

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND THE HISTORY CURRICULUM IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

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***Summary** – This article presents results of the comparative analysis of history curricula of some European countries: England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia. The analysis particularly deals with the position of history teaching in the compulsory education of these countries. Another focus is on how the aims and goals of history teaching, as well as attainment targets, are presented. In the last chapter, the European experiences are compared with the Croatian situation. Authors stress the importance of defining aims and attainment targets in most analyzed curricula versus the Croatian practice of defining obligatory topics and detailed description of the prescribed content.*

***Key words:** history teaching, history curricula, aims, attainment targets, European experiences*

Introduction

Since the end of the 1980s, history education in Europe has been undergoing an intensive process of changes which have, for the majority part, been focused on the development of new history programs. Influences under which these changes took place were various. On the one hand, the breakdown of communism induced reforms of the educational systems in ex communist countries. Although they did not take place at the same time and in the same manner, they were a part of an entire process of transition.¹ Dominant in the process were revisions of the history education program and the manner in which history is taught, consider-

1 While writing about the transition in education in central and eastern European countries, P. Rádo (2001: 11) observed that educational reforms often took place without a consensus on the basic principles and values, and that the emphasis was more on educational policies, than on pedagogical processes. .

ing the special role of that particular school subject and the possibilities of its influence on forming a student's identity.² On the other hand, during that period of time, many European countries framed their national curricula trying to raise and harmonize educational standards and ensure equal opportunities for all students.³ However, for some countries involved in this analysis, e.g. England, which did not have a central curriculum, the introduction of a national curriculum at the beginning of the 1990s meant strengthening centralization of education, which was reflected on history programs⁴. Therefore, changes in history education over the last twenty years should be observed as part of a wider process of developing the curriculum, as well as part of specific developments within the subject itself, which are a consequence of its position in the education of students. Although changes in European history education took place in rather different manners, and often with various outcomes, research to date has indicated general trends which have several basic characteristics.⁵ Intensified international communication and cooperation, standardization of education in the area of history teaching, brought about a harmonization of aims in history education. International cooperation improved the quality of teaching, so that, for example, most of the history curricula emphasize, more strongly than ever, the application of active methods of learning and teaching and the development of critical thinking skills. The organization of the history curriculum changes from the traditional chronological approach to a thematic approach, organized chronologically.⁶ However, these researches pointed to particular groups of problems and issues. The first group of issues is related to the position of history in the curriculum: should it be an independent subject or should it become part of particular curricular areas. Secondly, there is the issue of how to establish balance between acquiring facts and the development of students' skills within the curriculum, considering that in many countries, history is still a traditional subject which stresses memorization of content and its reproduction. The

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- 2 There is abundant literature about this, and some texts on the reform of history education in Estonia, Russia, the former DDR and in Hungary which is cited in the bibliography.
 - 3 The curricular approach is spreading from the Anglo-Saxon pedagogical area, and in recent years is especially oriented at measuring educational outcomes, that is competences that students should acquire through education. See Marsh, 1994: 144-145 on advantages and disadvantages of the curricular approach. Also Previšić (ur.), 2007: 9, 17, 117-118.
 - 4 See Phillips, 1998, 2000, 2002 about teaching History and the development of the English national curriculum. In Croatian see Koren, 2003.
 - 5 We primarily refer to international research, e.g. *Youth and History* (1994-1996) about the awareness of history and political attitudes of adolescents; research about history education in Europe which was conducted by EUROCLIO in 2003, the international association of history teachers, and also published in the book *History Changes: Facts and figures about history education in Europe since 1989*; research which was conducted within the framework of the project *Joint History Project – Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues in the History of SE Europe* published in the book *Clio in the Balkans* (Croatian translation: *Klio na Balkanu*); articles that are a result of the project of the *Council of Europe: Learning and Teaching European History in the 20th Century*. Also see *Dodatak Preporuci Vijeća Europe o nastavi povijesti u 21. stoljeću*, *Povijest u nastavi*, br. 1, 2003: 7-13.
 - 6 *History Changes: Facts and figures about history education in Europe since 1989*, 91-102

third group of questions is related to the relationship between national, regional, European and world history, considering that after 1989 the emphasis was on national history, so the balance between European, national and regional history is one of the more serious issues. The fourth group of issues is related to the level of centralization: despite the changes, which in some countries enabled schools and teachers to develop their own programs and approaches to teaching, centralization is still high in many European educational systems, and autonomy and responsibility of the teacher for the teaching profession is not adequately respected. Therefore, this issue is again becoming a point of discussion between educational authorities and educators. Finally, the last group of issues is related to the manner in which the role of the subject of history is perceived in the education of students, considering its value and role in shaping a student's identity.

These issues were addressed in the following analysis. It took place between 2004 and 2006 and focused on valid subject curricula (programs) of history in 11 European countries. During the time that passed since conducting the analysis to the time of publishing this text, further change in the curriculum took place in some of the countries (e.g. in Ireland, while changes to the Slovenian program are being prepared). However, the majority of the programs are still valid, and key points have not been changed. These curricula are analyzed in the chapter *Research results* which show comparisons and trends supported by examples. All basic curricular components are analyzed⁷: aims, content, guidelines for selecting methods, situations and learning and teaching strategies in history; with the exception of evaluation which is not elaborated in the analyzed documents. The chapter *Concluding remarks*, offers a comparison with the Croatian case, and points out particular recommendations which are derived from the results of the analysis. It should also be noted that this text presents a summarized versions of the research results which are published in their entirety in the journal *History in Teaching* 10/2007.

Prior to addressing the analysis itself, we would like to point to some difficulties with which we were faced in the analysis and comparison of materials. Creating a curriculum is approached in various ways by different European countries, and the comparison is further complicated by a very complex and varied use of concepts. Educational tradition plays an important role here, as well as the approach to teaching a particular subject which varies from country to country. Furthermore, some of the documents analyzed were outlines (e.g. the Netherlands, Scotland), while others are teaching programs in the sense that is similar to the Croatian understanding of program (e.g. Slovenia). Part of the documents provided a relatively good insight into the manner in which programs for history education are formed, while others are very general and actually without extra knowledge and other materials it is not possible to get a complete insight into the issue

7 Marsh, 1994: *passim*; Pastuović, 1999: 516-519; Bognar, Matijević, 2002: 183-4; Previšić (ur.), 2007: 20

analyzed.⁸ Therefore, in some cases we had to use other knowledge which is not equally abundant in all analyzed countries. This especially refers to the history of development of a curriculum, which is very important since it enables its contextualization, that is, understanding not only of how a curriculum was realized in a particular historical period, but why and for whom.⁹ For this part we referred to references which were in some cases abundant, and they are therefore better supported.

Research results

The documents analyzed did not enable the creation of a unique model, rather, considering that among particular countries some similarities were noted in the approach, several groups were formed. Finland, Norway and Sweden, belong to the first group of analyzed history curricula. The second group is made up of three countries whose curricula deviates the most from the Croatian history program: England, Scotland and Ireland. The third group of countries is Austria, Hungary and Slovenia, three central European countries whose educational systems stem from similar teaching traditions, but have in current trends taken different courses.¹⁰ The Dutch and German curricula were analyzed independently. At the national level, The Netherlands does not have a prescribed curriculum in the sense that is familiar to Croatian, and the Dutch document is a framework and is the most concise of all the studied documents which makes it difficult to offer detailed conclusions based on it. The German example is characteristic in the way that each state has a different program. As those programs, at the moment of analysis, were undergoing changes, the experimental program for the state Nordrhein-Westfalen was studied. The program relates only to the first four grades of primary school (*Grundschule*). Therefore, we will not further elaborate on that program in this text.

The position of history education in the curriculum

The conducted analysis allows us to conclude that history as a school subject, and historical content in general, are an important element of compulsory ed-

8 In some countries there are other documents that have more detailed instructions for teachers and some examples of good teaching practice.

9 Marsh, 1994: 217. For more on this topic see: Goodson, 1985.

10 As opposed to Austria which shows a tendency for keeping the established ways of education, in Hungary and Slovenia, as transitional countries, there is a stronger need for changes. In Hungary, there is a tendency towards experiment, which sometimes brought about chaotic situations. The document analyzed relates to the model in which compulsory education lasts 8 years, and high school lasts 4 years, while during the time of reforms in the 1990s in Hungary the 6+6 model was applied at the same time (Bihari, 2003). In Slovenia, changes after 1990 took place gradually, although the Slovenian history education program has traces of the Yugoslavian heritage which is evident in the proscription relating to defining content.

ucation in European countries. For the majority part, all curricula have a certain degree of requirements of learning historical content, whether within the framework of an independent subject, or as part of a wider subject area. For most of the analyzed school systems, history is compulsory and independent subject at least to the age of 14, however with various proportions in the schedule. The compulsory aspect of the subject varies from cycle to cycle, that is, from one to the other level of education (for example, in England, Scotland and Ireland, after the age of 14, history becomes an elective subject).

In the majority of cases there is a model similar to the one practiced in Croatian schools: historical content shows up for the first time in lower elementary grades of primary school, as part of the subject "Social science" (*Spoznavanje okolja i Družba* in Slovenia, *Sachunterricht* in Germany and Austria, *Environmental and natural studies* in Finland, *People and society before us* in Norway, *Environmental studies* in Scotland, *Environment* in Hungary, and similar) The exception is England where there is an independent subject History, from the beginning, and for which schools allocate a certain amount of hours. History as an independent subject shows up in upper grades of primary school or in lower grades of high school, depending on the educational model in particular countries. In both cases this refers to students between the age of 11 and 14. In a certain number of cases, history comes in combination with other subjects (e.g. in Austria there is a subject called *History and Sociology*, in Hungary it is *History and civic education*), while in other countries it is an independent subject within a wider curricular area entitled *Social subjects* or *Social Sciences* (e.g. Sweden, Norway, Finland, Scotland, and Ireland).

There is an obvious difference in the manner of scheduling history. In some curricula, it is scheduled by a weekly or yearly number of hours (e.g. Finland, Hungary), in some the total number of hours for all the years during a particular educational cycle (Norway), while in others there is a percentage of time (hours) allocated to a particular subject or subject area (Ireland, Scotland). In some countries, the number of history lessons is assigning is independent (Hungary, Slovenia), while in others it is defined within the time devoted to curricular areas in to which history belongs (Sweden, Ireland, Scotland). In England, the number of topics which should be covered throughout three or four years of education is defined, while the total number of hours for a school subject is left for the schools to establish. In some of the analyzed documents (The Netherlands) the number of teaching hours at that level is not defined. The most common practice is that the number of hours for teaching particular subjects/curricular areas is defined on the basis of minimum, and shaping part of the hours is left to the schools. It can be said that the number of hours allocated to history education varies from 1-1.5 to 2-3 hours per week, depending on the grade and country.

Defining the purpose and aims of the subject and defining students' achievements (teaching outcomes)

Table 1: Aims of three subjects in the Slovenian curriculum where historical content is present: Knowing the Environment (grades 1-3) (*Upoznavanje okoliša*), Society (grades 4-5) (*Društvo*), and History (grades 6-9) (*Povijest*).

Subjects	Aims
Knowing the Environment	The general aims of the subject which relate to historical content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ awareness that people and society change over time ▪ learning about various written and oral sources of knowledge about history ▪ learning about the local history and more important historical events
Society	General aims of subjects which relate to historical content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ becoming familiar with life and culture of people in the past (especially local area) and comparison with life and culture of today ▪ becoming familiar with examples from Slovenian (Hungarian, Italian) cultural traditions and developing an awareness about the Slovenian national belonging ▪ time orientation ▪ students develop active work forms and research history using various sources of information ▪ they learn to respect the diversity of the Slovenian ethnic area
History	Aims of history education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ students become familiar with the most important events in general and national history and they develop awareness about the national identity and national belonging. ▪ they become familiar with life, work and mentality of the people throughout particular historical periods and with changes over time. ▪ they become familiar and develop understanding and respect for various cultures, religions, races and communities. They acquire knowledge about the national and general culture, understanding of European cultural and civilization values of life. ▪ from examples from their homeland history they understand the importance of maintaining Slovenian cultural traditions in the examples of local history ▪ they develop critical thinking as a means to understanding the modern world. They acquire the skills for historical area and temporal awareness and learn how to appropriately use basic historical terminology. ▪ they become familiar with the role of sources in explaining history, they become competent in using historical maps, picture materials and texts, and they develop the ability to use simple methods for historical research. ▪ in contact with the school library, archive and museum, they obtain basic knowledge necessary for searching historical and popular-historical literature. ▪ they learn to critically reflect on historical events, about interpreting messages and current events. ▪ they acquire oral, written and illustrative skills in presenting historical information. ▪ based on historical examples, they develop an understanding of the values necessary for autonomous group work and life in a pluralistic and democratic society (tolerance, openness, peace, tolerant listening to other and argumentation about their own thought, cooperation, respect of basic human rights and dignity). ▪ they acquire work habits: accurate, systematic, perseverant...

Table 2: Aims and expected students' achievements in history education in Finland

	Aims	Students' achievements
<p>Grades 5 and 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students understand that information about history consists of interpretations by historians which are subject to change under the influence of new sources or methods of work. ▪ They understand the division of history into different eras and use terminology such as ancient history, the ancient time, the Middle Ages, the Modern Age. ▪ They can recognize changes in history of their own families or regions, on examples such as farming, they can describe changes that had influence on the human life. ▪ They learn how to recognize historical continuity (on examples) ▪ They learn to point to reasons for changes in history. 	<p>Achievements at the end of Grade 6 (three levels):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquiring information about history: students know how to differentiate fact from opinion and sources from interpretations of sources. ▪ Understanding historical occurrences: students know that history is divided into different epochs, they know how to name occurrences characteristic for particular societies and periods, they recognize continuity of particular occurrences from one period to another; they understand that change is not the same as improvement and that it does not mean the same from the perspective of different people and groups; they know how to place themselves in the position of a person from the past and explain why people from various eras thought and worked in a different manner; they know the meaning of cause-effect relationships. ▪ Using knowledge of history they know how to present observed problems by explaining events and occurrences from the point of view of parties involved, they know that the same thing can be interpreted in various ways and they can explain why this happens. .
<p>Grades 7-9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students learn how to obtain historical information and how to use them. ▪ Using various sources, they compare them and develop personal argumentative opinions based on sources. ▪ They understand that historical information can be interpreted in various ways. ▪ They explain the purpose and results of human activities. ▪ They evaluate the possibilities of future development using knowledge of history. 	<p>Achievements at the end of Grade 9. (three levels):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquiring information about the past: students learn to differentiate factors which explain the issue and secondary factors, they are able to read and interpret various sources. ▪ Understanding historical occurrences: they know where to place events in the context of time and chronologically; they know why people in particular spheres of life lived differently than today, they know how to present causes and consequences of historical events. ▪ Using knowledge of history, they can answer questions about the past based on information that they acquired from various sources, including modern technology, they can formulate their personal argumentative judgments and evaluate events and occurrences.

In most of the analyzed documents, emphasis is placed on defining the purpose, aims and student's achievements (tasks, outcomes) and the position of that subject in the system of education of the student students.¹¹ The purpose of history education is usually defined as one of the ways to understand the world in which one lives. In programs of England, Scotland and Ireland it can be observed that the purpose of history education is defined in a pragmatic and utilitarian way, and emphasis is especially placed on skills which make the basis for active citizenship, employment and lifelong learning. In all of the documents analyzed, the aims of history education are defined carefully and in detail. All three key dimensions can be observed: knowledge and understanding, competences and skills, attitudes and values. Three examples have been selected to show how particular countries define the aims of history teaching.

The first example is the definition of aims in the Slovenian program which, as has been said before, is the most similar to the Croatian practice. Table 1 presents the aims of three subjects where historical content is present. It should also be noted that the Slovenian program includes a catalogue of knowledge.

The second example is the Finish curriculum (Table 2) where the emphasis is at the same time on the aims of subjects and students' achievements. The Swedish and Norwegian curricula develop their aims and expected students' achievements in a similar way. We have included the Finish example paying attention to the PISA results, where Finland is high ranked in all areas where students' competences were assessed.¹² In the curricular reform in 2003/4 history became an independent subject, although it does not have such a high status in the Finnish curriculum, most probably due to the emphasis on languages.¹³

The Dutch curriculum is the third example which we selected due to the manner in which it emphasizes key skills which should be developed in all subjects, including History (Table 3). In the Dutch curriculum, History is defined through the development of historical awareness which is achieved through becoming aware of the basis of chronology (the application of concepts of time and periods of time, placing events and periods in time), and understanding the nature of historical sources (students should understand that sources can be contradictory and can differ among each other; they should be aware of the fact that sources tell their own story and that they can be interpreted in the context of a particular time, place, and point of view.

11 For the definitions of the terms *purpose*, *aim* and *tasks* (outcomes, achievements) see Marsh, 1994: 105, Bognar, Matijević, 2002: 151-166

12 Relating to this, see also Previšić (ur.), 2007: 136-139. About the position of history education in the Finnish curriculum see Virta, 2006.

13 Virta, 2006: 325

Table 3: Key skills which in The Netherlands, should be developed in all subjects, including History

<p>1. Work attitude:</p>	<p>Students are interested in the world surrounding them and they are motivated to explore it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they ask focused questions ▪ they can find and use relevant information ▪ they enjoy learning something new ▪ they don't give up if they did not succeed in the first attempt
<p>2. Work according to plan:</p>	<p>Students know how to make a plan and work accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they know how to formulate an aim ▪ they know how to orientate themselves in the subject ▪ they know how to recognize the causes and consequences in simple problems and based on them draw conclusions ▪ they know how to organize and implement greater activities step by step ▪ later on, they know how to judge whether their planning was successful ▪ they know how to present the outcomes of their work in oral or written explanations or presentations
<p>3. Use of different learning strategies:</p>	<p>By implementing teaching activities, students can use various strategies and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they know how to ask focused questions ▪ they know the difference between fact and opinion ▪ they know how to find and process relevant information from other sources, including dictionaries, atlases and registers ▪ they know how to work with other students, discuss problems and come to a common solution ▪ later on, they know how to judge whether their strategy was successful
<p>4. Self image:</p>	<p>Students learn how to deal with their abilities and restrictions of their own abilities::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they have self-confidence ▪ they know how to control their behavior ▪ they are able to and they can stand up for themselves
<p>5. Social behavior:</p>	<p>Students positively contribute to the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they behave toward each other with respect ▪ they behave in accordance with the generally accepted standards and values ▪ they respect differences in (religious) beliefs and cultures ▪ they dare to talk in a group ▪ they respect the emotions and wishes of other people ▪ they dare to offer support to a person that has different attitudes in the group ▪ they take responsibility for tasks that should be carried out
<p>6. New media:</p>	<p>Students use means of communication, including new media, in a responsible and purposeful way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they know how to write and edit a text using computer programs for text processing ▪ they have a general idea about the possibilities of (digital) information media ▪ they can use digital teaching resources by using computers

The analyzed materials make it possible to separate those aims that show up in all or in the majority of the documents. They are noted in Table 4; for each aim there is a short explanation which shows that those aims are mostly defined in

programs. In aims defined like this, the correlation between knowledge and skills (especially cognitive), and also stressing the individual, student's development while studying historical content.

Table 4: Aims of history education which show up in most of the analyzed documents

Aims	How they are defined in programs
Acquiring knowledge about past events	Becoming familiar with important historical events from general and national history. Programs of Scandinavian countries emphasize the regional perspective. .
Understanding the present	Learning about history contributes to the understanding of the present and the modern world, and is a basis for the development of perspectives on the future.
Development of cultural and national identity; understanding one's own culture and other cultures	The majority of the programs emphasize fostering and understanding of one's own culture and cultural heritage of the community. Part of the programs (English, Swedish, Finnish) stress the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the society, especially when talking about integration of cultural contributions by minority communities. In the Slovenian example there is the development of the Slovenian national awareness and identity, as well as preservation of Slovenian cultural traditions, however a selection of such concepts is an exception.
Understanding other cultures; interculturalism and multiculturalism	History research has plays an important role in learning and understanding other cultures (all programs stress that point), as well as the development of intercultural and multicultural perspectives (especially characteristics for programs of Scandinavian countries).
Understanding history as a discipline	The majority of the programs emphasize research of concepts such as chronology, causality, continuity, change, historical interpretations, development of historical awareness, correct use of historical terminology, learning about the role of sources and literature, and understanding the nature of historical sources, learning about the process of collecting and analyzing sources.
Acquiring skills which are fundamental for employment and life long learning	Work with historical materials is considered a means which enables orientation in modern sources of information. Especially stressed are aims such as: finding and evaluating information, development of critical and creative thinking, analytic approach, problem solving, argumentation, development of communicative skills, organization and presentation of historical content in various ways, development of work habits, learning skills, ability to work in a team, IT literacy.
Contribution to the individual development of the student	Search for personal identity in a pluralistic society, development of social skills, understanding themselves as individuals and members of a society, development of students' self-confidence, encouraging intellectual curiosity.
Citizenship education, education for peace	In the majority of the programs, especially in Scandinavian countries, History is seen as a subject which contributes to civic education of students and active citizenship, understanding basic phenomena of a democratic society, understanding of human rights, development of tolerance, peace and cooperation, and social responsibility.

Except for the purpose and aims, many curriculum frameworks note *expected students' achievements* (outcomes, tasks), as well as the levels of their achievement (attainment targets, goals to be attained) which define a student's progress. In most of the subject curricula, this relates to the overall development of students' competencies (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes), and it is the relatedness of aims, content and expected students' achievements that is an important element in the curricular approach in shaping the teaching of a particular subject. In subject curricula of Scandinavian countries expectations of students' *achievements* which are a basis for the evaluation of students' progress are met. The new German curriculum for the first four grades of primary school defines *binding requirements*; the Hungarian defines *minimal competences* necessary for the shift to the next level of education. The Slovenian teaching plan defines *standards of knowledge* which are for the majority part focused on fact which the students should acquire, however Slovenia with its focus on content is an exception, as was mentioned above.

As the most elaborated examples of defining expected students' achievements the English and Scottish curriculum stand out. The emphasis on teaching outcomes is especially characteristic of the English curriculum, although there are opinions that it is not clear whether these are normatively established or empirically confirmed achievements.¹⁴ As the English example has already been described in detail in Croatian literature¹⁵, we bring the expected attainment outcomes of students in the Scottish curriculum (Table 5).

Table 5: *Expected attainment outcomes of history education in Scotland*

	(Strands) (Levels of progression) A-F
Knowledge and understanding	<p>Important people, events and societies in the past: Developing understanding about characteristics of life in the past; why particular societies, people and events are considered important.</p> <p>A. Give examples of important people and events for their families and communities. Give examples of stories which provide information about the past and describe what they have learned.</p> <p>B. Describe particular characteristics of life in the past or selected topics/ periods.</p> <p>C. Describe varieties of life styles of people in the past, e.g. peasant life in comparison with the life of landholders.</p> <p>D. Describe particular characteristics of societies, people and events in the past and suggest reasons why they could be considered important.</p> <p>E. Describe motives or practices of people in particular historical situations. Explain values or attitudes that marked different past societies. Describe why it is considered that particular societies, people and events were important in the past.</p> <p>F. Apply knowledge and understanding of motives and practices of people in particular historical situations, values and attitudes of particular societies in the past, so as to come to the conclusion about particular historical issues.</p>

14 Previšić (ur.), 2007: 129

15 Koren, 2005

<p>Knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>Change and continuity, causes and effects: Develop understanding of changes and continuity through time and causes and effects in a historical context.</p> <p>A. Give some examples of changes that have influenced students' lives and lives of people in their community (before/after, past/present) and give reasons why they occurred.</p> <p>B. Describe changes which were driven by current circumstances in their lives (changes in place of living, lighting, clothing). Give reasons for why these changes occurred. Give examples of continuity in their personal lives (e.g. daily rhythm).</p> <p>C. Describe the lifestyles of today and of the past (What is different? What is the same?). Give some reasons for differences and continuity.</p> <p>D. Identify important characteristics of the processes that have changed over a longer time period (e.g. transportation, the role of women). Explain in a simple way why these characteristics were important and describe how they influenced people's lives.</p> <p>E. Demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of important main characteristic of particular events, processes and attitudes with respect to the changes and continuity. Provide reasons which explain why a particular historical event or process occurred and what its specific consequences were.</p> <p>F. Apply knowledge and understanding of causes and consequences in order to give detailed explanations about a particular process.</p>
<p>Knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>Time and historical sequence: Develop an understanding for time and how past events are related in a chronological sequence.</p> <p>A. Demonstrate awareness about yearly patterns and sequence of events in their personal lives and lives of others. Know ways in which time is described and measured, e.g. night/day, season, month, yesterday/today/tomorrow.</p> <p>B. Create simple time lines which show important events in students' lives. Put in order a small number of pictures/objects from various periods in chronological sequence. Appropriately use the word "century".</p> <p>C. Order some events with dates in a chronological sequence. Appropriately use the words "decade" and "millennium".</p> <p>D. Explain the meaning of the concept "before Christ" and "after Christ". Place a particular number of events on a historical occurrence that occurred BC and AC on a time line, e.g. the development of the script from its beginnings to this day.</p> <p>E. Explain the relationship between particular dates and the relevant century. Name and place important historical periods in chronological order.</p> <p>F. Compare time lines from important historical periods in various parts of the world.</p>

<p>Knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>The nature of historical evidence: Develop an understanding for various types of historical evidence and its relative meaning.</p> <p>A. Discuss objects from their personal history and say what they were used for and why do they find them important. Describe what old photographs/films etc. can say about people and places in the past.</p> <p>B. Suggest some simple types of evidence which talk about a person/event/development in history.</p> <p>C. Describe types in people remember and store memories, e.g. war monuments, and suggest reasons why they should do that.</p> <p>D. Suggest various types of sources of information about the past and how they can be useful for someone who is researching a particular topic. Explain the meaning of the term “inheritance” and give particular explanations, e.g. castles, literature, etc.</p> <p>E. Suggest ways in which the awareness of society about its own history can influence today’s and future development, e.g. decentralization in Scotland, conflict/peace in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>F. Describe how inheritance and evidence can be used in a positive and negative way, e.g. promotion of social, economical and political aims.</p>
<p>Skills</p>	<p>Preparing tasks: 1. Planning tasks (defining a problem and creating an approach) 2. Identifying appropriate sources of information.</p> <p>Implementing tasks: 1. Enable students to independently or in cooperation with other students participate in implementing the task, research and take notes on what they have done. 2. Selecting and processing relevant information. 3. Applying selected procedures, making judgments about the usefulness and reliability of evidence.</p> <p>Evaluation and reporting on the task: 1. Students develop skills for judging evidence, results and the final product, they take into consideration their conclusions and think about whether they could have approached the task in a different way. 2. Present their results or work in different ways, for different purposes and for a different audience, they interpret and explain the importance of their work.</p>
<p>Developing established attitudes</p>	<p>Dedication to learning: Creating positive attitudes towards learning. Encouraging students to recognize and value skills for understanding the world they live in. Enable them to participate in practical learning, appreciate its value, work together with other students or independently, consider issues and questions and offer solutions or ideas.</p> <p>Respect and care about oneself and others: Taking responsibility for the wellbeing, security and needs of themselves and others. Encourage students to think about how to contribute to the environment and culture when making decisions and selecting ways of action. Develop awareness that people have different perspectives and opinions on various issues.</p> <p>Responsibility towards society and the environment: Thinking about the consequences of their own actions on people and the environment, about the relationship between all living beings and their environment, developing awareness on maintaining development. They should be encouraged to appreciate the natural, cultural and historical heritage and the awareness on the need to responsibly participate in the multicultural society.</p>

The level of centralization and teacher autonomy

In his book *Curriculum: basic concepts*, C. Marsh talks about several types of curricula: 1. curricula based on the center, where decisions are made by management staff in education, 2. curricula based on the school, where schools are responsible for all decisions about the curriculum, 3. curricula aimed at schools which are placed in the middle between centralization and decentralization.¹⁶ When those three categories are applied to the documents analyzed, it can be concluded that in the documents analyzed the first two groups are mostly present, that is, all of them have a certain level of central planning, but the degree of autonomy left to the schools is varied. We also paid attention to the extent to which history teaching content was prescribed at the central level, and to what extent was the selection and development left to the schools and teachers, and in what proportion is the scheduling left to the schools.

Among the documents analyzed the Slovenian program stands out (*Učni načrt*), according to detail and prescription, as the most similar to the Croatian teaching program. Content is chronologically divided into four grades (6-9) and is defined in detail. In addition to that, the program contains the knowledge catalogue with basic and minimal standards relating to marking, and content that students should acquire is presented in detail. This example is closest to the Croatian teaching program. Another group of countries can be formed and includes countries where content is defined by the program but in the form of a framework; there are differences in the degree of content definition. In the Norwegian curriculum, content for each grade is written in 3-6 headwords. In Finland, Core contents are defined in shore for each grade in 7-9 points. In Hungary, content is defined through 6-8 topics per grade, while for each topic basic content, concepts, names of people and places, and dates are defined separately; a similar case can be found in Austria. In the Dutch document, basic historical concepts are defined (in three points) and Basic historical events, occurrences, processes and people (in 11 points) which should be the subject of research in History lessons. In England, content is presented at the level of broad thematic units for each cycle, where there is a lot of freedom of choice (however it is smaller than before introducing the National curriculum in 1991, and also smaller than in the Scottish curriculum). The Irish curriculum presents a list of topics which are studied, a short description of each topic in several points, and examples of possible approaches. The Swedish curriculum defines how students should acquire knowledge about modern history, peace attempts, genocide, Holocaust, revolutions and war in one sentence. The Scottish curriculum is the most general, providing guidelines for five major historical periods (the Ancient world; The Middle Ages; the Renaissance, Reformation and discoveries; Age of revolutions; Twentieth century) based on which schools and teachers independently define topics which are carried out in the classroom.

¹⁶ Marsh, 1994: 142, 146-148

It can be concluded that for the majority of the analyzed documents, the prescribed content for teaching are defined in general (they are elaborated much more concisely than in the Croatian case), at the level of broad topics, thematic units and historical periods, and teachers are left to elaborate further at the syllabus level. However, it should be noted that there are additional documents that are not prescribed, but contain a detail elaboration of content which is usually studied. Also, topics that show up in the State Matura exam, since they also influence the selection of content. Finally, it should be noted that only 11 European history programs are analyzed, while other research of history teaching showed that many European programs are still overloaded with content and are rather prescribed, that there is a significant gap between teaching practice and curricular aims which often only declarative, and that in many countries the degree of centralization has remained the same, or has increased in relation to the previous period.¹⁷

It should also be noted that in most of the curricula analyzed, there is a practice where the number of lessons for particular subjects/curricular areas is defined only at a minimal level, and that part of the scheduling is left as the responsibility of the school or the local community. This percent varies, so for example in Austria it covers a third of the scheduled lessons, in Scotland 20%, in Ireland 7.5%, but 5% in Norway and Hungary.) It can be concluded that more flexibility in the organization of school work is provided by curricula which: 1. leave a higher percentage of scheduling to the schools, 2. define the number of hours for entire educational cycles or cross curricular topics (instead of weekly defining the number of hours) or even make it possible for schools to define the number of hours that will be allocated to a particular subject, 3. generally define content and/or their order. This is mostly the case of the curricula in countries belonging to the first group (Finland, Norway, Sweden) and the second group (England, Ireland, Scotland), although in some cases such as England, the level of centralization has increased after introducing the national curriculum in the early 1990s.¹⁸

The relationship between local, national, regional, European and world history

The local dimension in historical content is especially strongly emphasized in earlier educational cycles of the majority of the curricula. History is initially usually taught on examples from the local area, beginning with content that students are familiar with, that are concrete. This dimension is especially strongly emphasized in the Irish curriculum where research of local history is stressed as the central element of the curricula at all levels. Of all the dimensions the curricula usually neglect the regional one; exceptions are Scandinavian countries which strongly emphasize this particular component in history education, that is, learning the history of neighboring countries.

¹⁷ *History Changes: Facts and figures about history education in Europe since 1989*, 91-102

¹⁸ Koren, 2003

Although all documents have content from national and general (European/world) history, their relationship cannot always be concluded based on the materials analyzed. Actually, only the detailed Slovenian program shows that approximately a third of the hours is allocated to national history. Also, it can be said that the English curriculum, half of the compulsory topics within the second and third educational cycle is dedicated to national history, however this does not say how many school hours will be allocated to each topic. In some of the analyzed documents, events from national history are placed into the wider European/world context, and showing general trends on examples from national and/or local history. A case in point is the way the Austrian program in its aims emphasizes the correlation of the universal, national, regional and local. Other documents do not offer a basis for some firm conclusions, but not one shows an attempt, like the Croatian program, to clearly define the relation between national and general history.

History and identity shaping

Considering the important number of aims, observed in the documents analyzed, which relate to the relationship between identity and history, it can be concluded that History is seen as one of the key subjects in shaping students' identities. Among the analyzed subjects there are similarities, as well as important differences in the manner in which this issue is addressed. Most of the curricula analyzed aim to promote various dimensions of identity and do not reduce them solely to the national dimension. For example, the English curriculum emphasizes students' understanding of themselves as individuals and members of society; the Austrian curriculum searching for one's identity in a pluralistic society, and the Finnish is strengthening student's identity. The national identity is present in all of the analyzed programs, but it is defined in various ways; the number of words is indicative. Some curricula emphasize *strengthening* national identity through history teaching (e.g. Finland) or *shaping* national awareness or identity (Slovenia), while others talk about *understanding* their own culture, and *nurturing* cultural traditions and cultural heritage of a community. The collective dimension in some cases relates also to the European identity, multiculturalism and interculturalism, which is very strongly encouraged in curricula of Scandinavian countries.

When talking about the way cultural identity is defined in history lessons, we can isolate the curricula of Finland, Norway and Sweden. They stress two dimensions: personal, that helps students discover their own cultural identity, and collective, which is seen through the Swedish/Norwegian/Finnish identity as an element of the Nordic and European culture. The national dimension also encompasses minorities that live in those countries. For example, the Swedish program emphasizes that understanding of the Swedish culture includes knowing the Sami culture. On the other hand, the intercultural dimension promotes understanding of cultural differences, which includes studying different cultures.

Finally, it should be pointed out that school History, because of its possibility of influencing the development of a student's identity, more than any other school subject is subject to various uses and misuses for political purposes. As a consequence, the EUROCLIO research showed that in many European countries programs are changed as a result of political changes. School History becomes especially sensitive when focusing on studying the 20th century, and especially the contemporary period.¹⁹ These controversies stem from a whole range of reasons – epistemological debates on the nature of historical awareness (ways in which awareness about history is constructed) to social (educational) roles that is given to the subject at the educational level. Questions such as shaping students' identity, collective memory, common heritage, multiculturalism, patriotism, etc., regularly produce opposing discourse which comes from different opinions on the place and role of history education in students' education. That is why one of the basic questions is posed, achievement of the educational aim of History, that is, how attitudes and values can be transferred by avoiding open or hidden student indoctrination.

Other: guidelines, evaluation, cross curricular ties

Some of the documents clearly indicate that external evaluation is the integral part of the national curriculum (e.g. England, Ireland), but that question is often only indicated and is not defined at the level of the documents analyzed. In most of the documents only some general principles can be found, based on which it can be concluded that History in the State Matura exam is mostly an elective subject; with the exception of Hungary where History is a compulsory subject.

Guidelines for the lesson planning are present at the general level of instruction with examples of good teaching practice. In some cases conditions for conducting lessons are defined at the general level for all subjects. In the documents analyzed, a lot of attention is given to the manner in which integration of content of particular subject takes place and cross curricular ties are ensured. This can indicate that establishing cross curricular ties is not that simple.

Overall, in the analyzed European curricula there is a sense of movement towards History as a subject whose value is not felt only through acquiring particular facts, but also through understanding processes which lead us to those facts (emphasis is given to the development of critical thinking skills), as well as through the personal development of students. It can be said that history education varies between the academic and utilitarian foundations²⁰ of the subject, where

¹⁹ *History Changes: Facts and figures about history education in Europe since 1989*, 92

²⁰ Marsh, 1994: 224

the first is more dominant in some countries, while in others some other aspects are dominating. Certain European curricula (especially the ones from the second group) emphasize that students should be introduced to the nature of history as a discipline. The process of finding, selecting and evaluating information and the possibility of presenting it in various ways (the connection between successful learning and language competences) is especially important. It is important to note that because of that, we shouldn't get the impression that factual knowledge is not important, but due to the richness of topics and content which history offers it is an accepted position that not everything can be elaborated. Therefore, in most of the analyzed programs a smaller number of topics that should be taught are present, however they are carefully selected so as to thoroughly go through the material and at the same time acquire knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and values.

In the end we would like to point out three characteristics which we find especially important in a successful development of curriculum: 1. clearly defined learning aims and expected achievements as a focus for student progress and assessment. 2. Support for all students which is based on the evaluation of their needs, various approaches of teaching and use of different assessment strategies. 3. Flexibility of curriculum, which at the national level gives a framework and guidelines, while its implementation and concretization is left to the schools, which creates the so called school curricula.

Concluding remarks

In the last chapter of this analysis we will attempt to compare the similarities and characteristics of European history curricula with the current situation in Croatia, especially in those points which significantly differ from the Croatian practice, and which – in our opinion, help us find the major weaknesses of Croatian History education and can define possible routes for its development. This part of the analysis will focus on programs which were created after the 1990s, although some of those characteristics can be observed in previous periods. It should also be noted that we will not only focus on the assessment of student knowledge, considering that that was not part of the analyzed documents; at the same time this is a topic which deserves a special analysis.

Compulsory education that is present in Croatia today is mostly structured through the educational reforms of the 1950s, and its minor changes and amendments in the mid 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. However, when we talk about creating teaching programs for History after 1990, the Croatian example offers some characteristics which are not found anywhere else. The primary and secondary school programs developed in the mid 1990s reflected the situation of the transitional and war period of the first part of the 1990s. Characteristic for that period were textbooks which changed before the program, moreover, the History pro-

gram from 1995 was created according to textbooks written after 1992. Although those programs in the professional eye were usually criticized and contradicted, the primary school program was enforced from the 1995/6 school year (with minimal changes in 1997 and 1999) to the 2006/07 school year, while the secondary school programs are still in use.

In the case of primary schools, the 1995 program served as a basis for creating a new teaching program that was enforced in the 2006/07 school year as part of the Croatian National Educational Standard²¹, while the high school program dating from the 1990s is still being used and based on that program national matriculation catalogues are written. It can be said, that the ideas continue to influence history teaching. However, from the pedagogical and didactic and methodical point of view, the new programs show continuity, and particular changes, and is significant not only for the state of History in Croatian teaching, but also in Croatian society.

Perhaps the biggest differences between the Croatian program and the analyzed curricula lie in **defining aims**. In all the curricular documents analyzed, defining the purpose and aims of the subject, and students' achievements has a significant place, and in most cases comprise the basic part of the curriculum. This is in strong opposition with the approach that existed in the 1995 program, where aims are vaguely defined, where any attempt to try and define student achievement failed, while at the same time the content is detailed and prescribed (organized in 40 teaching units). It can be seen that the development of students' skills and abilities was clearly neglected which leaves an impression that its main purpose was transfer of huge (often unnecessary) amounts of information, while memorization of data became itself a purpose. This was reflected in the assessment, where test based assessment of knowledge, and assessment of the degree of fact memorization was most often dominant, while skills were almost entirely neglected.

There is an obvious move toward a more clear definition of aims of History teaching in the new program. An important part is given to the development of critical thinking through working with sources, teaching about interpretations, noticing various perspectives, multiculturalism, etc. History is defined as the subject that can help students in understanding the world they live in, also stressing skills which students should acquire through History education. There is also an obvious move towards a thematic organization of the curriculum: subject matter for each grade is arranged in 11 topics which are chronologically organized. Lastly, what is new is the defining of key concepts and educational outcomes for each topic.

21 The history of creating a new program is equally interesting as its content; however this is not occasion to discuss it in detail. It will be sufficient to say that in its making since 2004, it went through several stages, and each one had a new committee selected by the respective Ministry, and changes that were introduced were in certain cases more under the influence of current political debates than scientific and professional reasons.

Nevertheless, many cases show that it is easier to define aims than apply them in practice. Working out educational achievements according to topics shows inadequate connections with the aims defined in the program introduction. Achievements are further defined only at the level of fact, that is, it is reduced to listing facts and is present at the level of their memorization. At the same time, a little or no attention is given to skills and competences: achievements such as *analysis* and *source evaluation* are mentioned only declaratively, usually at the end of the list of facts that should be remembered. Levels of student expectations in a particular level of education are also not defined clearly in the achievements. The number of topics for an individual class is still too big, which significantly restricts the use of active teaching methods which are emphasized as one of the main tasks of the new program. Some of the important aims which existed in the initial proposition, such as oral and written presentation of knowledge of the past (where communicative skills are stressed) are left out, which further breaks up the coherence of the initial proposition. These discrepancies are a consequence of subordinating the work of committees in the short term aims of the Ministry in search of fast results, without developing long term concepts and doubtlessly, frequent changes of the makeup of the committees which worked on developing the particular documents.

The next permanent characteristic of Croatian teaching plans is **content overload**, that is, a large amount of content that should be taught throughout one educational cycle. Despite the fact that unburdening was declared as one of the main aims of the change in the program several times, and also during the development of the newest program for primary school in 2006, history teaching did not manage to get rid of that burden. In our opinion, there are two main reasons for that. Firstly, unburdening is approached from the wrong starting points. There is a belief that history program covers (and should cover) “entire” history of mankind, from ancient history to the modern day where there are some traditional topics which are repeated from one program to another. In doing this, it is completely forgotten that learning “everything” is impossible even at the level of higher education, yet alone at the level of primary and secondary school. Because of that there has been a constant attempt to unburden students, so that “all” topics/content are kept, while the student load is reduced by removing some data what should not be remembered. The consequence of that is a more easy going approach to topics, and the result is the students’ inability to comprehend content; because of the Croatian history teaching cannot succeed in developing students’ skills, especially critical thinking skills. Secondly, considering that that approach to history education, memorizing facts is a purpose in itself, so that data that exist in programs and textbooks are not seem as an exclusive aim of history education, but as a means to develop specific student skills and competences.

The next two relating characteristics of the Croatian program are that they are **prescriptive**, and accordingly they **lack flexibility**, and the possibility of hav-

ing a choice which many other analyzed programs stress.²² Primary and secondary school programs developed in the mid 1990s were developed in such a way that teachers need to “realize” them in such a way that can easily be monitored. Schools and teachers were left with little autonomy and very little possibility to adjust the programs to the needs of students and the local community. At the content level, everything was prescribed, from detailed teaching topics to defining teaching units of new content including their titles and subtitles. In that way, not only content was taught, but also the structure of the teacher’s syllabus, as well as work methods, because the amount of content demanded frontal teaching and the method of oral reports. The new program for primary schools developed in 2006 showed an improvement in authorizing teachers to develop their own teaching and course syllabus. Within the 11 topics teachers can independently decide on allocating the number of hours and their sequence, however that is also very restricted by the amount of content that has to be covered in one school year. In addition to that, a question is posed as to what extent, after so many years of detailed prescription and guidance are teachers ready and competent to use those possibilities.

Last but not least various points of view on the **socialization role** that history has in the education of students should be noted in developing a history program. History education has always been marked by values, that is, related to particular social values that are promoted through history. However, because of that, school History is more than any other subject, subject to various types of political pressure, and its instrumentalization for political purposes aided to its stronger political orientation and often gave her the statue of “case subject”. During the 20th century in Croatia, an didactic approach was dominant which predominantly emphasizes its educational role and the main purpose of the subject was to shape and guide students’ *attitudes* and *values*. This was mostly done with detailed prescribed content to be learned, by emphasizing some and leaving out other data, through the selection of words and the amount of space allocated to particular content. In that was the official version of History was shaped, that is, what should be thought about particular historical events, periods and people was prescribed. This approach was especially characteristic of the programs from the mid 1990s where only one explanation of particular events and historical periods was allowed.

The new program from 2006 shows a difference between declarative adjustments of history teaching aims with modern European trends and their application in teaching practice. Its introduction mentions aims such as teaching about interpretations, multiple perspectives, development of critical thinking through the analysis of historical sources, etc. However, we don’t only find them in the development of educational achievements of students. Rather, in certain topic it can be seen that the author’s intention is not to offer content only, but clear and stand-

22 For example, Bogнар and Matijeвић (2002: 187-188) emphasize that the program framework can be taken as compulsory, but also as orientation, the latter being considered as pedagogically advisable for primary schools

ardized evaluation of historical events and processes, especially those from recent history, which in some cases discretely contradicts the proclaimed program aims and tasks on multiple perspectives and teaching students about interpretations.²³ It is also noticeable that because of direct or indirect political pressure certain topics (Second World War, The beginning and development of the independent Croatian state) were significantly changed in relation to the initial suggestion, which points to another problem with which History teaching is constantly faced.²⁴

It is valuable to also take a look at teaching historical content at the level of lower primary school (grades 1-4), which is creating a big problem in Croatian education. In most of the studied curricula studying basic historical concepts (time and space, interpretation in the English case, etc.) is expected at this level, also including local history, while at the same time in Croatia in the 4th Grade of primary school the entire Croatian history is prescribed to be taught. Numerous examples show that that poses a great problem for students: the content that they are studying is often incomprehensible and is only mechanically memorized and quickly forgotten, while at the same time the mentioned basic concepts are not acquired sufficiently or at all. Because of that the opinion that children at that age are not prepared to acquire historical content and develop critical thinking was formed, which is wrong and damaging for the development of students' skills and abilities.

What is most noticeable however is that the model which is still present in Croatia – especially from the point of view of rigidity, detail and centralization – is not present in any of the analyzed documents. Some of the changes were brought about by introducing the Croatian National Educational standard, however its true effects remain to be seen, considering that they largely depend on the manner in which teachers are going to implement them in their classes, but also on the types of encouragement from the educational authorities in the scientific circles. Nevertheless, it is worth thinking about the results of the evaluation of teaching programs conducted by the Institute of Social Research in Zagreb in 2003 (with a note that the program evaluated was the one from 1995). Eight grade students evaluated history as a relatively interesting subject; however it got significantly lower marks for “usefulness in contemporary life” and “importance for future life”. In both categories history is in the ninth place out of thirteen subjects. Teachers themselves came to similar findings, by saying that the problematic side of history was in the difficulty, lack of contemporariness, usefulness for today's life of students and interest.²⁵

Finally, it can be concluded that changes in Croatian education should be initiated from defining the general idea about the route that Croatian schooling should follow. Therefore, it is necessary to have a curriculum framework for com-

23 *Teaching curriculum*, 2006: 291.

24 Compare the initial and final version of the program at www.mzos.hr

25 Baranović et al., 2004, *passim*

pulsory education and within it define the position of particular subjects including History. While shaping subject curricula it will be especially important to clearly define educational aims and relate them to the educational outcomes, where emphasis should be on the development of students' competences necessary for everyday life and life long education (e.g. development of critical and creative thinking, oral and written communication, cultural awareness, interpersonal and civic competences, learn how to learn, etc.). The future curriculum should ensure stronger links with the area of humanities (by defining content links and defining particular cross curricular topics between subjects within the area of humanities and with a flexible curriculum which would enable schools to independently allocate their teaching lessons within the area of humanities). It should also provide a link between educational aims/students' achievements in particular subjects and external evaluation of knowledge, considering that it will largely define the manner of teaching in schools. Finally, it can be concluded that it is still important to thoroughly rethink the entire educational system including history teaching. We believe that changes in Croatian history teaching should move in the direction of contemporary European trends, which at the same time demands adequate and thorough professional development of teachers who are currently working in schools, as well as the education of students – future teachers.

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