus on the more generalisable patterns. Finally, some history teachers and curriculum developers have argued that this approach, with its emphasis on the comparative analysis, identifying similarities and contrasts, and working with longer time scales than they are used to with conventional syllabuses, is too intellectually demanding for the average 11-15 year-old.

IV. THE SCOPE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

This section of the report identifies the likely constraints on increasing the European dimension of history teaching; some possible strategies for bringing about change and, finally, some opportunities or "gateways" for curriculum development within the parameters and constraints operating in different education systems.

1. Potential constraints

Official guidelines

The majority of education systems in Europe now issue curriculum guidelines for teaching history or for inter-disciplinary areas which include history. In most cases, these guidelines are produced by curriculum working groups of professors of history and of history didactics, teacher trainers and teachers. Mostly, the guidelines, when they have been drafted, are submitted to the Minister for Education for approval and then sent to all schools. In some education systems, particularly in the German Länder, the guidelines have to be voted on by provincial parliaments as well. One implication of this is that the process of curriculum change can be quite slow. In those countries, where new guidelines have just been issued, there is an understandable reluctance to introduce changes before the new curricula have been tried out over a reasonable period of time; the likely situation in England and Wales, the Netherlands, Scotland and Spain.

Curriculum frameworks for history teaching

There is no consensus about how the history curriculum should be structured. Within the official guidelines which were looked at, there were at least five different curriculum frameworks being employed. Some offer a sequential survey from early times to the present day; some only focus on a few distinct periods of history; others are structured around key historical themes; some focus primarily on political history, while others offer a broader perspective including the economic, social and cultural; and some combine history with other disciplines such as civics, geography or social studies.

From time to time, a Ministry of Education, or the curriculum working party which it has established for history, may choose to look again at the curriculum framework which it has previously opted for. Indeed, a number of national and local ministries have done so in the last five years. However, for that very reason, many of them are unlikely to introduce major changes in the near future. Consequently, any attempt to extend the European dimension of history teaching will probably be constrained by the particular curriculum framework currently in fashion. This can happen in two ways. A content-rich syllabus focused on national history, as many chronological surveys tend to be, will leave little scope for much coverage of what has happened elsewhere in Europe. More typically, if the history curriculum has been structured according to certain principles (chronological, thematic, inter-disciplinary, etc.) then any additional coverage of European history is likely to be governed by the same structuring principle.

Educational resources

This is already a problem in most European education systems particularly where the proposed curriculum changes are far reaching. If the proposed syllabus requires new textbooks and a structured in-service training programme, it may be difficult to bring about change quickly

and universally. In the current economic climate in much of Central and Eastern Europe, there appears to be a recognition of the need for major curriculum reforms, particularly with regard to history teaching. However, the resources to achieve this are not available.

The number of hours of history teaching which the student receives

Far-reaching aims and objectives can be severely limited by this particular factor. In some education systems, compulsory secondary education lasts three years, in most it lasts five years and in a few compulsory secondary schooling lasts seven to eight years. In some systems, history is a compulsory subject for the whole of secondary education, while, in others, it is only compulsory for three years and then becomes optional. Clearly, there is less scope for broadening the history curriculum or looking at some pan-European themes in greater depth if compulsory secondary schooling lasts three rather than five years. In a similar vein, it is also worth noting that, in most education systems, history is not formally taught as a subject before the age of 11 to 12.

The evidence gathered for this research also showed that the average secondary school student in Western Europe receives less than two hours of history teaching per week, approximately 80 hours per year; a total of 240 hours in a school where lower secondary education is limited to three years and 400 hours in a system where compulsory secondary schooling begins at 11 and ends at 16. In education systems, where the history curriculum is content-rich, the opportunities for extending or expanding the curriculum will be fairly slim. Also, the possibility that the history curriculum might bring about significant changes in students' attitudes and values (for example, to make them more tolerant, more likely to support democratic values, less xenophobic or Eurocentric) seems rather remote, unless the whole ethos of the school also supports and promotes these attitudes and values.

The extent to which school textbooks are officially prescribed and authorised

Again, there is considerable variation between education systems. Some official guidelines specify the textbooks to be used; others provide a range of recommended texts to choose from. In some systems, the curriculum planners work closely with approved publishers, while, in others, the individual history teacher is free to use any textbooks of her or his choice. Clearly, in an education system where history teachers are heavily dependent on approved textbooks, this can be a major constraint if the textbooks give little coverage to European history, publishers are reluctant to change without official sanction, and the officials are not particularly interested in extending the European dimension of the history curriculum.

On the other hand, this is one of those potential constraints which can also be an opportunity. The authorisation of textbooks can also be an important mechanism whereby curriculum planners at the official level can bring about changes in classroom teaching. However, this practice is less common than it used to be.

The autonomy of the teacher

As we have seen already, education systems in Western Europe vary considerably in the extent to which the individual teacher can exercise choice in terms of curriculum content. Some official guidelines merely list the topics to be covered leaving scope to the teacher to decide which aspects of that topic will be focused upon. Others provide more detailed content but, even then, some syllabuses and curriculum regulations provide opportunities for the teacher also to choose some topics from a list of options. In theory, virtually all Western European education systems would claim that, even where the content of the curriculum is officially specified, the individual teacher can still exercise considerable autonomy regarding the teaching methods he or she employs. But "content-rich" syllabuses can be a severe constraint upon the range of teaching and learning styles which a teacher uses. A syllabus, which takes the pupil from pre-history to the break-up of the Soviet Union in three years, may leave little time for small group work, investigative approaches, comparing different interpretations of an event, or using primary source material.

The learning capabilities of the students

The problem with history as a discipline, compared with mathematics, science or autochthonous languages, is that it lacks a clear developmental learning pattern. With mathematics, there is a clear, sequential learning progression based both on logic and on research findings on how children learn to think mathematically. With history, on the other hand, there is no consensus, firmly embedded in research findings, to indicate what constitutes the prior or fundamental knowledge, understanding and skills which have to be learned in order to create a basis for subsequent learning.

A case can be made out for including or excluding any period or topic. The 19th Century is not intrinsically more difficult to understand than the Palaeolithic era or the Middle Ages. There is no inherent advantage in beginning with the distant past and moving chronologically through to modern times. Economic, social or cultural history is not intrinsically more difficult to understand than political history. It is often argued, therefore, that what distinguishes the historical knowledge and understanding of a 14 year-old from that of an 11 year-old is his or her ability to apply certain fundamental skills and concepts in more sophisticated and complex ways. Some of these skills and organising concepts are not unique to the discipline of history; for example, collecting and weighing evidence, detecting bias, comparing alternative perspectives, establishing causal links. However, history teachers, researchers, specialists in the didactic of history and assessment experts seem to differ concerning the intellectual demands that can be reasonably made on the average 11 year-old, 14 year-old or 16 year-old.

In an earlier section of this report, it was suggested that current thinking on the teaching of European history is influenced by a debate about whether Europe is best defined by its diversity or by its common cultural heritage. It was pointed out in that discussion that the approach to teaching, which takes the cultural heritage as its starting point, emphasises the introduction of additional curriculum content, whereas the approach, which takes diversity as its

starting point, relies more on introducing the pupil to certain methods of historical interpretation (comparison, depth studies, longitudinal studies, etc.), certain generalising and organising concepts such as continuity and change, centralisation and fragmentation, development and decay, and certain historical processes, e.g. nationalism, the nation state, industrialisation and urbanisation. Some history teachers argue that this kind of approach is better suited to the student in upper secondary education (i.e. after the age of 15 or 16). If they are right, this could be a major constraint on how European history is taught to 11-16 year-olds.

However, more research is needed. Writing as a curriculum researcher who is interested in the whole secondary curriculum and not just the teaching of history, it is my impression that teachers of some other subjects, particularly mathematics and science, already require their students in lower secondary education to employ similar kinds of higher order cognitive skills and to understand equally sophisticated concepts and processes.

2. Strategies for Change

Some of the constraints outlined above can only be addressed at a national or international level and, clearly, the Council of Europe has an important role to play here. It is too easy to assume that large-scale changes cannot be brought about in the teaching of history through European-wide initiatives. In the 1970s, we saw a shift away from teaching history, geography and the social sciences as separate subjects and towards developing inter-disciplinary programmes. Indeed, in Berne in 1973, the Standing Conerence of European Ministers of Education recommended that "subjects should be de-compartmentalised" so as to make pupils aware of the "interpretation of knowledge in everyday life".

This approach is still pursued in some education systems, even though the trend, in the 1980s and '90s, has been away from inter-disciplinary approaches and back to the teaching of single subjects again. Clearly, approaches to the Humanities and Social Sciences did not change overnight, just because of a joint declaration by European Ministers. Rather, their declaration reflected a trend which could be traced back to the late 1960s; a trend established by a vanguard of academics, teacher trainers and history teachers.

The same conditions apply now with regard to the inclusion of European history within national curricula. A vanguard of academics and teachers, with the support of international organisations such as the Council of Europe, have been developing curriculum strategies, collaborative projects and teaching materials. The expansion of the Council of Europe and of the European Union has given impetus to these developments, and an added sense of urgency has come from the growing need to understand what is happening in Central and Eastern Europe and to set it into an historical context.

However, as we have seen in previous decades, curriculum innovation will tend to be limited to a vanguard unless the majority of teachers and curriculum planners feel that it is practicable and feasible to introduce some new elements into their teaching and curricula. They will only perceive this strategy to be realistic if it:

- addresses the constraints outlined above;

- is flexible enough to fit into the very different curriculum frameworks adopted across Europe.

The function of this last section of the Report is to suggest ways in which this can be done. The suggestion is that we can identify "gateways" into different curriculum structures and frameworks which will enable individual teachers both to extend the European dimension of their teaching and also integrate it into what they are already required to teach.

3. Gateways into the history curriculum

In the sub-section on potential constraints, it was argued that there are five main types of curriculum framework employed by Ministries of Education and by individual history teachers for structuring the history curriculum. It was further argued that, in most of the education systems of Europe, any attempt to extend the European dimension of the history curriculum will have to work within the prevailing curriculum framework established in official guidelines. The next step then is to examine the scope for extending the European dimension within each framework.

Outline Surveys: These are chronological frameworks which cover an extended period of time. It may be a comprehensive survey or it may be a broad sweep of history with significant gaps. The official lower secondary school history syllabus in Luxembourg, for example, is extremely comprehensive. In just three years, the student is taken from pre-history to the contemporary crises in Eastern Europe. The Portuguese syllabus for 12-15 year-olds also begins with pre-history and ends with "cultural progress and diversity in the contemporary world", but there are significant gaps in the time line. The approach adopted in England is also a broad sweep of history beginning with ancient Rome and ending in 1970. However, in England, some of the topics and periods can be looked at in more depth because the official guidelines cover primary as well as secondary education.

The case for an outline survey is usually that it helps students to understand the relationship of cause and effect, contingent and contributing factors; and that it provides students with a mental map of history or a set of reference points which give some measure of coherence to the study of the past.

Some of these outline surveys already give considerable coverage to the European historical dimension. The syllabuses from Luxembourg, French-speaking Belgium and Portugal have a very strong European emphasis. The illustration below is taken from the history syllabus which was issued, in the late 1980s, by the Ministry of Education in Luxembourg. It lists the topics which 14 year-olds are expected to cover.

List of topics covered in history curriculum for Year 9 (15 year-olds) in Luxembourg
[NB. This particular syllabus is for streams 1 and 2. An attenuated version of this list is taught to stream 3]

Mid-19th Century to modern times

Industrialisation
Social issues
European Imperialism
World War I
- Causes
- Developments
- Consequences

Emergence of a new order in Europe
Russian Revolution
USSR under Lenin and Stalin
- historical, political and economic structures

Problems of the Weimar Republic
World economic crisis of 1929 and its consequences
Fascism in Italy and Spain
National Socialism in Germany
- Hitler: the road to power
- goals and consequences of National Socialism
- towards war

World War II
- developments and characteristics
- holocaust

New order in Europe after the war:
- Marshall Plan and reconstruction of West Europe

United Nations
East-west blocs, the Cold War and Berlin 1948-49 and 1961
NATO and the Warsaw Pact: spiral of rearmament
COMECON and the European Community
Crises in the Socialist States of Eastern Europe

Clearly, there is scope here for providing the young student with an overview of 20th Century European and world history. On the other hand, this is predominantly political history, and it is "history at a fast trot": a lot of ground is covered in a short time and, inevitably, there is a risk that the student only acquires a relatively superficial understanding of events. Furthermore, for the reasons given in an earlier sub-section of this report, there may be practical and administrative constraints which, in some countries, could prevent a significant shift of emphasis from national to European history.

The outline survey is still the dominant model for historical curricula in Europe, and there are a number of topics and themes which appear in almost every survey framework which offer scope for introducing a European perspective. Some of the most commonly taught topics, which come into this category, are identified below:

TOPICS widely taught in secondary schools in Western Europe which offer scope for a more European perspective

Feudalism	Inventions
Population movements	Colonisation
Medieval society	National unification or self-determination
Medieval towns and cities	Emergence of the nation state
Medieval culture and thought	Absolutism and the development of representative government
Monasticism	Agrarian revolution
Medieval Universities	Industrialisation
Black Death and plague	Social changes brought about by agricultural and industrial development
Emergence of commercial centres	Social and political movements in the 19th Century
Church and State	Imperialism
Printing	Economic crisis in the inter-war years
Architecture (Romanesque and Gothic)	De-colonisation
Dynastic rivalries and conflict	Post-war economic and social reconstruction
Religious conflict and differences	
Population growth	
Agricultural expansion	
Emergence of capitalism	
Humanism and science	
Overseas expansion	

However, in most cases, these topics, at present, tend to be taught from a national point of view. Often, the issue is not so much which topics should or should not be included in the curriculum in order to ensure more emphasis on European history; rather the key issue is how to encourage teachers to take a more comparative approach to the topics covered in their history syllabuses. In some countries, it may be necessary to recognise this in official curriculum guidelines. In all countries, it has implications for the pre-service and in-service training of history teachers and for the teaching resources available to them. It may even have implications for the teaching of history in the universities.

There is considerable potential within the framework of the outline survey for the inclusion of pan-European topics and for looking at aspects of national history from a more European perspective through a comparative approach. However, the scope for the former strategy may be limited by practical constraints and the scope for the latter strategy may be constrained by the narrowly chronological structure of most outline surveys. Many of the historical phenomena and developments listed above, such as feudalism, urbanisation, agricultural expansion, industrialisation, and so on, did not emerge at the same time across Europe. It is not easy to convey this in a densely packed historical survey.

The "thematic" framework - Here the selection of content or topics to be studied reflects problems, themes and historical processes rather than periods. This approach tends to be adopted for any combination of the following reasons.

i. themes, problems and processes can be analysed through a limited number of "case studies", thereby permitting the development of historical enquiry in depth;

ii. the thematic approach provides some degree of coherence to a comparative approach to teaching history. In other words, a focus on themes or problems enables the history teacher and her or his students to identify common or contrasting patterns more readily than might be possible if they were taking a comparative approach to a period;

iii. this appears to be a useful framework, where one of the main aims of the curriculum is to use history to help students to understand the present. It provides scope for the teacher to take a longer time span than he or she can usually do with the conventional chronological syllabus, which is often split up into rather arbitrary periods. Therefore, it becomes possible to trace back, over several centuries, the roots of current events;

iv. it is often a better framework for introducing the pupil to historical method than the outline survey. There is more time to use a variety of source documents, to examine alternative historical interpretations, to collect, classify, structure and examine historical evidence and to apply the historian's key analytical concepts;

v. finally, and linked to the previous point, it can be a more useful framework than the outline survey for encouraging the pupil to think historically. Advocates of the "thematic" approach often argue that the outline survey may have structured the topics into a chronological sequence, but it does not necessarily ensure that the pupil comes to understand the processes of continuity and change which link events and developments in one period with those occurring in a subsequent period.

The potential strength of this framework, then, is that it can offer a dynamic view of historical processes - the factors which contribute to change and continuity and the tensions between them, at any given time; and the long term developmental patterns which transcend the often arbitrary periods that are the basis of chronological surveys. It offers depth rather than breadth. Its critics, on the other hand, express concern that this approach may not contribute sufficiently to the development of a sense of time and historical perspective, and that it might run the risk of students developing an atomised view of history. That is, jumping from theme to theme with no obvious connections. Much depends on how, if at all, the teacher and the supporting teaching materials link themes together to ensure that this "atomisation" does not occur.

The Irish History syllabus for the Junior Certificate (students from 12 - 15) provides one example of a thematic framework. It is divided into three sections. Students start with an introduction to history as a discipline: "How we find out about the past?". They then move on to explore case studies of change: changes in the European view of the world, religious change, changes in land ownership, political change and social change. In their third and final year, they move on to a section entitled "Understanding the Modern World": which looks at political developments in Ireland in the 19th and 20th Centuries, social change in the 20th Century, and international relations.

As with the outline survey framework, it is possible to identify a number of widely taught topics, which are thematic or provide an opportunity for focusing on historical processes, and which could also serve as vehicles for introducing a more European perspective. The list on the next page is not meant to be comprehensive; it merely serves to illustrate the differences and the areas of overlap between this and the outline survey framework.

However, it is important to emphasise again that the issue is not so much which themes and processes to focus on or even which ones to introduce into the curriculum, but rather the issue is how to approach them in the classroom. The thematic framework lends itself to:

- development studies with a relatively long time scale;

- comparative studies of historical developments in two or more countries and regions which can focus on contrasts and similarities;

- depth studies;

- studies of change and continuity. In this respect, the thematic framework is particularly useful for studying the processes of unification and fragmentation, development and decline, absolutism and democratisation, internationalism and nationalism.

THEMES widely taught in secondary schools in Western Europe which offer scope for a more European perspective	
Christianisation of Europe	Exploration and discovery
Population movements	Religious conflict and differences
Land settlement	Emergence of the nation State
Trade routes	Absolutism and the development of representative government
Cultural routes and links	Balance of power
Feudalism	Industrialisation
The spread of knowledge	population movements from the country to the towns
Religion and the State	Social and political movements in 19th Century
Urbanisation	Imperialism and colonialism
Agricultural development	International relations
Developments in art and literature	
Developments in Architecture	

The "Patch" Approach - This is an attempt to break up the syllabus into a few distinct eras selected for their historical significance or because they provide a good opportunity for applying historical methods and concepts. Often justified as a way of "bringing history to life", it frequently involves a range of different historical perspectives on each "patch": economic, social, cultural and political. The French history programme for lower secondary schools offers one such example. The emphasis essentially is on two "patches", the first focuses on the

circumstances before, during and after the French Revolution and France in the 19th Century, and this is covered in the 2nd cycle (years 7-8). The second "patch", which focuses on modern history, is taught in the 1st cycle (years 9-10). Then in the terminal cycle, the syllabus returns again to modern history.

An abridged version of the guidelines for the second cycle is reproduced below.

ABRIDGED version of the History Curriculum for the 2nd cycle (pupils aged 11-13) in France

Ancien Régime
Ideas of property, social and demographic changes and population movement; the gradual evolution of the State; the development of a stable monarchy; work, technology and society in the 18th Century.

The French Revolution and Empire
The main actors; the chronological phases; important documents of the time; the impact of the Revolution outside France: the impact of revolutionary ideas and the development of the Empire.

France, Europe and the world in the 19th Century

a. **Economies, societies and nations in Europe**: growth of liberalism, social movements, religious ideas, nationalism and internationalism;

b. **France and the French**: the development of democracy; ideologies; social change; political development in 19th Century France; the movement of ideas.

c. **Europe and the world**: colonialism, exploitation and conquest. [NB. This should include a study of a non-European civilisation.]

Many of the points raised about the thematic framework would apply to the "patch" approach as well. It offers opportunities for the development of historical enquiry in depth, teachers can often take a longer time scale than they would do with the more conventional outline survey and there is scope (and time) for introducing the methods and concepts of the historian. It often differs (though not inevitably) from the thematic approach in that the "patch" - as a particular period or time span - is usually approached in a chronological way. In that respect, it often provides more opportunities than the comprehensive historical survey for looking at a period from a variety of different perspectives: national, regional, European and

global and from a variety of different historical

dimensions: political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual. This is well illustrated in the extract from the French history guidelines. Its critics, on the other hand, often argue that this approach is not sufficiently broad to ensure that students are introduced to either their national or their European cultural heritage.

There is as much scope in the "patch" approach as there is in the "thematic" framework for introducing more European history. The main problem facing the curriculum developer is how best to ensure that the "patches" selected have both national and European significance. As we have seen in many of the extracts from guidelines and syllabuses, the 20th Century as a "patch" is usually taught from a European and even a global perspective as well as a national perspective. It is also likely that, for many countries at the heart of Europe, an era of national significance is also likely to be an era of significance for their region if not for Europe as a whole. This is apparent in the extract from the French history curriculum. On the other hand, this may be less likely in the development of history curricula in countries on the periphery of Europe and in countries with imperial pasts, where the global dimension may be more significant than the European one.

However, even in those curricula where the "patch" is primarily of national significance, there is no reason why teachers cannot apply the same methods as those adopted by teachers working with thematic curriculum frameworks in order to set national history into a wider context: comparison, contrasts and similarities.

A dimensional framework - Here, the curriculum is consciously structured around the different dimensions of historical study. Most history curricula include some topics which are primarily economic, social or cultural. But, the dimensional framework goes beyond this. These and other dimensions (sometimes including the intellectual, the scientific, the technological, the religious and the aesthetic) are systematically used to plan, select and structure the content.

This had been the original intention of the Working Party which was given the task of producing a new history curriculum in England in 1990. This group, which comprised university historians, teacher trainers and history teachers, was asked to produce detailed programmes of study for four distinct age groups (5-7, 7-11, 11-14 and 14-16 year-olds). Each programme of study identified core study units which all pupils had to follow and also set out criteria for schools to guide them in the development of supplementary units. Initially, the Working Party attempted for, each programme of study, to specify the essential knowledge to be covered under each dimension. This came to be known as the PESC formula (Political, Economic, Social and Cultural). In fact, after a discussion document had been issued and widely debated, the PESC formula was relegated from an organising framework to an exhortation to try to give attention to these different dimensions where possible.

By contrast, the history programme issued by the Ministry for the French-speaking Community in Belgium structures the curriculum in this way identifying how the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of each period should be explored. The published guidelines outline the topic headings to be covered over five years of secondary education. The following brief extract should serve to give an indication of the approach adopted. It is a summary of what pupils would cover regarding the early Middle Ages during their second year of secondary schooling (N.B. they also look at Rome from its origins to the decline of Empire and Feudal society from the 10th to the 14th Centuries).

History Curriculum for the French-speaking Community in Belgium (issued 1986)

Year 2: Early Middle Ages - the fragmentation of the old worlds and construction of the new.

(i) Formation of the West

Politics: Germanic kingdoms, the Carolingian Empire, the Treaty of Verdun and its consequences, control of the masses by an administrative and military aristocracy.

Economy & society: rural societies, the great estates.

Culture: the prolongation of Antiquity and the search for a new culture, monasticism, the Carolingian renaissance.

(ii) The survival and adaptation of the Roman Empire in the East

Politics: the reconstitution of the Roman Empire, Justinian.

Culture: Byzantium

(iii) Islam and the new world: The Arabs, Mohammed as a religious and political leader, the Koran.

Politics: expansion in the Far East, the Mediterranean and Asia

Economy & society: desert civilisations and urban civilisations; the trade routes.

Culture: intellectual and artistic blossoming in the Near East.

Advocates of the dimensional framework tend either to argue that a history syllabus which focuses predominantly on political, military and diplomatic history ignores the wide range of human achievement and lacks breadth and balance, or that a study of important events and developments cannot be really understood unless it takes account of the social, economic and cultural (as well as political) framework in which it occurs. The two arguments are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, in practice, they often lead to different kinds of history curriculum.

The example from Belgium mentioned above represents the argument for breadth and balance, but there is little attempt here to look at how these different dimensions interact at any given time. Of course, there is nothing to stop a teacher showing how the vitality of a new religion, the expanding trade routes and the cultural, social and intellectual eclecticism of the Arabs combined to give a creative dynamism to their political and military expansion into the Far East, the Mediterranean and Asia. On the other hand, the anecdotal evidence from those teacher trainers, school inspectors and curriculum evaluators, who either offered evidence for this report or commented on a previous draft, suggest that most teachers would not do this. Instead, they are more likely to take each dimension separately and structure their lesson planning accordingly. This is always likely to be seen as the practical option in a history curriculum, which adopts the framework of the outline survey. To focus on how these different dimensions underpin and interact with each other calls for either a "patch" or "thematic" framework where there is scope for teachers and pupils to look in more depth at a theme or a sequence of events. That is, to undertake a cross-sectional analysis of that period or theme. In this respect, the opportunities for more emphasis on European history or for adopting a more European perspective are the same as for the "patch" and "thematic" approaches.

Sceptics tend to argue that the dimensional approach, when linked to a patch or theme, and involving cross-section studies, is too sophisticated for pupils in lower secondary education and should be reserved for those over the age of 16, or even students in higher education. There is so little hard evidence based on evaluation of the use of this approach with 11 -16 year-olds that we are not really in a position either to support or reject this sceptical position.

Inter-disciplinary frameworks - The main argument for this approach is usually that, in reality, human life is not readily compartmentalised into the temporal, the spatial, the sociological, the political and the economic. This framework is most commonly used where the main aim is to understand and explain the present or, more specifically, to understand contemporary problems. Another characteristic of the approach is its emphasis on concepts for facilitating comparative analysis. Two of the curriculum guidelines reviewed for this report offered interesting examples of this approach. The Social Sciences provide the framework for the approach proposed by the Spanish Ministry of Education. From 12 - 14, the students begin with an introduction to basic concepts in the social sciences through an integrated study of broad human themes. They then go on to a more detailed study of contemporary Spanish society, including contrasting studies of other places and other times and a unit on social conflict. From 14 -15, they focus on themes related to human and economic geography and then, from 15 - 16, the focus is more historical. The students begin this year with an induction into "doing history", and then focus on studies of economic, social, political and ideological change which are

relevant to contemporary times, through both depth studies (e.g. of the industrial revolution) and contrasting studies (e.g. the transition to democracy in Athens with the transition to democracy in post-Franco Spain).

The second illustration is taken from the lower secondary curriculum in Scotland. This uses environmental studies as the framework, and this includes the social sciences, the humanities and also science and technology. The rationale for this approach is that "the environment encompasses all the social and physical conditions which influence, or have influenced, the lives of the individual and the community, and which shape, or have been shaped by, the actions, artefacts and institutions of successive generations". The emphasis here is very much on learning the processes, skills and methodologies of each discipline, including history. Again, as the curriculum guidelines put it, "acquiring, interpreting and using evidence and information about the world they live in, is part of a sequence of discovery and rediscovery for every generation".

The potential strength of this approach is that, while it is not "content free", the content is subsidiary to the aim of learning to think and work with the methods, concepts and ways of thinking which are characteristic of each discipline. As such, there is scope here for introducing new or different topics, as long as they provide opportunities for case studies, development studies, contrasting and comparative studies or the collection and interpretation of primary and secondary sources of evidence. Its critics, on the other hand, express concern about whether the uniqueness of the historical approach is subsumed by the need to explore what is inter-disciplinary, and whether the emphasis on explaining the present might not contribute sufficiently to the development of a sense of time and historical perspective. This raises an interesting question. The Scottish guidelines for environmental studies assert that a historical perspective can be acquired by means other than the chronological survey. They argue instead that "teachers can assist the development of a sense of chronology by making a habit of reinforcing the notion of chronological time by sharing, or encouraging pupils to complete timeline charts". Others argue that a combination of depth studies (e.g. the Reformation), lines of development (e.g. the influence of Islam since the 7th Century) and contrasting studies (e.g. Europe in the 18th Century and in the late 20th Century) could be just as effective and that an historical perspective develops through the application of historical methods rather than through learning about the key events in every period.

Although the historical content of the curriculum may be subsidiary to learning the methods and concepts of the discipline of history both in terms of collecting and examining evidence and also in interpreting it, there still need to be some criteria for selecting the content to be studied. Some of the syllabuses, which adopt an inter-disciplinary framework, specify the content to be studied and these mostly seem to focus on national history. There is scope for studies of change, developmental studies, contrasting studies and cross-section studies, but the comparative element tends to be either between different regions of the same country (north - south, urban - rural, different linguistic groupings) or between different periods in the nation's history. The developmental element tends to be self-contained rather than taking into account the impact on domestic events and patterns of what was happening elsewhere in Europe.

Other syllabuses and history guidelines, which adopt this framework, tend to specify the learning objectives, but leave it to the teacher (at least to some degree) to select the periods, events or themes which will provide the vehicle for developing and applying these methodological skills and concepts. This applies to a large degree to the Scottish guidelines for environmental studies. It also applies to the relevant guidelines issued by the Dutch Ministry of Education. Strictly speaking, these guidelines are not inter-disciplinary; they are devised for a combined history and civics course. Nevertheless, the format is interesting for our purposes. It consists of a set of learning objectives to be achieved, rather than a list of topics to be covered. This reflects the difficulties of attempting to introduce some measure of consensus on teaching different subjects in an education system, where some 80 per cent of the schools are privately controlled through the various churches. Two of these objectives will highlight the point being made here:

Extracts from the Dutch guidelines on core objectives for history and civics issued in 1990.

Core objective A1: pupils should be able to collect and organise information based on historical data.....and should be able to conduct simple research on historical events and social, economic and cultural developments in their own environment.

Core objective D10: pupils should be able to draw a comparison between aspects of different cultures in the late Middle Ages in Europe and in modern society.

There is scope here, then, and in the other history guidelines, which emphasise the inter-disciplinary framework, for introducing case studies drawn from other European countries or cultures and case studies reflecting pan-European themes. One other area which offers considerable scope for introducing a European dimension is local history. A number of these history guidelines and some of the thematic ones often include a unit on local history as a kind of induction process - an opportunity for the pupil to learn how a historian collects and interprets evidence. The local dimension is selected because it is assumed (a) that this is more likely to arouse the interest of the pupil, and (b) that it will be easier to obtain source documents, artefacts, and so on for the pupils to look at. However, it is still possible to introduce a European perspective here. For example:

- comparisons between the pupils' own locality and a similar environment in another country; e.g. two ports, two cities or towns, two rural communities or mining communities, etc;
- studies of linkages uniting the pupils' own town or locality with other parts of Europe, through pilgrim routes, trade routes, silk routes, linguistic links, population migrations, etc;

- regional and provincial studies (e.g. the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the North Sea, Scandinavia, the Iberian Peninsula, etc.).

The initiatives, sponsored by the Council of Europe on cultural routes and the trading links of the Hanseatic League, are particularly useful here as are links and exchanges between schools in different countries and regional initiatives such as the Baltic Sea Project which involves over 150 schools in all the countries on the Baltic sea coast. The project is primarily environmental and draws particularly on geography and science, but it has been recognised that there is also scope here for other disciplines including history. (For details, see the Council of Europe Report on a Conference on Teaching About European History and Society in the 1990s, at Tuusula, Finland in August, 1991.)

V. CONCLUSIONS

The emphasis, in the previous section of this Report, was on the scope for introducing more European history into official guidelines. These guidelines are not immutable; they are reviewed periodically and, as we saw in the mid-1970s and again a decade later, a particular approach to teaching history can become fashionable and quickly influence the thinking of those who have responsibility for drawing up official syllabuses and curriculum guidelines.

International conferences and seminars, which bring together curriculum planners, researchers, teacher trainers and teachers from countries across Europe, can help to create a climate of change and, clearly, the Council of Europe has a key role to play in bringing that changing climate to the attention of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education. In the meantime, it is necessary to look at practical and realistic ways in which the European dimension of these syllabuses and guidelines can be augmented and enhanced within the constraints established by the particular curriculum frameworks advocated by individual Ministries of Education.

While it is possible to draw up lists of topics and themes which could be introduced into these curricula, the main thrust of the argument, in this report, has been that it is not so much what is taught, but how it is taught. The primary task is to look at ways of helping history teachers throughout Europe to introduce a European dimension into their teaching. The suggestion here is that this can best be done by encouraging them to adopt:

- a comparative perspective which:

  . contrasts events or developments in two or more countries or regions;

  . shows similarities in the historical developments of two or more countries or regions;

  . shows how events, processes and developments, at a national or local level, have been influenced by (or have influenced) what is happening elsewhere in Europe;

. shows how different cultures have influenced each other often to the point where their respective cultures have been transformed through their interaction and fusion;

- a cross-national perspective which:

  . highlights the elements of European culture which are shared, whilst not over-shadowing the diversity which is also characteristic of Europe throughout most of its history;

  . shows the linkages through trade, education, religion, travel, print and the exchange of ideas which have facilitated mutual influence;

- a perspective which recognises that, on virtually any historical question or issue, there will be a multiplicity of points of view and that good history teaching involves conveying this fact to the pupils (with illustrations drawn from other nations, cultures, religious movements or ethnic groupings) and encouraging them to recognise that there is usually no one definitive or correct perspective in the study and interpretation of history.

This will have implications for the pre-service and in-service training of teachers, many of whom will not have been trained to teach history in this way, and it also has implications for the publishing of textbooks and teaching materials, particularly handbooks for teachers.