

Conference Report

Kick-off Conference of the European Forum for Reconciliation and Cooperation in History and Social Sciences Education (EFREC)

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Proceedings minuted by Patrycja Czerwinska and Katarzyna Jez

The inaugural Conference of the European Forum for Reconciliation and Cooperation in History and Social Sciences Education (EFREC) aimed to bring together representatives of state and civil society initiatives conducting bi- and multilateral textbook revision and improvement work in Europe, Africa and Asia, giving them opportunities to connect, discuss challenges arising in international textbook revision, and share best practices.

Words of welcome; setting the scene

Prof ECKHARDT FUCHS, director of the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), welcomed the participating organisations and initiatives to the Conference and outlined the history and remit of the GEI, the event's host institution.

Prof Fuchs handed over to Dr STEFFEN SAMMLER (GEI), whose remarks provided an introduction to the EFREC project and its aims – identifying areas that require attention in this area and harnessing synergy effects to forge innovative paths in international textbook revision and curriculum development. Steffen Sammler explained EFREC's objective as being to constitute a forum for the sharing of ideas and experiences on products, methods and practices of international textbook revision and development, to the end of creating standards for textbook and curriculum revision. He set out EFREC's medium-term aim to work with its collaborating organisations to create an agenda for an institutionalised forum centred around digital infrastructure, with the purpose of promoting reconciliation, mutual understanding and cooperation in curriculum development and the production of educational media. Further, stated Steffen Sammler, EFREC intends to run workshops with its collaborating initiatives, set up joint projects, and offer research stays, scholarships and information around producing educational media and developing curricula. There are also plans for disseminating the outcomes of bi- and multilateral activities in this area via academic publications and the issuance of recommendations to education policymakers. He additionally outlined the results of a survey carried out prior to the Conference among over 100 initiatives from Asia, Africa and Europe. As he explained, the data reflect marked interest among curriculum and textbook revision initiatives from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which contrasted with relatively low response rates from organisations based in Western Europe.

Themed panels on bilateral textbook revision and development work

The Conference's first two parallel panels discussed their participants' experiences with bilateral activities in this field and showcased products of and ideas for projects in bilateral textbook revision and development work.

Panel 1a: Experiences with bilateral activities

Dr MARCIN WIATR (GEI) opened the panel with a report on the bilateral textbook commissions whose coordination is based at the GEI. In recent years, he explained, the creation of bilateral textbooks or teaching and learning materials in line with curricular stipulations for the subject of history has established a product-centred form of collaborative academic work among diverse traditions in subject-specific teaching, with educators taking an active role. During his contribution, Marcin Wiatr considered the role of specific academic communities and of politics of memory - among both historians and the wider public - in the establishment of transnational products in this regard and the potential limitations of bilateral processes. As an example, he raised the question of whether it is in fact possible to present appropriate accounts or interpretations of the history of Poland without referencing Germany and Ukraine. Concluding, he advocated the expansion of bilateral work at nation state level to encompass connections with local and national histories.

During the discussion that followed, Prof. IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI (Centre for Historical Research in Berlin of the Polish Academy of Science) proposed a closer exploration of accounts detailing the histories of border regions via the comparative analysis of bilateral textbooks such as the history books produced by Franco-German and Polish-German teams. Responding to Igor Kakolewski, Marcin Wiatr noted the centrality of various regions of Europe, including South Tyrol, East Prussia, Silesia and Galicia, to the Polish-German textbook *Europa – Unsere Geschichte*. [*Europa. Nasza historia*.]

Prof. VOLKER ZIMMERMANN (German-Czech Textbook Commission) was interested in whether European or national frameworks were more appropriate for conducting and supporting bilateral collaboration. He observed that the matter of whether bilateral discussions around textbooks should take place at European or national level had been a matter of debate for the last twenty years, and considered the matter of regional history of great interest in this context, pointing out that regions where different populations meet are not only flashpoints of conflict, but also spaces of encounter and cooperation.

Taking up this idea, IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI called for an extension of the traditional view of the history of relationships between two nation states to encompass a transnational perspective on the history of regions, with the study of areas around borders representing an exemplary way forward. He cited the example of the Polish-German textbook *Europa – Unsere Geschichte. Europa. Nasza historia*, in which, he observed, regional history serves as a sort of bridge to greater understanding of other complex historical phenomena in the closely entangled history of Europe.

In a reference to the panel's title, ECKHARDT FUCHS raised the question of bilateral textbook commissions' central purpose(s), be they the promotion of reconciliation or mutual understanding, engagement with conflictual or controversial historical issues, the effort to combat stereotypes, or the joint production of teaching and learning materials or indeed state-approved textbooks. In Fuchs' view, the matter of how to achieve these purposes and the historical approach to take in doing so – regional, national or European – must be secondary to agreement on overall aims.

The panel continued with a presentation by Dr NAOUM KAYTCHEV (Joint Interdisciplinary Expert Commission on Historical and Educational Issues between Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia) on the activities of the Bulgarian-North Macedonian Textbook Commission, launched in 2017 on the basis of an agreement between the two states which committed them to exploring their

differing perceptions of their history. A list of historical events and personalities drawn up in this context proposed foundations for a shared culture of memory. In 2018, the Commission issued recommendations for improvements to textbooks which have yet to find implementation in curricula and teaching and learning materials.

In answer to Eckhardt Fuchs' enquiry regarding the independence or otherwise of the Commission from political decision-makers and the relationship between policy and academia in the two countries, NAOUM KAYTCHEV stated that this relationship was a complex one; while textbooks undergo approval processes conducted by the two states' ministries of education, their authors are historians, and the Bulgarian side in particular sets great store by working with historical sources and maintaining an ethos of independence as historians. Steffen Sammler requested that the Commission communicate the outcomes of its work to the EFREC team.

Volker Zimmermann suggested that, possibly, part of bilateral textbook commissions' remit should be to identify how and via which methods we should teach our young people to call historical narratives into question.

LENA RADAUER (Joint Commission for the Study of the Recent History of German-Russian Relations) wished to know more about the cooperation between the German-Czech Textbook Commission and the Historical Commission for Bohemia (*Historische Kommission für die böhmischen Länder*) or the German-Slovak Historians' Commission and the relationship between these processes of shared work. Responding, Volker Zimmermann noted that there is no official or institutionalised collaboration between specific commissions; instead, there are relationships among individual members of the commissions and close communication takes place in specific instances, one example being the work on the development of Czech-German or Slovak-German classroom teaching and learning materials.

Referencing IGOR KĄKOLEWSKI's suggestion to increase the use of online formats for the creation of educational media, LENA RADAUER described a three-volume account of shared Russian and German *lieux de mémoire*, *Deutschland-Russland. Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte - Orte der Erinnerung*, the product of arduous collaboration between German and Russian historians. The current situation, she noted, raises problems with regard to accessing these books; providing their content to schools in digital form may represent a solution to these difficulties and is a matter of interest and relevance to EFREC.

Panel 1b: Bilateral textbook projects: political and educational challenges

Dr DIRK SADOWSKI's (GEI) input to the panel identified political and educational challenges for bilateral textbook projects via the example of the German-Israeli Textbook Commission, distinguishing these challenges according to whether they related to external or internal factors. In Dirk Sadowski's account, the second 'generation' of German-Israeli textbook recommendations, published in 2015, noted a degree of imbalance in German textbooks' depictions of Israel, whose context was almost exclusively the Israeli--Palestinian conflict. Textbook chapters discussing Israel and this conflict frequently implement multiperspectivity and engagement with differing interpretations and points of view, didactic principles highly valued within the German education system. In some instances, the reciprocal relationship linking content to didactic methodology in German textbooks engendered misunderstanding. Dirk Sadowski noted further that the principal debate in this context took place, not between Israeli and German academics, but among particular voices in the German discursive arena.

Dr VOJTECH RIPKA (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes) pointed out that difficulties arising from divergent educational objectives and narratives are not limited to the production of multilateral

educational media, but occur likewise in contexts outside this field – as observable in work with partner organisations from Central and Eastern Europe. He referred to occasions on which differences became apparent in views as to what constitutes solid foundations for education.

Referencing the challenges in communication noted in the discussion thus far, CAROLIN SAVCHUK (Museums Berlin-Karlshorst) added that the current military conflict in Europe is an exacerbating factor in this regard. Until Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the German-Russian Museum in Karlshorst, Berlin, had been engaged in highly active collaboration with partner organisations from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and elsewhere in Germany. One of these joint projects had involved teachers from the four countries reflecting on differences in their views on education and working towards a joint educational scheme for teachers' CPD. The war, she concluded, had brought this work to a halt.

Dr KYRIAKI TOPIDI (European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)) asked about the distribution of resources provided by the Israeli Ministry of Education for school-based work. In answer, Dirk Sadowski stated that differences in resource allocation were in evidence, and were particularly visible during visits [presumably by Commission members] to schools serving the Arab population. The differences occurred not only between Jewish and Arab schools, but also between the faith and the secular sectors of the Israeli education system. A second question from Kyriaki Topidi related to the depiction of Israel in German textbooks and to whether the increase in extreme right-wing and anti-Semitic views in German society influenced its educational media. Dirk Sadowski's reply stated that, while public debate around these matters is currently intensifying, surprise over this development is the predominant tenor of the academic view of it. While Germany's textbooks are not free from stereotypes about Jewish people and Judaism, work is in progress on recommendations targeted towards ways of overcoming these clichés, and textbooks are not anti-Semitic in any way, shape or form.

ATIF RIZVI (Conflict and Education Learning Laboratory (CELL Foundation)) underlined the imbalances of political power between communities or states in textbook discussions, and added that the most significant difficulty in the Israeli/Palestinian context is the lack of dialogue around sensitive and conflictual issues.

[Joint briefing on the discussions in Panels 1a and 1b](#)

In his introduction to the panels' shared briefing, Dirk Sadowski, for Panel 1b, underlined the predominant role of didactic principles such as multiperspectivity, and the concomitant challenges, in bilateral talks around textbooks. The discussion in Panel 1a, as summarised by Marcin Wiatr, centred primarily on the matter of whether the principle of bilateral work has proved itself and how various actors in the field might advance it going forward, particularly in view of the rise of digital communication and formats. Marcin Wiatr highlighted the partial similarities among the challenges and experiences of bilateral initiatives that had emerged in the course of the discussion, and stressed the crucial importance of ongoing sharing of ideas, for instance on approaches drawn from regional history, if the field is to generate and make use of synergy effects.

PETRO KENDZOR (All-Ukrainian Association "Nova Doba" for Teachers of History, Civic Education and Social Studies) acclaimed the work of bilateral textbook commissions as being of great significance to both the societies engaged in each one, due to the fact that the outcomes and products of this work, such as joint textbooks, recommendations and materials, reflect the state of research in the discipline of history in each country and the national cultures of memory in place in each case.

Atif Rizvi cautioned those present against attaching too great a significance to their own roles as historians, and advised that EFREC should strive to develop new products whose conceptions

transcend traditional disciplinary foci, thus helping harness the currently unused potential that other subjects might be able to contribute to a reinvented discipline of school history.

In this context, Kyriaki Topidi emphasised the fact that many international organisations are in favour of guidelines for textbook revision, asserting that such an endeavour represents, in a connected world, a good opportunity to make knowledge available to other actors and for other purposes. Further, she posed the question of whether the subject of history and bilateral approaches are the only avenues to engagement in the areas of reconciliation and diversity management and noted that increasing numbers of states are using civic education as a vehicle for these issues. How, she wondered, might it be possible to expand the spectrum, in terms of conflict prevention work, to include other social science disciplines?

Steffen Sammler responded by asserting EFREC's awareness of the significance of the social sciences in history and politics education, adding the caveat that it appeared important to maintain a critical view in regard to the social sciences' potential susceptibility to being pressed into the service of 'patriotic' education; he suggested that history education may offer the advantage of greater critical distance and capacity for reflection in this regard.

Referring back to Atif Rizvi's contribution, Eckhardt Fuchs stated that didactic principles such as multiperspectivity and critical engagement with narratives, sources and interpretations are long established in curricula, classroom practice and teacher training in numerous European countries, adding, however, that this fact alone is not indicative of the skills students acquire from education of this type. In response to Kyriaki Topidi's considerations, Eckhardt Fuchs noted the evidence of recent decades that divergent and controversial interpretations of historical events have proved particularly conflictual issues among various societies. He pointed to the illustrative example of South-East Asia, where, as AKIYOSHI NISHIYAMA's detailed written contribution to the Conference had set out, the treatment of the twentieth century's violent experiences is the central sticking point in debate between Japan, China and South Korea. Dr Nishiyama's paper had discussed the ongoing impact of the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 and the issues of slave labour and sexual slavery in the Second World War on relations among these countries.

Concluding the discussion, IGOR KAŁOLEWSKI advised that the German-Polish Textbook Commission has a bilateral teachers' working group, established three years previously, whose members regularly attend the Commission's meetings, supplementing its largely academic perspective with views from the classroom.

Discussion: EFREC and bilateral activities

The overall discussion, facilitated by IGOR KAŁOLEWSKI, commenced with the issue of multiperspectivity and the inclusion of divergent points of view in the history classroom. Asked how these principles manifest specifically in the products of bilateral textbook commissions, Marcin Wiatr gave an account of the creation of the Polish-German history textbook and the associated experiences, citing the example of a section entitled '*Blickwinkel*' (Perspectives) which juxtaposed divergent interpretations of a specific topic from historians working within or outside Europe or from people who had experienced the period or event in question. The textbook, explained Marcin Wiatr, also contrasts different historical sources to the end of demonstrating that people in the past engaged in debates and differences of opinion on events just as present-day people do, and that their assessments in this regard were often inextricably linked to the places in which these people lived.

CAROLIN SAVCHUK followed up these points by describing a project involving the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst which, until very recently, had brought teachers from Germany, Belarus,

Russia and Ukraine together to draw up joint lesson designs and plans. The group, explained Ms Savchuk, had agreed upon the topic of Soviet prisoners of war and their experience in Second World War German POW camps, as an issue affecting all four countries involved in the project; this alone ensured a degree of built-in multiperspectivity in the materials. She added, however, that the collaboration had only been possible because the group's work had omitted study of the social ostracism and discrimination to which the former POWs were subject after their return to the USSR.

Dirk Sadowski highlighted the finding of the German-Israeli Textbook Commission that German textbooks' depictions of Israel appear almost exclusively in the context of the conflict with Palestine. Multiperspectivity, he explained, is currently an incipient component of the Israeli approach, and his colleagues in Israel are not yet thoroughly familiar with the idea; they tend to struggle particularly with collections or juxtapositions of sources or images on emotionally charged topics, such as first-hand accounts from people affected by settlement policies, due to what they regard as an overly negative portrayal of Israel emerging in this way. During the process of creating teaching units, Dirk Sadowski continued, the German side evidences an inconsistent notion of what multiperspectivity means in practice; their Israeli counterparts, reviewing materials on the issue of immigration to Germany circa 2015, noted a one-sidedly positive view of the topic without a complementary critical perspective, which, stated the Israelis, failed to uphold the principles underlying a multi-perspective approach.

Volker Zimmermann called for greater nuance in the concept of multiperspectivity, which might, depending on its definition, entail illustrating the complexity of a specific topic or creating opportunities for learners to assert their views or call them into question. Defining the limitations of multiperspectivity, in Volker Zimmermann's view, should be a matter secondary to this awareness of the concept's specificities. IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI responded by pointing to instances in which multi-perspective approaches have found use in bilateral history textbooks even in relation to issues on which it was impossible to compromise on a shared narrative.

Referring to Volker Zimmermann's comment, Eckhardt Fuchs agreed with the premise that a multi-perspective approach should form the foundation of all historical narratives set out in educational media and that the choice of materials needs to be dependent upon the context and objectives in each case. In this regard, Mr. Fuchs mentioned a conference on this topic to take place at the GEI in February 2023, entitled *Considering Perspectives in Educational Media: Conditions – Negotiation Processes – Opportunities*.

Atif Rizvi was of the view that EFREC should prioritise deciding upon and setting out fundamental tenets regarding the application of multiperspectivity as a concept. He asked whether its primary perspective on this notion should be a general one in the context of history, or more specific in character, focusing on the production of educational media. His vision was that EFREC could provide a golden opportunity to introduce multiperspectivity from the outside, so to speak, as a form of 'peer review', effecting an extension of what 'multiperspectivity' means – turning it from a concept in didactics to an integral core principle of the production of educational media.

Responding to IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI's question on the current state of work in the Polish-Ukrainian Textbook Commission and on whether a joint project will be possible in the future, Petro Kendzor stated that the Russian invasion has engendered a shift in views of Polish history and society among numerous Ukrainians, both historians and civil society actors. He reassured those present that dialogue is ongoing and expressed his confidence that the group will be able to attain a shared understanding of the two countries' history in time.

Eckhardt Fuchs reminded his audience of the diverse tasks and objectives that make up EFREC's remit. A central aspect of its purpose, he suggested, is to focus first on creating a space for the

sharing of information and ideas-on the work and outcomes of the various bi- and multilateral textbook initiatives. One of EFREC's further aims, he continued, is to develop standards in areas such as the structuring of bilateral collaboration processes and of their products and, drawing on the experiences of the member initiatives, to create what one might term 'guidelines' for future projects around managing the interactions and tensions among policy, academia and civil society and for matters of funding. Similarly, EFREC might drive dialogue and discussion around didactic principles such as multiperspectivity and the juxtaposition and debate of opposing views. Quality assurance could involve the establishment of a form of 'peer review' on an agreed basis.

Presentation and discussion of the prototype for EFREC's website

PATRYCJA CZERWINSKA (GEI) and KATARZYNA JEZ (GEI) showed the Conference the prototype for EFREC's planned website. They emphasised the prototype's status as a proposal for the planned digital infrastructure which will be the subject of detailed discussion in the EFREC community going forward. Ms Czerwinska's and Ms Jez' presentation covered the website's planned layout and technical details along with its key structural categories, *Initiatives, Projects, Resources, Publications* and *Events*. The presenters explained the website's purpose as being to provide information on the organisations involved in EFREC and all other bi- and multilateral initiatives in textbook and curriculum research and to raise the profile of ongoing and completed projects in these areas, as well as acting as a space for showcasing products of this international work, such as curricula, textbooks, and teaching and learning materials for the classroom. The website will also make available to actors in this area new publications in the field, a bibliography of relevant research on textbook revision and textbook and curriculum research, and a calendar of events. A password-protected area will enable registered users to engage in a discussion forum and post calls for interested parties to join collaborative projects. The website will be available in English only.

Atif Rizvi was keen for the website to extend a clear invitation to join EFREC to initiatives based outside, as well as within, Europe, and noted that the discussion thus far had shown that the experiences and views of non-European organisations had a very significant role to play in driving and advancing textbook and curriculum revision and reconciliation within Europe. In response to these points, Katarzyna Jez explained that EFREC had engaged in discussions with colleagues from countries outside Europe prior to the Conference, and EFREC partner organisations from – for example - Japan had provided input for the Conference and colleagues from South Africa are in attendance. She considered that appropriate wording could give greater emphasis and visibility to EFREC's international focus.

As well as proposing to expand the website's horizons and change EFREC's name from 'European Forum' to 'World Forum', IGOR KĄKOLEWSKI praised the planned website's layout and design, and asked whether it might be possible to provide content in other languages. STEFFEN SAMMLER explained that multilingual websites presented a difficult financial challenge in the long term. Noting that one aspect of the website's potential added value lies in the planned sustainable archiving of sources relating to bi- and multilateral work on textbooks, he set out the website's planned approach of presenting a short description of these sources in English followed by a link to the original document.

In Eckhardt Fuchs' view, the discussion up to this point had indicated that the various points on the website's planned menu were not distinguished sufficiently clearly from one another. He considered it important to use the *Resources* section for products of EFREC itself. On the idea of potentially renaming EFREC as a 'World' or 'Global Forum', Mr. Fuchs reminded the attendees of EFREC's primary objective of providing an umbrella organisation for activities based in Europe to the end of harnessing synergy effects. EFREC is also, he commented, an open forum for initiatives from other

parts of the world, and suggested the website seek to emphasise this more clearly without the organisation itself undergoing a complete name change.

Atif Rizvi shared this view, considering 'Global' too unspecific in the EFREC context, and stated that an alternative might be to remove 'European' from the organisation's name instead. He regarded it as advantageous to emphasise EFREC's principal purpose as establishing a forum for sharing ideas and experiences, which he would put in terms of [textbook/curriculum] 'revision by consensus in Europe'.

Thanking the discussion's participants for their comments, Patrycja Czerwinska assured them that the EFREC team working on the website would engage in thorough discussion of all feedback and suggestions. She requested that everyone remain aware of the level of resources available to the EFREC team to manage the workload associated with the website, and emphasised again that the proposal is currently at prototype stage.

Eckhardt Fuchs asked all those present whether they would be prepared to contribute to the website and provide it with information on their activities and any outcomes arising therefrom. Ms Topidi stressed the need for a social media strategy if the website is to gain a profile and come up in internet searches. In her view, EFREC's current name may present obstacles for its target group in identifying its potential relevance to them and finding it in the first place. Her suggestions for the *Resources* section included multimedia products, webinars and other materials with practical utility created by EFREC's participating organisations.

Katarzyna Jez noted the existence of technical methods for optimising the website's visibility and commented that clear descriptions of its categories would be a further helpful factor in terms of enabling interested parties to find it in a search. She described both the GEI and EFREC's collaborating organisations as possessing strong networks of which they could make use in terms of spreading the word about EFREC in general and its website in particular and emphasised the benefits of these organisations working closely together, including on making information available for publication on the website.

IGOR KAŁOLEWSKI set out the willingness of the Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin to become involved in the EFREC website and suggested that, for instance, digital teaching and learning modules developed in collaboration with the GEI on the basis of the joint Polish-German textbook might enrich the website's content. He thought that the centre would be able to provide essays in Polish on transnational textbooks, which could be translated into English for publication on the website. Another proposal, from ATIF RIZVI, was to include publications issued by the CELL Foundation on the topics of conflict and violence and on historical narratives. Mr Rizvi offered to arrange a separate meeting at any time to choose publications and other materials for the website, and advised that, in principle, the CELL Foundation's web developers would be willing to share their expertise.

Concluding the discussion, Volker Zimmermann nominated materials issued by the German-Czech Textbook Commission for inclusion on the website, and indicated that other initiatives in the area of Czech-German cooperation on textbooks may be of interest and relevance to EFREC. He raised the potential point of how to structure and publish the materials, and perceived significant added value in a collection in one place of all products, materials and publications arising from or relating to bi- and multilateral textbook projects, saving researchers and stakeholders the effort of identifying and locating them via numerous far-flung paths.

Themed panels on the education policy context

The Conference's second focal theme encompassed two parallel panels on the political context and framework of international work on textbooks and the formats in which it is organised.

Panel 2a: The role of the education policy context in international work on textbooks

Dr ÖNDER ÇETİN (GEI) provided an overview of the process that took place in the textbook discussions between Armenia and Turkey, including details of the Turkish view on the role played by the education policy context in the work of textbook and curriculum revision initiatives. Mr Çetin's input focused specifically on two aspects of the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation process. The first of these was how the education policy context manifests in curricula and textbooks; the second revolved around the ways in which bilateral projects and initiatives contribute to shaping the political frameworks and conditions around their work and to the revision of curricula or educational media. Önder Çetin explained that the Armenian-Turkish project is not an official 'textbook commission', but rather a collaboration among NGOs. In his view, the discussions that are taking place in the context of the collaboration are not easy, but do give cause for hope that normalisation of relations may be achievable. For example, the Turkish coordinator of a joint oral history project (Leyla Neyzi), who noted the sensitivity around the wording, which led to them not asking immediately about "Armenians" or omitting the term "genocide" during interviews or in project outputs. Continuing, he mentioned the various projects and workshops that have arisen from the dialogue between Armenia and Turkey in this context, taking an oral history approach to the local past on the basis of interviews with people who had experienced specific events, and noted an insight emerging from these, that the narrative espoused by local populations could in various instances diverge from the official accounts that predominate in curricula and textbooks. Mr Çetin further cited a handbook, *History Education in Turkey and Armenia: A Critique and Alternatives*, as an example of the outcomes of this collaborative work, which contains twelve guiding principles that offer an alternative perspective for history education and teaching methods, as well as guiding the preparation and development of textbooks. These principles such as "favouring plural voices or perspectives," "encouraging students to question the texts and evaluate the motivation behind the language used in the texts and its possible consequences," and opening up more space for the history of everyday life and local histories are applicable other bilateral cooperation projects in history education in similar contexts.

Responding to Mr Kaytchev's enquiry on the education policy context in the two countries and on whether the materials he had described focus exclusively on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Önder ÇETİN explained that approval processes for educational media take place under state supervision, creating a landscape in which new, inclusive approaches exist within a state-prescribed framework. He confirmed that the majority of the relevant debate focuses on portrayals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as highlighted by Mr Kaytchev. With the exception of the revision of the portrayal of the Assyrian community in 2013 in response to their reactions to their portrayal in the 10th Grade History textbooks in 2010, he did not know whether any specific initiative at the educational realm had direct impact in amending the state stipulations on curricula and textbooks that had been issued in 2002. Mr Çetin further added that he was aware of some contributions in nineteenth- and twentieth-century history made by the members of minority communities that had attained a place in educational media. Engagement with this period had the most potential to facilitate reconciliation between the two countries.

In reference to the discussion with Kyriaki Topidi that had taken place on the previous day, Steffen Sammler wondered which topics had achieved curricular status and asked about the extent to which European institutions such as the Council of Europe had attained success in realising these ideas in textbooks.

ÖNDER ÇETİN's reply indicated that the principles outlined [in *History Education in Schools in Turkey and Armenia*] have the potential to become part of a process of transformation or revision in this regard, but that progress in this area is impossible without making direct approaches to the political decision-makers who are involved in textbook development; it is imperative to get both sides on board, both those who seek to develop innovative approaches in textbook revision and those with the power to implement these changes. The early 2000s had seen strong pro-European tendencies in Turkey, including in its political arena, which generated financial support for a variety of educational projects, some of which centred methods such as multiperspectivity. A significant number of the coordinators of these initiatives are now holding leading positions in education faculties and supervising curriculum revisions; now is the time, considered Mr Çetin, to attempt to find out what had prompted these decision-makers to lend their support to such educational and historiographical innovations.

VIKTORIA AYGÜL (European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)) observed that civic education is one possible route to reconciliation, and highlighted the importance of providing school students with tools for recognising and addressing conflict in a dispassionate, factual manner. She cautioned, however, that the aim of fashioning 'civic education' out of history education alongside social sciences is an ambitious one. How exactly should this process be designed?

Mr ÇETİN highlighted first and foremost, of a unprejudiced perspective on the events in question in each case. He further reminded that conflict, frequently perceived as a destructive force, could also bring about opportunities for positive change – an aspect which many often forget. In this spirit, he added, we need to enable school students to see conflict as potentially enriching and as containing the potential to improve things, also as part of improving critical thinking. Önder Çetin also pointed to findings of recent research suggesting that teachers tend to avoid discussing conflictual topics in the classroom for fear of losing control of the debates that might ensue.

In reference to this, Kyriaki Topidi commented that, in view of the general international climate in this regard, it would seem important to intertwine bottom-up and top-down processes into the production of educational media. The state, she observed, remains the principal actor in this context, in light of the sociological premise that education in schools is an instrument of education in and for nation states. Further, Ms Topidi referenced the need to be aware of the cost/benefit factor for state actors and the necessity of exploring the nature of textbooks' impact on opinion formation – do textbooks produce narratives or vice versa? She additionally wondered whether a 'conflict-free perspective' in this area is in fact possible; multicultural societies, she stated, are always going to experience conflict, be it around principles, values or identities. For this reason, she suggested, it would make greater sense to prepare students at school for weighing up various factors and forming judgements from these; concluding, she considered that it may be the case that the capacity to 'navigate' conflict is a more realistic aim than is the creation of 'conflict-free zones'.

Concurring with Kyriaki Topidi, ÖNDER ÇETİN clarified his comments, advising that he was not proposing the creation of perspectives literally free of conflict, but rather envisaging the addition and contextualisation of an abstract level for an approach to conflict. He was of the view that it would be crucial to change the current negative perception of conflict and recognise its potential for generating judgements that draw on solid historical foundations; it would seem, he continued, both eminently sensible and highly constructive to equip learners with the skills they need to form their own judgements and raise their awareness of sociocultural difference and divergencies.

Naoum Kaytchev rounded off the discussion by requesting access to publications on issues around Armenian-Turkish initiatives in this area, to which ÖNDER ÇETİN replied that he would be happy to share his research findings on textbook and curriculum revision in Turkey.

Panel 2b: Organisational structures of multilateral work on textbooks in Europe

MILOŠ VUKANOVIĆ's (Association of History Educators of Montenegro / HIPMONT) contribution to the panel considered whether it might be possible to produce a shared history of the Balkan region. He reported a view of history [in the states of the Western Balkans] as a means to the assertion of national superiority rather than as a channel of reconciliation in the region, but pointed to indications of more positive change, such as an incipient increase in sensitive use of language. Admittedly, he noted, history education in the region tends to avoid difficult topics such as the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Despite these challenges, he was able to report that efforts to create a unified approach to teaching history are underway, to the end of realising a shared historical consciousness. Engagement with teachers, conducted with the support of NGOs, has, as he explained, enabled the emergence of a consensus on which topics to teach in the classroom and on the principle of centring the communication of historical facts rather than their interpretation.

Marcin Wiatr added that, as the Polish-German textbook project had shown, 'history' consists in various diverging interpretations of events, and that it is vital to provide students in school with methods for managing differing points of view. Concurring with this opinion on the importance of multiperspectivity, MILOŠ VUKANOVIĆ emphasised, as a caveat, the difficulty presented by the non-recognition of specific academic or juridical base facts by national representatives, and stressed that setting out differing perspectives is one thing, but negating academic or juridical base facts is unacceptable.

Responding to an enquiry on the current situation within the Polish-Ukrainian Textbook Commission, Prof KAROL SANÓJCA (Polish-Ukrainian Historical Commission) reported a drastic reduction in activities since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with contact currently limited to unofficial channels. Mr Sanójca added that dialogue in a spirit of equal value and esteem, beyond formal structures, provides a sound basis for overcoming doubts related to historical issues.

The question arose as to how the German-Polish Textbook Commission had handled times of crisis in the past, such as the period of martial law in Poland between 1981 and 1983. Prof HANS-JÜRGEN BÖMELBURG (German-Polish Textbook Commission) responded by advising that experience had taught the Commission to avoid losing contact with the other side on both the official and the personal level; the worst case may involve the suspension of institutional collaboration, but it is important to maintain personal contact among Commission members, which have the potential to foster communication outside and beyond state-sponsored or propagandistic narratives. In terms of facts and interpretations, current tendencies are making an appearance in Poland as elsewhere, outlined Mr Bömelburg. He recounted in this context the situation around the failure of volume 4 of the joint Polish-German textbook to receive official approval in Poland; Polish experts, in their statements on the book, had denied the fact that an intense debate is in progress around the pogrom at Jedwabne, notwithstanding which the textbook's authors had decided to publish the book without amendments to its content. He additionally emphasised the importance of the manner in which bilateral textbook commissions recruit or nominate their members. The German-Polish Textbook Commission co-opts its members on a reciprocal basis; delegating them from ministries can result in nominations being blocked.

Atif Rizvi observed that this discussion raises the question of EFREC's role in periods of crisis, and encouraged those present to observe a distinction between continuity of bi- and multilateral work in the area of textbooks during such crises and the institutional memory of this work. In his view, EFREC has the potential to act as a forum for reconnecting the experiences of the past with the challenges and demands of the present. An instructive example in this context came from Mr Zimmermann; he referenced the talks on textbooks between [the Federal Republic of] Germany and Czechoslovakia, that had commenced in 1967 and met a sudden end with the crushing of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968,

after which contact continued via personal connections. The official establishment of the German-Czech Textbook Commission, stated Volker Zimmermann, did not take place until 2002. This example served, he commented, to illustrate the crucial relevance of Mr Rizvi's point about pitching EFREC as an institution that can provide support to networks under threat.

Petro Kendzor expressed his confidence that the Polish-Ukrainian Textbook Commission is engaging in successful collaboration. Noting that the Ukrainian and Polish academics working in the Commission are analysing textbooks that are currently in use, he considered it highly desirable, going forward, for the Commission to become involved in processes around education policy and around curriculum and textbook development.

VOJTĚCH RIPKA asked whether the German-Polish Textbook Commission's members consider themselves representatives of their national communities of historians. In answer, Mr Bömelburg stated, for the German members, that they do not regard themselves as representatives of German national history as an academic discipline, that most of them specialise very closely in Eastern European history, and that awareness of Polish historiography is a predominant focus of the Commission. The situation is a different one, he added, in the case of those members of the Commission whose specialism is in history didactics; their work requires them to adhere more closely to nationally defined educational standards and didactic practices.

Responding to a question from IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI as to how the team conducting the 'Teaching Modern Southeast European History' project tackled the challenge of issuing four volumes containing teaching and learning materials in thirteen languages and involving eleven participating countries, MILOŠ VUKANOVIĆ detailed the project's focus - source materials on topics in regional history - and reported that it had found a positive response and received support at state level, but that a lack of available training for teachers had limited the materials' reach in schools.

[Joint briefing on the discussions in Panels 2a and 2b](#)

Steffen Sammler provided a summary of Panel 2a's contributions and discussion, adding considerations on the potential extent to which cost-benefit analysis might help convince governments or ministries to effect change in textbook development. Mr Bömelburg recommended in this context that EFREC analyse the opportunities for change in curricula and educational media that may arise from crises, being situations that call for the rapid development of new teaching and learning materials. Katarzyna Jez stressed that such materials should make use of experiences drawn from processes of societal change in the recent past, and added that teachers in Poland think back with wistful nostalgia to the textbooks of the 1990s, some of which featured better designs than did later publications.

[Themed panels on conflictual issues in the history classroom](#)

The Conference's third focal thematic area explored issues in history teaching with potential to ignite conflict.

[Panel 3a: Nation states' legitimising use of myths of origin](#)

The panel opened with a presentation from POLINA SULIMA (European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)) and VIKTORIA AYGÜL on a case study around Russian and Ukrainian myths of origin relating to the Kyivan Rus', myths that play an important part in legitimising the existence, identity formation and territorial claims of the states in each case, both in history textbooks and in political debates. Their work, which is ongoing, centres on history textbooks published in each country in the academic year 2020-21 and seeks to establish whether the books provide accurate reflections of the two countries' diverse populations, with over 150 distinct population groups in Ukraine and more than 190 in Russia. The analysis at the centre of the project engages with issues of gender, culture and

religion, as well as examining the interactions among historical personalities (male/female dichotomy) and cultural (princes, Slavic tribes) and religious groups (Christianity as a 'uniting' force versus 'invasive' Islam) that find entry into, or exclusion from, narratives on the establishment of the Rus'. Ms Sulima and Ms Aygül further described their analysis of the narratives employed in the textbooks (including oppositions such as 'Old Rus'' versus 'Kyivan Rus'-Ukraine', 'Ukrainians' versus the 'Russian population', and the 'Crimean Peninsula' versus the 'south-eastern areas of modern Ukraine') and the conflictual issues arising from these divergences.

Kyriaki Topidi followed this input with a contribution on the role of education around minorities as a mechanism of social cohesion and conflict prevention. She commenced by discussing legal documents on the protection and rights of minorities issued by international organisations (UN, Council of Europe, OSCE), and observing that they formulate the objective to which they give expression, to educate and inform about minorities, in a distinctly vague manner. For the most part, she continued, these international documents limit themselves to general references to issues of language, rather than setting out statements on the inclusion of minorities' representative bodies in curriculum development processes. Numerous studies, stated Ms Topidi, have raised problematic practices around the depiction of ethno-cultural diversity (such as the use of stereotypes and reductive representations centring on victimhood); this notwithstanding, curricula and educational media frequently omit to examine the root causes of systematic discrimination. Ms Topidi observes the current general trend in research around minorities as being to pursue more proactive approaches, studying aspects of identity such as gender and ethnic origin alongside socioeconomic factors. She spoke about the capacity of the concept of national identity to serve as a starting point for critiquing and rethinking the role of minorities and communicating a pluralistic notion of identity in the curricula and textbooks of post-conflict societies. In light of this, she suggested, teaching and learning materials should seek to gain a stronger focus on helping learners explore, identify and reflect on their own prejudices and engage with real-life, lived and experienced characteristics of minority cultures as component parts of their identities. In relation to societal cohesion and conflict prevention, Kyriaki Topidi put forward a number of suggestions for those creating and using materials for the classroom; they included putting a greater emphasis on intercultural content in school subjects stemming from the social sciences, regular textbook revision processes, multi-actor approaches to designing and using textbooks, and achieving a better understanding of teachers' actorship in the educational process.

In response to Eckhardt Fuchs' request for additional information on the Russian-Ukrainian textbook commission referred to above and the joint textbook project in this regard, POLINA SULIMA and VIKTORIA AYGÜL explained that this bilateral commission, established by the governments of the two countries, had come into being on the initiative of the Ukrainian side, and the textbook it had produced revolved largely around shared aspects of the nations' cultures and omitted engagement with a number of contested topics. The National Institute of Memory in Ukraine, founded in 2013/4, had called for the textbook to be denied approval, and an evaluation of the publication in Russia had resulted in its withdrawal from schools. These developments had marked the end of the commission's work.

IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI shared his view that constructions of multicultural pasts in the course of nation states' formation should be one of the central aspects of the conversations taking place in EFREC, and went on to describe the highly intense nature of the debate around the depiction of the multicultural Polish-Lithuanian Union in the context of the German-Polish textbook. IGOR KAŃKOLEWSKI described the textbook's chapter on this topic as an example of a skilfully handled shared narrative that, alongside its German and Polish audiences, addresses Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian learners and teachers, showing and telling a unifying heritage. He noted in this

context that the legitimising use of myths of origin is more prevalent in the former Communist states than in other European countries.

Drawing on the previous contribution to the discussion, Ms Topidi shared her vision of EFREC and of its potential to inspire our understanding of conflict and identity formation with a spirit of historical and cultural inclusivity. In her view, culturally diverse classrooms present new opportunities for history teaching. She defined EFREC's key strength as its capacity to reflect on the past from and via a multiplicity of points of view and advocate for history education to lead on developing media and materials for our present time, centred on gaining greater understanding and anticipating the time yet to come. As an example of an inspiring approach in a related field, she cited the method by which French schools deliver religious education – as a part of various different subjects – and commented that it may be of interest for conflict and peace education.

In reference to Igor Kačkolewski's question on how history textbooks depict the origins of the Russian and Ukrainian states, VIKTORIA AYGÜL explained that Russian textbooks consistently describe Ukraine as part of Russia's 'own', Slavic territory. These textbooks pay considerable attention to Prince Vladimir as a figure of high significance to Russia, who – the narrative runs – advanced the state's development by his conversion to the Orthodox faith. Olga of Kyiv, she added, takes on secondary importance in these textbooks. Supplementing Ms Aygül's remarks, POLINA SULIMA noted that Ukrainian textbooks provide a more detailed account of the Christianisation process, with Prince Volodymyr and his baptism at the narrative's centre, but make no mention of indigenous peoples living on Ukrainian territory. Olga, she added, appears as the narrative's only female character to receive an 'exciting' depiction.

Naoum Kaytchev remarked upon the range of similar patterns in evidence in numerous other European countries, with Bulgaria and North Macedonia being a case in point; the shared history of these countries in the early medieval period, he noted, was a subject of detailed and thorough discussion within the Bulgarian-North Macedonian Textbook Commission. Continuing, Mr Kaytchev referenced cultures of memory in Bulgaria and North Macedonia, both of which locate the origin of their people in the era of Christianisation. The Commission, he explained, had been able to reach agreement on the role of St Cyril and St Methodius and had proposed a shared public holiday. Among its most significant achievements, added Mr Kaytchev, was the consensus on joining together to honour St Clement and St Naum of Ohrid.

Making reference back to Igor Kačkolewski's question, Ms Topidi was in agreement that myths of origin are likewise a central element of Greece's culture and politics of memory, and pointed to the Greek constitution, which, she observed, evidences the link between education and the idea of nation in its enshrinement of education for the state's population, as descendants of the Ancient Greeks, on their roots in antiquity and the religion of that time. Ms Topidi further indicated that there is political will in Greece to promote the narrative of a homogeneous nation built on historic foundations.

Naoum Kaytchev was only partially in agreement with the premise of IGOR KAČKOLEWSKI's question as to whether myths of origin are more prominent in cultures and politics of memory in Eastern Central European countries than in Western Europe. Mr Kaytchev shared his observation that nineteenth-century personalities receive more public attention in these countries than do medieval 'heroes'.

Panel 3b: Crimes against humanity, experiences of genocide and resistance in the twentieth century
Petro Kendzor's presentation, providing insights into conflictual issues in the history classroom, commenced with his expression of thanks for the international solidarity extended to Ukraine and his

concern that the war being waged against his country by the Russian Federation would have far-reaching implications for history education. His input described a Ukrainian textbook project of 2012, *Razom na odnij zemli. Istoriya Ukraini bagatokulturna* [‘Together in one country: The multicultural history of Ukraine’], whose principal objective was to bring about mutual understanding among various ethnic groups in Ukraine and whose distinguishing feature is its use of textual sources on the basis of specific thematic foci, without a chronological approach, as opposed to text written by the textbook’s authors. One of these foci is ‘conflict in history’. As Mr Kendzor noted, the book is the first Ukrainian textbook to discuss – naming some examples – the pogrom committed against the Jews of Lviv in 1941, the massacres of Volhynia in 1943, and Ukraine’s cultural and ethnic diversity. The book’s underlying purpose, he stated, is to help young people develop empathy and advance their capacity to form critical judgements. He described the process of the book’s development as one entailing close and thorough discussion with numerous ethnic groups and national minorities – only the Russian side proved impossible to engage in dialogue, a reluctance which Mr Kendzor considered to stem from a lack of willingness to conceive of Russia as part of the historical narrative of Ukraine. A political debate, he added, ignited around the book immediately after its publication.

Marcin Wiatr wondered at this juncture whether it might be possible to use some chapters from this Ukrainian textbook in Polish history lessons with mixed Polish/Ukrainian classes in Wrocław. In answer, Prof KRZYSZTOF RUCHNIEWICZ (Willy Brandt Center for German and European Studies University of Wrocław) thought this might well be doable, reminding those present that learners from Ukraine [who were in Poland as refugees] faced the significant challenge of attending school in accordance with Polish law, which required them to have knowledge both of the Polish language and of the country’s history – an incomprehensible stipulation in view of the current situation. He explained further that online classes continue to run in Ukraine, and in some instances children are required to attend both these and lessons in Polish schools, placing enormous pressure on them to add to their traumatic experiences. It would, he suggested, be desirable to have the textbook referred to by Petro Kendzor translated, at least in part, and use it in Polish history classes for these learners; the idea of arranging training for Polish and Ukrainian teachers on the key issues in this context would also be worthy of consideration. In a closing thought, he noted the tendency in public discourse towards the instrumentalisation of matters from the shared Polish/Ukrainian past to the end of creating an atmosphere of fear; giving clear public visibility to all cooperation and collaboration efforts, he proposed, would work to counter this.

In reply, Mr Zimmermann, while conceding that textbooks are an important medium, commented that the more accessible a resource, the more adaptively it can respond to the particular needs of a situation. He also reminded the Conference that textbooks are often symbolically charged, a circumstance which gives rise to its own problems. Teaching and learning materials, he continued, are also subject to this risk, but have the advantage of being, first, quicker to create, second, able to concentrate on specific topics, and, additionally, more flexible, being subject to less rigid national administrative approval processes than are textbooks.

In this regard, Mr Ruchniewicz offered the suggestion that EFREC might help teachers access alternative forms of resources, such as websites and podcasts, as supplementary teaching and learning materials; while textbooks remain the preponderant basis of history teaching in Eastern Central Europe, he stated, it would make sense to be open to modern forms of media for use alongside them. He referred in this context to a highly popular publication issued by the University of Wrocław, *Forced Resettlement, Refugee Movements and Expulsion 1939–1959: Atlas on the History of Eastern Central Europe*, a diverse collection of sources telling the stories of Polish, Jewish, German and Ukrainian people caught up in these events.

Mindful of the diversity characterising debates around conflictual and controversial topics in and around textbooks, Atif Rizvi proposed harnessing the expertise within EFREC to the end of developing analytical methods and tools for the study of these controversies, which could enable EFREC to become a neutral space for the independent analysis of conflict and a forum for parties to conflict to come together in an arena free from bias, exchange ideas on an equal footing, and create institutional memory undergirded by evidence-based academic methodology. Marcin Wiatr, concurring, named the provision of digital teaching and learning materials developed on a sound academic basis as an important objective of EFREC. Petro Kendzor pointed out in this context that this would help broaden the debate around textbooks, extending its horizons from a limited focus on academics and educators; as such, the discussion would need to include learners and their experience with media outside the school setting. He saw a task for EFREC in this regard as being to determine the influence of educational and other forms of media, parents, and pop culture on young people's historical consciousness.

Joint briefing on the discussions in Panels 3a and 3b

Steffen Sammler, summarising the discussion that took place in Panel 3a, noted its comparative focus on myths of foundation/origin in Ukrainian and Russian textbooks. Reporting back on Panel 3b, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz mentioned the presentation of the Ukrainian textbook and the discussion of three potential areas of activity for EFREC.

Eckhardt Fuchs wondered whether the de-rigueur groundwork for academics and educators seeking to plan bi- and multilateral textbook projects should include engagement with cultural diversity in the societies of their own nations. In response, POLINA SULIMA raised the numerous challenges facing Ukraine in this regard, commenting that the country is home, inter alia, to people who identify with the Russian ethnic minority alongside those who identify as Ukrainian, but regard Russian as their first language. These circumstances, she stated, make it difficult to bring everyone together to engage in dialogue on an equal footing. Continuing, she described the minorities in Ukraine who have no access to Ukrainian textbooks in their first languages - the Bulgarian minority, for instance, has to use textbooks produced in Bulgaria – a situation which makes it impossible to ensure that all groups are working from the same historical narrative. The lack of a thorough, fundamental process of facing up to the past in Ukraine exacerbates these difficulties.

Petro Kendzor confirmed that Ukraine was striving to introduce a European dimension into national politics and pointed to efforts currently in progress. He hopes for a positive development going forward, stating that Ukraine is a multicultural society and it is vital for it to work towards a state of living together in harmony.

Concluding discussion

Eckhardt Fuchs called for ideas to help advance EFREC's operations, citing the development of its website as a vital step forward and promising that the project team would continue to discuss its infrastructure and key terms. He noted that the website's dual purpose, to serve as a space for the exchange of information and to make available to stakeholders the currently scattered wealth of resources on international textbook and curriculum revision, had emerged clearly, and appealed to all EFREC's collaborating organisations to do their essential part in ensuring its ability to meet these objectives. In the coming months, the team will develop robust, sustainable workflows whose purpose will be to enable the running of the website as a platform for communication. In addition to this, Mr Fuchs emphasised the necessity of remaining in constant contact with EFREC's partner institutions. He listed matters yet to be decided as that of a specific approach to drawing up best practice examples and the weighting of topics and issues by their relevance. The next step, in Mr Fuchs' view, should be to share thoughts on how we might implement the products of textbook

projects in practice and on arranging and targeting training for teachers in this context. He noted further questions requiring answers, as follows: What textbook approval processes are there, and what do they involve? Can we share any experiences of these challenges in the various countries where people have worked, and any accounts of tackling them successfully? Looking to the future with confidence that EFREC's network will expand, Mr Fuchs set out the need to branch off in terms of topics and regions. Prof Ruchniewicz, taking up this theme, emphasised the centrality of an overarching hub for the exchange of ideas and information, a point of collection for the members' experiences which would enable others to access and draw on them. He was also convinced of the need to continuously expand the thematic scope of EFREC's work. Observing that the current war in Europe is reactivating memories of past wars in the continent's older generations, he posed the question of how to cope with these traumas and returning experiences of violence or migration. His vision was for EFREC to potentially provide a structure for dialogue around these issues.

Referencing EFREC's spectrum of topics and themes, IGOR KĄKOLEWSKI added the point that multiperspectivity and the juxtaposition and confrontation of divergent views are of substantive importance in this regard. Reminding his audience of the conference to take place at the GEI next year, *Considering Perspectives in Educational Media: Conditions – Negotiation Processes – Opportunities*, at which EFREC is to have a visible presence, he commented that the debate in this area continues to reveal a range of diverging views – often on a national basis – on multiperspectivity and the use of contrasting perspectives, hence, he observed, the need for continuous dialogue in EFREC. He then introduced a further point of relevance to history didactics, namely the significance attaching to the history of border regions, charged with transnational intertwinements. The German-Polish textbook, he noted, reads this issue as a matter of 'regions that divide and forge links/bring together'.

Atif Rizvi urged those present not to lose sight of EFREC's objectives. As an organisation in its early stages, he said, EFREC needs resources, in terms of people, funds and intellectual inspiration, and analysis is required to identify what, in the way of such resources, is actually available to it – for an organisation can only pursue such objectives as it has previously set out and specified. Mr Fuchs explained that it is precisely this on which the project team will embark next. He reassured the Conference that there are funds for the website, translations, contracts for services as required, and for holding conferences, and stated that, drawing on the brainstorming that had taken place at this kick-off Conference, the team would create and operationalise a schedule and overview of milestones and make it available to the network.

The EFREC team rounded off the discussion, and the Conference, by thanking all participants for the lively exchange of thoughts and ideas.

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