

European Identity in Slovenian Education System through Geographical Perspective

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In order to achieve the European Union goals of effective integration in a wide range of economic and political domains, there is a need to reflect upon the common sense of European identity. The authors tried to identify to what extent content on "Europe", "European dimension" and "European identity and citizenship" exists in the Slovenian national secondary school curricula of social science subjects and how it is represented and constructed in official curricular documents. Upon the gathered data authors through geographical perspective discuss the connection between actual teaching of European issues in the classroom and syllabus goals, asking themselves if it is possible to achieve integration in terms of collective identity.

Key words: European identity, geographical education, Slovenia

Europski identitet u slovenskom obrazovnom sustavu s geografskog gledišta

Za postizanje ciljeva Europske unije glede učinkovite integracije širokog spektra ekonomskih i političnih područja, nailazimo na potrebu da se u tom spektru odražava zajednički osjećaj europskog identiteta. Autori su pokušali ustanoviti koliko je sadržaja vezanog na „Europu“, „Europsku dimenziju“ i „Europski identitet i državljanstvo“ zastupljeno u nastavnim planovima i programima predmeta društvenih znanosti u Sloveniji i kako je taj sadržaj prezentiran i strukturiran u nacionalnima školskima dokumentima. Na temelju prikupljenih podataka autori su s geografskog gledišta, raspravili o poveznici između realizacije u nastavi i programskih ciljeva glede europskih pitanja u školama, propitujući je moguće postići integraciju u smislu zajedničkog europskog identiteta.

Ključne riječi: Europski identitet, nastava geografije, Slovenija

INTRODUCTION

On 14 December 1973, in Copenhagen, the nine member countries of the European Communities decided that the time came to draw up a document on the European identity. That should enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities. They decided to define the European identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind. Their intention was to carry the work further in the future in the light of the progress made in the construction of a United Europe (*Declaration on European Identity*, 1973). Nevertheless, the concept of European identity is definitely a new concept. Therefore it is a fluid concept that does not stand for something static and fixed, but illustrates the ongoing change and adapts its operational activities. In public and in more professional circles, this concept is interpreted very differently.

People have always been associated in different forms of community, because we need a sense of belonging to a nation, group, clan and society. We feel safe and comfortable when we are allowed to determine ourselves according to our nationality, and thus accept a well defined national identity (Jacobs and Maier, 1998). Each social group has its distinctive symbols that reflect the precise behavior, thinking and "raison d'être" of this group. The symbols of particular social groups are the totems their members identify with. As a social phenomenon every individual identity as well as any collective identity is a dynamic (social) process. Identities constantly evolve, emerge, transform and, finally, also cease to exist. Collective identities of an individual in different ways affect their individual identities and vice versa (Jacobs and Maier, 1998).

Castells argues that there is a need for "a common European identity on behalf of which citizens around Europe could be ready to share problems and build common solutions" (Castells, 2002, 234). But the question of how such identity could be either found or built remains. According to Castells, only in the realm of values a cluster of elements that looked promising could be identified. This cluster refers to the welfare state and explicitly embraces social protection. If European institutions were able to promote these values, and to accord life with these promises for all Europeans, probably the "project identity" would grow (Castells, 2002, 234-235).

In terms of values that have been established in Europe over the centuries, the following concepts can be defined: democracy, rule of law, individual freedom, equality, work as a value and a means of personal fulfillment, freedom of religion, faith in reason and critical thought, solidarity. All these concepts and values are somehow characterized by a common European tradition that has developed over centuries of history (from antiquity to the present). In a way it is easier to focus on whether or not European citizens consider themselves members of a political community. In this sense, we are interested in people's sense of political identity - a notion, which is close to the concept of citizenship.

Almost no one doubts the existence of local, regional, ethnic and national identities in Europe. However, it is often called into question how and if there is a European identity. It is difficult to talk about the existence of a common and overall European identity. Maybe we should talk about pluralism of identities and search for their common properties or their lowest common denominator and only then start talking about the real content of a common European identity.

At the time of accelerated globalization and regional integration an old model of nation-states, rising above national identity, is beginning to suffocate their development potential (Rizman, 2003, 115). The relationship between the EU and globalization is not unique. On the one hand, the EU can be seen as a reflection of globalization, and on the other hand, as a response to the globalization of nation states or as a mechanism through which the nation-state better faces globalization challenges (Makarovič, 2009). In this sense we have already internalized many experiences brought about by globalization, and have built them into our perception and construction of national identity. National identities and processes of globalization are constantly confronted with new challenges and choices. The current self-evident idea that our world is mainly limited to the national society is seriously questioned. The same can be said for the national and indeed any collective identity since they are becoming dislocated and decentralized. Globalization has undoubtedly threatened existing patterns of people belonging to their (national) societies. Therefore the resistance which either requires a return to "pure" traditional identity or the modernization of national identity is understandable (Rizman, 2008). In Europe national identity still dominates over the idea of a common European identity because it is deeply embedded in everything that defines man as a social being (Karolewski, 2006).

According to Duchesne and Frogner, the dream of the Community's founding fathers was ultimately to see the emergence of a European identity. That does not mean that European identity should replace national identities but that it should become strong enough, and be perceived as 'inclusive' enough by European citizens (Duchesne and Frogner, 1998). On the other hand, it is true as Häkli and Paasi (2003, 148) argue that governmental agents often use rhetoric persuasion, and appeal to popular ideas and identities to gain support, while people may routinely express their cultural identity and distinctiveness in territorial terms, even though at times the territorial dimension might be rather vague. Nevertheless, a development of European identity is regarded as a vital objective in pursuing the establishment of a politically, economically and militarily influential united Europe. It equally importantly supports the foundations of common European values, such as fundamental human rights and spread of welfare. It also inherently strengthens the supra-national democratic and social institutions of the European Union. The concept of common European identity is rather viewed as a by-product than the main goal of the European integration process (*Pan-European Identity*, 2010).

In a speech to the European Parliament on 8 March 1994, the poet Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, indicated the need for a Charter of European Identity. The idea was taken up by Europa-Union Deutschland, which at its 40th Congress held in Bremen on 5 November 1994 decided to undertake the work of producing such a Charter (*A Charta of European Identity*, 1997).

Would it be enough to define identity as the feeling of belonging to a certain entity, defined by different (in the case of collective identities – agreed upon and shared) objectives?

According to Højlund (2010), the European community was not bred from beautiful values and pure imagination, but as a response to a terrible collapse of all kinds of values between peoples and countries. Højlund is convinced that this historical knowledge is necessary for an understanding of the situation in Europe today. He argues that the Rome

Union – later the EC and now the EU – was not bred from a solemn vision of a European identity, a European community of values regarding democracy, human rights and liberty, equality and fraternity, but it was created because everything broke down during the long process from World War I, over the economic, social and political distress and adversity of the interwar period, to the final disaster of World War II. Højlund is skeptical about the word "identity" as used for confirming one's own values in opposition to the values of other cultures and peoples, while in the sense of self-examination in relation to history, the identity is, according to him, indeed a good choice of word to use (Højlund, 2010).

When we speak of collective identities, especially regional, national or ethnic identities, we have to take into account that culture constitutes an important dimension of these identities. Culture, or more precisely shared culture, is understood in many different ways in this context. However, these concepts of (shared) culture usually imply a common language, sense of community, shared origin and history, often the existence of a religious community, etc.

Some authors consider the concept of European identity at least problematic. They are convinced that to some extent, a great part of our continent's inhabitants feel European, but the majority feel more intensely their belonging to their national state. Identities are not easily separated and, different feelings of affinity - ethnic or racial group, gender, political ideas, cultural affinities... - are often mingled. Although a genuine European Union requires a European identity, it proves difficult to be established (*Citizenship and Identity*, 2010). Balibar and Wallerstein (1998) also noticed that while constructing European identity Europe should not be beguiled. It should be noted that the peoples of Europe can establish a common identity only when they accept European multilingualism, as they named it, and the fact that Europe is a multiracial and multicultural area - if it is extended to the Eurasian region and North Africa region.

A lot of scholars have been lately trying to get to the bottom of what means to be European. Samuel Huntington, a celebrated American academic, affirms that Europe finishes where Eastern Orthodox Christendom and Islam start. From another point of view, a French scholar, Henry Mondrasse, has claimed that a common cultural European identity does exist and that it could be the base for a political Union. One of the most suggestive theories in this field comes from a celebrated German thinker, Jurgen Habermas. According to the well known view of Habermas, in a liberal democracy, citizens should not be identified with a common cultural identity, but with some constitutional principles that fully guarantee their rights and freedoms. This proposal is very suggestive, because it comes from the best liberal and tolerant tradition of Europe, and escapes from and fights against ethnic nationalism, the great foe of peace and freedom in the early 21st century Europe (*Citizenship and Identity*, 2010).

THE SURVEY ON EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN SLOVENIA

Why should teachers implement the ideas/concepts of European identity into the teaching process? To educate the new generations of young people in the spirit of the European Union, which is indispensable for long-term and successful existence of the European

Union, to develop a common, not only political but also cultural space of Europe and consequently, to establish the European identity as a common denominator. Young people are the ones who will continue to shape common European space and it takes, as we all know, a lot of work to raise and educate a good, democratic citizen of the European Union.

In Slovenia a national survey has been conducted as part of the PAM-INA (Perception, Attitude, Movement – Identity Needs Action) project whose main aim is to identify perceptions and understandings, attitudes and attachments and ways of articulating and experiencing the idea of European identity among European youth.

The aim of this survey is to identify to what extent the content considering "Europe", "European dimension" and "European identity and citizenship" exists in Slovenian national secondary school curricula in subjects Geography and History and how it is represented and constructed.

SAMPLING

The following study focuses only on official syllabi for subjects Geography and History, which are taught at the Slovenian secondary education level, i.e. ages 12 to 19. We decided to analyse these two syllabi, because we predicted that the majority of contents, connected to European identity and citizenship are taught within these two subjects.

The seven age groups/grade levels were included in the sample. The lower-secondary school level¹ was represented by students in their Grade 7, 8 and 9. At the upper-secondary school level (Grades 10 to 13), we included only the syllabi² for the chosen subjects in general upper secondary education (gymnasium) although Slovenian students can choose between different levels of upper-secondary schools, i.e. gymnasium, upper secondary vocational schools, upper secondary vocational and technical schools, upper secondary technical schools. The reasons for choosing only students in gymnasium were twofold:

- about 40 % of generation in the age range of 15 to 19 attend gymnasium,
- the majority of subjects that include contents of Europe, European dimension and European identity and citizenship are taught only in gymnasium.

So far no study in Slovenia has tried to analyze how European identity is represented in official curricular documents of the subjects. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature. It explores how terms that relate to Europe, EU, and European identity and citizenship are constructed and represented across the aforementioned subjects.

Tab. 1. Curricular documents analyzed for Slovenia.

Tab. 1. Analizirani kurikularni dokumenti u Sloveniji

Age group/ Grade level	Subject title	Title of Document	Pages	Published by/ Edition
12-13 7 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – geografija)</i>	7	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – zgodovina)</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
13-14 8 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – geografija)</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – zgodovina)</i>	6	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
14-15 9 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – geografija)</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (basic compulsory school) <i>(Učni načrt (osnovna šola) – zgodovina)</i>	4	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
15-16 10 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (210 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (210 ur))</i>	7	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (280 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – zgodovina (280 ur))</i>	9	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana

16-17 11 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (210 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (210 ur))</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (280 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (280 ur))</i>	9	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
17-18 12 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (210 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (210 ur))</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (280 hrs)	8	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
18-19 13 th	Geography	Geography Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (210 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (210 ur))</i>	5	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
	History	History Syllabus (general gymnasium, classical gymnasium, gymnasium specialising in economics) (280 hrs) <i>(Učni načrt (splošna, klasična in ekonomska gimnazija) – geografija (280 ur))</i>	9	The National Education Institute and The Ministry of Education and Sport, 2008, Ljubljana
Total		14 Documents	89	

Source: Survey, 2010.

ANALYSIS

To analyze the data quantitative approaches were used. By quantitative analysis (counting of terms/words/phrases related to European content) we determined the presence of Europe by subject and grade as appears in the Slovenian official syllabi of the subjects Geography and History. Such kind of analysis will enable us to draw some conclusions about the ways in which European identity and citizenship are taught and developed among students at the lower- and upper secondary school levels in Slovenia.

Content analysis

The references to the terms shown in Table 2 were counted by using official syllabi for Geography and History (the documents analyzed for the subjects can be found in Table 1).

Tab. 2 Terms/Phrases used for content analysis of curricular documents.

Tab. 2. Termini/fraze korištene za analizu sadržaja kurikularnih dokumenata

Term/Word/Phrase	Content-meaning
Europe	direct reference to "Europe" in any content
Eurasia	as a geographical term
EU (EEC & EC)	
EU Institutions	e.g. the Parliament, the Commission, etc.
Council of Europe	
Council of Europe Institutions	e.g. the European Court for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, etc.
Symbolical markers	Euro, Constitution, anthem, flag, logo (for the last two both if mentioned in text AND if they were visually depicted)
Europeans	to denote a single social group
European identity and/or citizenship	used as a phrase "European identity" or "European citizenship"
European	as an adjective or a noun, e.g. European languages, European economies, European landscape
European nationalities or countries	references to individual European countries or nationalities e.g. Italy, Slovenian people, French Alps, Greek culture
Other	for terms or phrases which do not fit the previous categories

Source: Survey, 2010.

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN SLOVENIA

The findings of the quantitative content analysis are presented in Tables 3a and 3b by subject and grades.

Tab. 3a Analysis of references to "Europe" in Geography syllabus.

Tab. 3a. Analiza referenci na pojem „Europa“ u nastavnom programu za geografiju

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total (f)
Subject: Geography	LOWER SECOND-ARY SCHOOL			"GIMNAZIJA"				
Europe	43	1	4 (8)	2	1	49	4 (5)	104 (13)
Eurasia	4	0	(3)	0	0	0	0	4 (3)
EU (or EEC or EC)	0	0	12 (3)	0	0	3	3 (5)	18 (8)
EU Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council of Europe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council of Europe Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Symbolical markers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Europeans	0	0	0	0	2	0	0 (2)	2 (2)
European identity/ citizenship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (2)	0 (2)
European (adjective to noun)	0	0	(1)	0	0	3	3 (7)	6 (8)
European (individual countries)	0	0	0	0	0	27	11 (3)	38 (3)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	47	1	16 (15)	2	3	82	21 (24)	172 (39)

Source: Survey, 2010.

In Slovenian schools Geography is taught as an independent course at lower secondary levels (in Table 3a Grades 7 to 9) and at upper secondary level in gymnasium (in Table 3a Grades 10 to 13). Other types of upper secondary schools include Social Sciences course, which combines contents of geography, history and sociology.

In Grade 6 the contents are related to Earth, orientation and climate (very general), in Grade 7 to Europe and Asia, in Grade 8 to Africa, Asia, North and Latin America, Oceania and Polar regions, in Grade 9 to Slovenia.

In gymnasium geography is taught in Grades 10 to 12. The contents in Grade 10 are related to general geography whereas in Grade 11 to Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Australia and Oceania and Polar regions, and in Grade 12 to Europe and Slovenia. The students who choose Geography for "matura", which is the national final exam at the end of the gymnasium, in Grade 13 learn about geographical features of Slovenian regions in detail (they have additional 105 hours of Geography).

As can be seen in Table 3a³, the majority of references to "Europe" occurred in the Geography syllabus for Grades 7 and 13. The reason for that is because in Grade 7 students are taught about geographical characteristics of Europe and Asia. In Grade 7 syllabus Europe is divided into five geographical units: Southern Europe, Central Europe, Western Europe, Northern Europe and Eastern Europe. At the beginning of Grade 7 students learn about general natural and social characteristics of Europe (e.g., landscape, climate, population, EU), and after that they focus on each of above mentioned geographical units. They also learn about the countries that are part of each geographical unit: Southern Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Montenegro, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Andorra, San Marino, Vatican and European part of Turkey), Central Europe (Austria, Czech republic, Lichtenstein, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland), Western Europe (Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxemburg, Monaco, Netherlands, United Kingdom), Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine).

In Grade 13 in gymnasium the content about Europe is very similar to the one in Grade 7. It is more detailed and Europe is divided into 6 geographical units (instead of 5 in Grade 7): Eastern Europe with Russia, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe and South-Eastern Europe.

As can be seen in Table 3a, some terms are used quite frequently (e.g., Europe: 104 references, European: 38 references), but some terms are not mentioned at all (e.g., EU institutions, Council of Europe, Council of European institutions, Symbolical markers); the terms European identity and European citizenship have just two references in the syllabus for gymnasium (here it has to be clarified that those two references are mentioned in the syllabus for gymnasium, but they are not specified in which grade students have to know these two terms; they have to know them at the end of schooling).

Comparing the two levels, lower- and upper secondary (gymnasium), we can see that more references to "Europe" occur in gymnasium (in total 108 references; at the lower secondary level 64 references). The reason for that is because the content about Europe is more detailed than at the lower secondary level. Comparing these two levels, we can also see that terms Europeans, European identity and citizenship, European (individual countries)⁴ occur only in gymnasium.

In Slovenian schools History is taught as an independent course at lower secondary levels (in Table 3b Grades 7 to 9) and at the upper secondary level in gymnasium (in Table 3b Grades 10 to 13). Other types of upper secondary schools include Social Sciences course, which combines contents of geography, history and sociology.

In Grade 7 students are taught about Prehistory, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Middle Ages, etc., in Grade 8 about Geographical discoveries, Humanism, Renaissance, Turkish invasion, Peasant revolts, Absolutism, French revolution, Industrialization, etc, and in Grade 9 about 20th and 21st century (e.g., different political regimes, cold war, economic changes in 20th century, Slovenes in 20th and 21st century, etc.).

Tab. 3b. Analysis of references to "Europe" in History syllabus.

Tab. 3b. Analiza referenci na pojem „Europa“ u nastavnem programu za povijest

Grade (GC)	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total (f)
Subject: History	LOWER SECOND-ARY SCHOOL			"GIMNAZIJA"				
Europe	10	3	1 (16)	1	9	0	7 (6)	31 (22)
Eurasia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU (or EEC or EC)	0	0	1	0	0	0	2 (3)	3 (3)
EU Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (1)	0 (1)
Council of Europe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council of Europe Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Symbolical markers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Europeans	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
European identity/citizenship	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
European (adjective to noun)	3	3	0 (5)	0	4	3	4 (13)	17 (18)
European (individual countries)	1	9	0 (7)	0	1	0	1	12 (7)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	14	16	2 (28)	1	15	3	15 (23)	66 (51)

Source: Survey, 2010.

Syllabi for History in gymnasium are very similar to the ones at the lower secondary level, although the content is more detailed. In Grade 10 students are taught about Prehistory and Ancient times, in Grade 11 about Middle Ages, Humanism, Renaissance, Absolutism, Industrialization, in Grade 12 about 19th century and in Grade 13 about 20th and 21st century.

As can be seen in Table 3b⁵, the majority of references to Europe occur in History syllabi for Grades 7 and 8 at the lower secondary level and for Grades 11 and 13 in gymnasium. Total number of references is 66 (if we also add references which are not specified for each grade, then the number is 117), which is much less than in Geography syllabi, where the total number of references is 172 (and with added references 211). Some terms are not used at all, e.g. Eurasia, Council of Europe, Council of Europe Institutions, Symbolical markers, European identity and citizenship.

Comparing the two levels, lower- and upper secondary (gymnasium) we can see only a small difference between the final numbers of occurred references (at the lower secondary level the total number of references is 32, and in gymnasium 34).

If we compare both subjects and analyzed syllabi, we may conclude that the vast majority of references to Europe occurred in the syllabi for Geography (in total 172 references; if we add those which are not specified for each grade the total number is 211) followed by the syllabi for History (in total 66 (118) references).

In the Slovenian syllabi some references to Europe are mentioned and explained in detail and some of them are not mentioned at all.

First of all, it is surprising that the term EU is used in geography syllabi only in Grades 9 (but not in Grade 7 where the main topic is Europe) - 12 references, in Grade 12 - 3 references and in Grade 13 - 3 references (in total 18 references). In history syllabi it is mentioned in Grade 9 - 1 reference and in Grade 13 - 2 references (in total 3 references).

It is also surprising that European institutions are very rarely mentioned. They are not mentioned at all in lower secondary school syllabi for Geography and History. Even in the secondary school syllabi the institutions are not mentioned; only two institutions, European Parliament and European Council are mentioned in the syllabus for History.

As seen in Tables 3a and 3b, European symbolical markers are not used at all.

The terms Europeans and European identity and citizenship are used, but very rarely. For example, the term Europeans is used only in Geography syllabus in Grade 11 (2 references) as well as in History syllabi for Grades 8, 11 and 13 (in total 3 references). The terms European identity and citizenship are mentioned even more rarely; students have to know these two terms at the end of upper secondary school (gymnasium) in Geography and History (it is not specified in which grade they have to learn these two terms).

On the other hand, students obtain a lot of knowledge about European nationalities or countries. In syllabi for Geography students learn about natural and social geographical characteristics of European countries. It should be noted that students learn in more detail about the countries that are closer to Slovenia (e.g., Central and Southern Europe) than about distant countries (e.g., Northern Europe).

In Slovenian syllabi there are no definitions and explanations about European identity and citizenship. However, in the syllabi for Geography and History for gymnasium we find the statement saying that students have to know the term European identity at the end of their secondary school level, but it is not specified in which grade students have to learn the term.

DISCUSSION

So far, no study has attempted to explore how the knowledge about Europe, EU, European identity and similar terms is constructed and represented in the syllabi of the social science subjects at the levels of lower- and upper secondary education in Slovenia. Therefore this study is an important indicator of the current state.

The quantitative analysis of the official documents (syllabi) showed that the vast majority of references to Europe occurred in the syllabi for Geography followed by the syllabi for History. Furthermore, we found out that some terms are used quite frequently in the syllabi (e.g. Europe, European) while some terms are rarely mentioned (e.g. EU

institutions, Council of Europe, Council of European Institutions, symbolical markers). The term European identity occurs in both syllabi, but the term is not written as specific objective. European institutions are very rarely mentioned; in gymnasium only two institutions, European Parliament and European Council are mentioned in the syllabus for History.

The Slovene academic literature about the European identity mainly focuses on sociological and political issues (e.g. Rizman, 2003; Šabec, 2006). The authors explain or define the position of Slovenia and Slovenian identity in an integrated European community. Discussions mainly raise issues about the relationship between the Slovenian national identity and the European identity. The first reference that deals with the EU issues in school is a guide for teachers' "EU in School" (Krajc et al., 2010), which provides the data about the EU and the EU member states, and offers didactic material which can be used for teaching and learning about the EU issues across various subjects at different age levels.

The analyses of the syllabi show that no syllabus contains a definition about European identity or citizenship. The objectives related to European identity are written in general terms (at the beginning of the syllabi), but are not specified for each grade. They just mention that students have to know these two terms at the end of schooling.

As the economy and society change so the education system changes as well. The education system must be adaptable, flexible and quick to respond to new challenges. One of the challenges for the Slovenian school system for the 21st century should certainly be to find ways of how to include more knowledge about the European community in the social science curricula, how to strengthen the awareness of European citizenship among students and how to help students develop stronger European (not only national) identity.

Questions regarding the nature and content of European identity, but especially the search for a new European identity, its relations with other identities and a possible loss of national identities are frequently asked in the context of the EU (Eastern) enlargement. These questions are discussed in all current EU member states. Initiated especially by opponents to the EU integration they are or are becoming burning issues also in the candidate countries. The public (opinion) in these countries often fears that their national identities will be lost or, at least, substantially weakened with their full integration into the EU. So far it seems that nobody really knows the answers to these questions.

At the same time as the national analysis of curricular documents took place in Slovenia the analyses were also made in seven European countries, participating in the project PAM-INA (Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Northern Ireland, Poland, Slovenia, and Sweden). Quantitative analyses of all eight documents showed diversity of frequency across countries and subjects. In most countries, most references occurred in History (Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Northern Ireland, and Poland), only in Slovenia and France the majority of references occurred in Geography. The analysis also showed that the highest frequency of references have Greek (1067) and Greek-Cypriot (1008) curricula (for example in Slovenia a total of 262 references), however the qualitative analysis indicated that this high frequency was not intended to enhance European identity as such, but because national concerns were located in a European context (Philippou, 2010). The analysis showed that spatial-location representations of Europe are quite strong across all curricular documents, even in non-geographical subjects. However, these representations

also have links to other representations (e.g. cultural, political, historical and economic) (Philippou, 2010).

In most countries there were no direct references or definitions of European identity and citizenship in the analyzed curricular documents. However, their content was "revealed" through the selected curricular aims and content (Philippou, 2010). For example, in Slovenian syllabi for Geography there is no definition of European identity or citizenship, but there are general objectives related to these two terms. Furthermore, if we look at different textbooks for Geography or History, there are no definitions of these two terms, neither are they mentioned. But as these two terms are written as general objectives in syllabi, students have to know them at the end of schooling. Therefore we wonder how teachers interpret general objectives about the European identity and how they implement this objective in the classroom.

In recent years many researches have been carried out on the topic of European identity. European Union institutions, particularly the European Commission, want to gradually instill a sense of European identity and affiliation (Šabec, 2006). For this purpose modern elements of European symbolic geography are used. Therefore it is possible to monitor the trend and try to correct the situation. Data survey in the spring of 2007 (*Javnomnenjska raziskava o Evropski uniji -EB 67, 12/04/2010*) show that the European flag, as an important symbol of the European Union, is known to almost all European Union citizens (95%). Most respondents (78%) believe that the European Union flag represents something good. That suggests a very positive attitude of Europeans towards the symbols of the European Union. But on the other hand much less Europeans identify with the flag of the European Union. On average, more than half of respondents (54%) identified with the flag. Interestingly lower percentage (less than 50%) of identification with the EU flag is among respondents who come from more developed European countries (eg. Great Britain, Austria, France, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands). In these countries the belonging to their own nation and national identity is still very much presented. It should be emphasized that the degree of identification with the flag of the European Union is proportional to the respondents' opinion about the accession of their country to the European Union. EU citizens, who are in general very positive towards the existence of the European Union, are more inclined to identify themselves with the EU flag.

This everyday *europeism* for most of EU citizens does not simultaneously mean the sense of European identity. All these symbols are also present in national traditions, therefore they are not something new or different. Even more, they are symbols that are typical of national identity. They are clear, (emotionally) intensive, accessible, well-established, and widespread among the people and still relatively convincing. In other words, we accept all these symbols, but we do not identify with them and the symbols do not form a common European identity. Without common memories and meanings, symbols and myths, heroes, historical figures and monuments only a few people will feel European. In addition to all the above mentioned, respondents also do not understand the importance of EU symbols. For example, many respondents do not understand the meaning of the anthem and the EU flag. They do not understand what the blue color of EU flag and twelve yellow stars on it mean (Šabec, 2006). The understanding of other symbols is rather similar. Therefore an individual can not develop a deeper relationship with the EU symbols.

One of the Slovenian national reports for the EU says that according to the Slovenes, the European identity is largely determined by the geographical position of the European countries and the common democratic values while in shaping national identity knowledge of Slovenian language is of a key importance. The strongest sense of identity is the identity of respondents' own country ("Slovenian"), closely followed by the identity of the region. A high proportion (80%) of respondents feels European (*Javnomnenjska raziskava o EU-EB 71*, 2010).

In The Eurobarometer 69 survey respondents were asked to express their opinion on the assertion that beside general global western values there are no common European values. Among the Slovenes 16% completely agreed with the statement, 35% agreed more, 24% agreed less and only 11% did not agree at all. Consequently, Slovenes belong to the more "skeptical" group of nations regarding the existence of independent European identity (Bergant, 2009). For all these studies the distinction between Europe and the European Union is important, since the attachment of people to the latter is, most likely due to its "institutional" connotation, significantly lower than in Europe (Šabec, 2006). Thus, researchers should be careful how to ask questions relating to the attachment of people to Europe or the European Union. Most people naturally categorize as the Europeans, while some might have problems when it is necessary to categorize as a member of the European Union.

Further research indicates some interesting results. The European Union, in contrast to Europe, is considered as a complex institutional and bureaucratic system, as a project of social elites, whose performance is for about 70% of respondents too complex and non-transparent. The same share of respondents felt that the European Union does not take into account the opinion of ordinary citizens. Due to the lack of interest people are not interested in participating in public debates on European Union. They consider them particularly unproductive (Šabec, 2006). At the same time, data from the Eurobarometer survey 69 indicate that Slovenes are very familiar with the functioning of the Union and that the degree of their confidence in its institutions is well above the European average. Slovenes are therefore one of the largest supporters of European integration, which is not necessarily linked to the same level of consciousness regarding European identity (Bergant, 2009).

CONCLUSION

According to Žagar (2010), every (individual and collective) identity as a social phenomenon is a process and not a state; it appears, changes, transforms and eventually ceases to exist. As imperfect as this simple working definition might be, it points out a few important characteristics of this phenomenon. Identity might be a fact, but it is above all a (individual and/or collective) feeling and belief that somebody belongs to a specific category determined by common characteristics. However, a feeling of an individual might not be enough; it is very important that others also see (perceive) and recognize this individual as a member (part) of a specific entity. In this context, identity gets its social dimensions and becomes a social phenomenon. Wiener (1999) says that social movements emphasize the importance of the collective identities that do not depend on nationality, but develop

in relation with internal boundaries. Since they produce and are the product of boundaries within national states they represent both inequalities and differences (Wiener, 1999, 2-3).

Building a new common European identity will not require only incorporation, but also a certain transformation of existing European identities. It will have to build upon the positive experiences and traditions that form Europeanness, but it will also have to consider and fight negative experiences that caused much suffering. Europe contributed greatly to social and cultural developments, made positive contributions not only to science, technology and culture, but also to cultural diversity and richness. However, its negative impacts were substantial as well. Europe produced aggressive and hegemonic nationalism, colonialism, fascism, Nazism, gulags, concentration camps, holocaust, "ethnic cleansing," etc. Such negative phenomena can be avoided in the future only if they are well known and if people are aware of their possible negative consequences (Žagar, 2010).

A new common, inclusive and pluralistic European identity has to recognize today's reality. The European integration will not abolish nation-states any time soon. It means that this new identity as a supranational identity has to complement the existing traditional national identities and patriotism. Additionally, as Europeans we will need to develop a democratic supranational patriotism, which is only possible if the democratic legitimacy of the European integration and its possible transformation into a European federation are ensured. This is the reason why issues of legitimacy and democratic deficit need to be addressed seriously. We believe that a broad political coalition will be required to achieve this goal. This requires a broad consensus on the content of a new common European identity. To summarize, Žagar (2010) believes that this new common European identity is and will need to be an inclusive identity, a multiple (multi-layered) and plural identity that will have to incorporate many existing different sub-national (regional), national and supranational identities, a multicultural/intercultural identity that will not only recognize, respect and facilitate the existing (linguistic, cultural, religious, etc.) diversity, but also develop new identities, an identity built upon democracy and democratic vision of a common Europe and an identity built upon democratic, supranational patriotism.

The building of a new common, inclusive and pluralistic European identity is an important and desirable task. However, there are many dangers that can hinder or (even) prevent the realization of this goal. Explaining these dangers would require complex and lengthy discussions. Some of the phenomena that are in Žagar's (2010) view the most dangerous are intolerance, national exclusivism (exclusiveness) and nationalism, racism and xenophobia, internal colonialism and inequalities, unequal treatment, hegemony, tendencies of possible future monolithism and the lack of legitimacy and democratic deficit.

Today new social curricular content, new democratic relations, new education, new learning culture, new educational events, etc. rapidly penetrate into "the school of information society" In particular social sciences learning area is due to the new, globalized life practice, full of constant new learning content that a teacher of social sciences should be very well acquainted with. In increasingly complex teaching social studies these educational events are supposed to make an important contribution to the personal growth of young, emerging Europeans (Židan, 2009).

With Slovenia joining the European Union, the Slovenian citizenship is no longer merely national, but combines the Slovenian and European identity. Although we try to be flexible and adaptable, it is not so easy to enter into European integration and globalization processes. In addition to "national and European" a global citizenship and globalization of cosmopolitan democracy should also be developed. If a common European home is to be realistic, we urgently need the creation of a new, inclusive and plural European identity, based on the principles of democracy, equality, recognition and respect of diversity and on the ideology of (equal) cooperation. All the above mentioned requires a review, modification and upgrading of curricula and teaching materials (textbooks, workbooks, etc.), followed by accomplished teacher education to properly respond to changes influenced by the European Union goals of effective integration in a wide range of economic and political domains, including the common sense of European identity.

NOTES

- 1 The lower-secondary school level is part of a 9-year unitary basic compulsory education.
- 2 We use the term "syllabus" for the documents presented. A syllabus in Slovenian basic compulsory education (Grades 7, 8 and 9) is equivalent to an annual subject matter planning.
- 3 In parentheses: the number of terms that are mentioned in syllabus but not specified in which grade. Students have to know the term at the end of lower – (if it is written under column Grade 9) or upper secondary school (if it is written under column Grade 13).
- 4 In Geography Syllabus for basic compulsory school it is written that students have to know countries for each geographical unit of Europe, but the countries are not named in the syllabus.
- 5 In parentheses: the number of terms that are mentioned in syllabus, but not specified in which grade. Students have to know the term at the end of lower – (if it is written under column Grade 9) or upper secondary school (if it is written under column Grade 13).

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