

The European dimension in education in geography textbooks for Croatian primary schools: Lessons learned and future expectations

Vignjević Korotaj, Bojana; Ledić, Jasminka; Miočić, Ivana

Source / Izvornik: **Metodički ogledi : časopis za filozofiju odgoja, 2020, 27, 171 - 192**

Journal article, Published version

Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)

<https://doi.org/10.21464/mo.27.2.11>

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:186:041342>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#)/[Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-02-20**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - FHSSRI Repository](#)



THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION IN GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOKS FOR CROATIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

Bojana Vignjević Korotaj, Jasminka Ledić, Ivana Miočić

Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Rijeci, Hrvatska
bojana.vignjevic@ffri.uniri.hr; jledic@ffri.hr;
ivana.miocic@uniri.hr

Received: 20 January 2020

Croatia's accession to the EU brought changes in educational policies by introducing the concept of the European Dimension in Education (EDE). EDE has successfully found its way into the new Croatian national curriculum, however, there has been no comprehensive analysis of whether it has been introduced into teaching materials (textbooks). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to determine if the European Dimension in Education is present in geography textbooks for primary schools, as well as to explore how it is represented in them. The results of research show that the idea of the European Dimension in Education is most commonly present in terms of factual knowledge about Europe, which does not motivate teachers and pupils to actively and critically discuss issues related to Europe and the European Union.

Key words: *European Dimension in Education, geography textbooks, comparative analysis of textbooks, primary school*

1. Introduction

The process of European integration poses a challenge for schools – how to prepare pupils for life in the European multinational and multilingual context? Accordingly, there has been considerable debate as to whether the European Dimension in Education (EDE) could serve as a response to the challenges of European integration (European Parliament, 2016).

The European Dimension in Education is founded in the documents of European Union institutions and the Council of Europe; it is most commonly perceived as a value construct and defined as an added value to educational content. Schmeinch (2013) describes EDE through the categories of knowledge (basic and interdisciplinary knowledge, culture, history, geography, politics), understanding (understanding the interdependence of relationships within Europe and the world, understanding the consequences of one's own actions related to the future development of the European Union as well as one's personal life and the lives of the European people in general), attitudes (clear, constructive, and critical attitudes towards European ideas), and skills (practical skills for lifelong learning such as languages, communication, social and geographical skills). On the other hand, Diestro Fernández and Valle Lopez (2015) highlight three important elements of the European dimension: the European identity as euro-global and open to the world; cultural interaction – interculturalism among people and European regions; European citizenship – in the political and legal context, in the context of active democracy, Europeanization and sustainable development. It is apparent that different authors take different approaches in defining the concept, which can be attributed to the inherent elusiveness of the concept as well as its tendency to continuously evolve (Ledić and Turk, 2012). In this paper, the European Dimension in Education is defined as specific knowledge, skills, and values on which pupils should be educated in order to become aware of and accept the advantages and challenges of life in Europe. From our standpoint, the concept of EDE should be integrated into national educational policies and curricula due to its potential to prepare pupils for an active and critical role in a dynamic and ever-changing context.

Apple (1993) claims that curricula are under the contextual influence of political, economic, and ideological changes, which presupposes that the process of European integration will be reflected in national curricula (and consequently in textbooks). Inspired by this idea, we have established that national curricula have actually changed under the influence of social and political changes (specifically in the context of changes that occurred after the European integration process); we therefore wanted to explore whether changes to curricula are accordingly reflected in textbooks. In the context of specific school subjects,

we expect geography textbooks to include the concept of EDE because we believe that *history and geography textbooks attempt to explain our roots, how and why we happen to be living in a certain place, and how that place can be described and characterised – in other words, who we really are* (Pingel, 2010, 7). Additionally, geography is perceived in the literature (Savvides, 2008; Resnik Planinc, 2012; Schmeinck, 2013; Banjac and Pušnik, 2014) and the reports of European institutions as one of those school subjects within which EDE can be best promoted.

Therefore, this paper aims to determine if the European Dimension in Education is present in geography textbooks for primary schools and in which way. Taking into account that there has been a lack of similar research in the national and international context, this paper may serve as a contribution to the process of understanding and implementing the EDE concept in Croatian schools; it may also be relevant in the international research context as a contribution to discussions about the challenges of EDE implementation in the educational policy agenda.

2. The European Dimension in Education in (national) curricula

In line with the aim of this paper, it is important to address processes and changes in national education policies since the early 1990s that have influenced the content of school textbooks. *The Framework Curriculum for Primary Schools in the Republic of Croatia of June 1993* was created just after Croatia gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This political and social change is well documented in the Framework Curriculum, whereby the aim of geography (which was of interest to our analysis) is for students to get to know and love their country, gain basic knowledge about the Earth, familiarise themselves with the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the modern world, and to notice the need for mutual cooperation and human solidarity in the world. Noticeable changes in this curriculum as compared to former ones include a focus on the national identity and relinquishing all topics related to Yugoslavia and the SSSR, as well as the appearance of the topic of European integration.

In 2005, a document called *A Guide to the Croatian National Educational Standard* gave way to another important document called the

Teaching Plan and Programme for Primary Education in 2006. The plan and programme, among other things, introduced content, aims, and educational achievements for all primary school subjects. In principle, this document promotes the idea of European coexistence as well as intercultural understanding and European citizenship. However, when taking a closer look at geography, it is evident that the focus is still more on promoting national pride and identity.

The National Curriculum Framework for Pre-School Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education of July 2010 (NCF) is another document presented by the Ministry that marked a transition into the competence-based system, thus aiming to keep pace with the curricular policies of other modern education systems. The aim of the *National Curriculum Framework* was to provide a stepping stone for creating subject curricula. The NCF did not precisely define teaching content for each subject, but instead provided the outcomes pupils had to achieve in different fields of study. The NCF was created during Croatia's EU accession process, which resulted in visible affiliations to the documents and ideas of European educational policies. Additionally, Croatia was strongly positioned on the European continent as a potential member of the European Union. In line with this, the term European Dimension in Education was used for the first time as one of the underlying principles of the National Curriculum Framework. Geography topics within the NCF can be found within the natural sciences, as well as the social sciences and humanities. The latter entails topics such as social systems and structures, European integration and globalisation processes, Europe and the European Union, and the position of Croatia in the context of European integration. However, even though NCF was intended as a stepping stone for the creation of subject curricula, the aforementioned *Teaching Plan and Programme for Primary Education* of 2006 has remained the formally relevant document.

Still, the relevance of the NCF is evident in the *Strategy of Education and Technology*, which was published in 2014 in order to introduce the *Comprehensive Curricular Reform for Early and Pre-School, Primary, and Secondary Education*. Specifically, the Strategy suggests that comprehensive curricular reform begins with modernising and innovating the NCF, as well as harmonising different policy documents (*Strategy of Education and Technology*, 2014, 38). The Strategy utilises

the definition of values, goals, and principles from the NCF, with the European dimension of education being one of the values mentioned. Moreover, the importance of the NCF is further emphasized by the National Curriculum Framework (February 2016, drafted during work on the Comprehensive Curriculum Reform) and the National Curriculum Framework (a draft created after public consultation in December 2017), whereby both documents are based on the characteristics of the education system determined by the Education Act (2010), the National Framework Curriculum (2011), and the *Education, Science, and Technology Strategy* (2014). However, at the formal level, the fact is that the curriculum has not changed for 13 years, and that Croatia became a member of the European Union during this period (in 2013).

Only recently, in early 2019, the *Teaching Plan and Programme for Primary School of 2006* was replaced with new subject curricula. The new *Curriculum for the Subject of Geography for Primary Schools and Secondary (Grammar) Schools in the Republic of Croatia* (2019) emphasises that teaching geography means promoting space as an identity foundation. More specifically, it develops personal, local, regional, national, and also supranational and global identity. From the perspective of the European Dimension in Education, it is somewhat surprising that the European identity is not mentioned in the document explicitly; however, it is stated that the fundamental value of learning and teaching geography is to develop curiosity about the world and to inspire children to build a better present and future for Croatia, Europe, and the world. By comparing the *Teaching Plan and Programme for Primary School of 2006* and the *Decision adopting the Curriculum for the Subject of Geography for Primary Schools and Secondary (Grammar) Schools in the Republic of Croatia of 2019*, it can be concluded that significant changes are visible both in the learning and teaching content and in defining and achieving educational outcomes.

It is evident that the new geography curriculum represents numerous changes compared to the Plan and Programme of 2006. Given that the new curriculum has been implemented in Year 5 in the 2019/2020 school year, future research will show whether geography textbook authors have implemented the aforementioned changes, especially in Year 7 textbooks in terms of the European Dimension in Education.

Apple's notion (1993) that a curriculum is not simply a "neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation" (Apple, 1993, 222), but is rather heavily influenced by the current ideology and derived from "cultural, political and economic conflicts, tensions and compromises" (Apple, 1993, 222) proves accurate in the Croatian national context. Specifically, changes after Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia, as well as during and after the process of Croatia's accession to the European Union, left a visible mark on the restructuring and redefinition of the principles and objectives of the educational system, as well as on the curricular content of various subjects. It can be concluded that textbooks are *bearers of curricular content* (Ivić, Pešikan, Antić, 2013), and it is thus to be expected that changes in the national curricula are reflected in textbooks.

2.2. The European Dimension in Education in textbook research

Issitt (2004) considers textbooks to be significant empirical material that often reflects the current (ideological, value, political) orientation of a given society. The author states that textbooks have epistemological relevance in terms of providing the right and wrong understanding of the world, and that they are used to record national history and the culture of remembrance, as well as to conceal national sins and create animosity towards others. In line with this, Malatesta and Squarcina (2011) conducted a qualitative geography textbook analysis in Italian schools, the results of which indicates the polarisation of countries into 'us' – Europe, and 'them' – other countries, referred to as the 'Othering' process. They conclude that Europe is often (visually) represented as a well-defined geographical area with a common culture, history, and political institutions. On the other hand, countries outside the EU are often represented as poor and dangerous, and are left unnamed on geopolitical maps. Furthermore, while listing challenges regarding content in geography textbooks, Biilman (1997) highlights the fact that some smaller European countries are often omitted from textbooks, and when they are represented, it is usually due to geographical particularities or tourist attractions. Banjac and Pušnik (2014) analysed the representation of European symbols in civic education and ethics textbooks in

Slovenia. European symbols (such as the European flag and anthem) contribute to forming behaviour and identities, and are used to instigate public support for European integration as well as a sense of Europeanism, European culture, space, and identity. The analysis indicates that the topic and symbolism of the European Union have been gradually and successfully introduced into textbooks in the Slovenian national context (Banjac and Pušnik, 2014).

No comprehensive textbook analyses have been conducted in the Croatian national context regarding the European Dimension in Education, however, several authors have taken a noteworthy interest in geography textbook analysis. Pajtak (2018) indicates that the content of history and geography textbooks can relate to the broader social context. She concludes that the history and geography textbooks used in the mid- and late 1990s in Croatia served to strengthen the national identity in the context of nationalist ideology, and were often biased and expressed negative attitudes towards Others (including national and religious minorities). Koren (2001) analysed history and geography textbooks in primary schools in order to establish how national minorities in Croatia are portrayed (especially in the context of post-war events and attitudes towards the Serbian minority). Her analysis demonstrates that textbooks more often than not focus pupils' opinions in a particular direction rather than encouraging them to develop their own attitudes and to critically reflect on the people and events around them.

3. Research aims and methodology

This study aims to determine if the European Dimension in Education is present in geography textbooks for primary schools,¹ as well as to explore how it is represented in them. We decided to analyse changes related to the presence and representation of EDE indicators in a se-

¹ The Croatian education system includes pre-school (ISCED 0), basic (ISCED 1 & 2), secondary (ISCED 3), and tertiary (ISCED 5 & 6) education. The levels of education in the Croatian education system are: pre-school education, corresponding to ISCED 0; primary education (first four years of basic education), corresponding to ISCED 1; lower secondary education (last four years of basic education), corresponding to ISCED 2 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2003). In Croatia, primary and lower secondary education consists of eight years of compulsory schooling; this structure has not changed since Croatia's independence.

lection of geography textbooks from the 1997/98 school year and the 2014/15 school year.

The textbooks from the 1997/98 school year are based on the 1993 Framework Curriculum, written shortly after Croatia won its independence, while the textbooks from 2014/15 school year are based on the *Teaching Plan and Programme* for primary schools from 2006. As noted earlier, even though the 2010 National Framework Curriculum did not have formal strength, its influence on textbooks should not be dismissed due to the fact that the 2010 *School Textbook Act* prescribes that textbooks should be based on both national and subject curricula. It is also important to note that this period marked the end of the Croatian EU integration process.² Given the difference in Croatia's political status with regard to the EU across the span of 17 years between the analysed textbooks, we worked under the assumption that the analysis would display differences in the representation of elements of the EDE. We also took into account the complexity and potential time span necessary to implement new textbooks in schools. This is why we selected textbooks that were used four years after a given curriculum came into force. In 1993, Croatia did not have a legal act regulating school textbooks; in 2010, the School Textbook Act entered into force and prescribed that new textbooks are generally selected for a duration of 4 years. As noted previously, a new subject curriculum is now in force, however, due to the fact that it has not yet been implemented for all years of primary school (Europe as a topic appears in the Year 7), we opted to leave the analysis of the new geography textbooks for future research.

We decided to conduct textbook analysis since it offers the possibility of exploring information, meanings, and values that are being promoted through national educational policy. The textbook analysis was conducted by employing *content analysis* as a point of view (exploring what the text tells us about the EDE), the *qualitative method* (conducting an analysis that aims to reveal the content and mode of presenta-

² Relations between Croatia and the EU intensified in 2000, when the Office for European Integration transformed into the Ministry of European Integration. Croatia submitted its application for membership in the European Union on 21 February 2003. Accession negotiations formally opened on 3 October 2005. Croatia's negotiations ended on 30 June 2011, followed by the signing of a Treaty of Accession on 9 December 2011 and accession to the European Union on 1 July 2013.

tion of EDE, as well as the underlying assumptions and messages), and the *deductive approach* (using an established grid of external categories / EDE indicators to which the textbook is expected to respond) (Pingel, 2010). The aforementioned EDE indicators were developed by Ledić, Miočić, and Turk (2016); they have been adopted as the conceptual framework for this analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. Indicators of the EDE (source: Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016)

Basic content of the EDE (What?)	Implementation mechanisms/processes (How?)
European values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting (European) values in education: tolerance, pluralism, democracy, equality, pacifism, solidarity, freedom, and human rights
European citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness about the role, rights, responsibilities, and possibilities of European citizens • promoting the concept of active citizenship
European identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness about the local, national, and European identity, and the connections between them • respecting different cultural and ethnic identities (intercultural understanding) • developing a sense of political, social, and cultural affiliation with Europe
Multilingualism and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning (European) languages in the context of developing linguistic competencies as well as intercultural competencies and understanding • developing the ability to learn and work in a multinational environment • fostering the mobility of pupils, students, and teachers • providing the possibility of international interaction

<p>Development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes “about Europe, in Europe, and for Europe”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforcing history, geography, and foreign language teaching (“<i>wherever possible</i>”) • promoting knowledge of Europe in a geographical, historical, and social context (characteristics of countries, similarities and differences between countries) • promoting the knowledge and understanding of EU policy and its relationship with the world at large • creating public awareness of Europe (its history, the developmental course of its political and cultural beliefs, economic systems, differences, and the role of the individual)
--	---

Regardless of the tendency for EDE indicators to be as precisely categorised and defined as possible, they do in fact overlap and mutually complement each other, meaning they are not inseparable constructs. Furthermore, EDE indicators in textbooks are rarely stated in an explicit, direct manner, therefore the indirect occurrence of these indicators must also be taken into account.

The textbook analysis in this study was conducted in the following manner. In the first phase, all members of the research team independently/individually reviewed the textbooks and conducted a preliminary content analysis of geography textbooks for Years 5, 6, 7, and 8 of primary school in the selected school years (8 different textbooks). The results of the first phase of analysis show that the European Dimension indicators are rare or absent entirely from textbooks for Years 5 and 6; it was thus decided to eliminate these textbooks from further analysis. We decided to take a closer look at the geography textbooks for Year 7 and Year 8 in the chosen time span (four different textbooks in total). The content for Year 7 focuses on the European continent, while the content for Year 8 refers to the geography of Croatia and its relationship to the rest of the world. In the second phase of the research process, each member of the research team individually conducted a qualitative content analysis and employed the deductive approach by coding textbook content that could be placed under one or more of the five EDE indicators. After this, through a series of discussions, the research team

took a consensual decision on the occurrence of EDE indicators in the chosen textbooks.

4. Research results – geography textbook analysis in primary school

As an introduction to the research results, the table below (Table 2) shows descriptive characteristics of the textbooks chosen and analysed.³ Both Year 7 textbooks share two authors (out of three), and the topics the two textbooks cover are almost identical. The only clear difference between the two editions is the number of pages. It is interesting to note that the earlier edition of the textbook entails a special chapter on the topic of European integration, which the more recent edition no longer contains. The two Year 8 textbooks were written by different authors. Even though both editions cover the geographical characteristics of Croatia, the more recent edition also contains a specific chapter on Croatia's relations with the rest of the world (the political dimension).

4.1. Comparison of geography textbooks for Year 7

The main topic of the geography textbook for Year 7 used in 1997/1998 is Europe, i.e. the European continent. Generally speaking, the authors adopt a very positive attitude with regard to Europe throughout different subchapters.

The theme of this textbook as a whole significantly contributes to the idea of implementing the European Dimension in Education into geography classes, particularly referring to the indicator *Development of knowledge, skills and attitudes 'about Europe, in Europe, and for Europe'*. However, it should be noted that the textbook mainly serves

³ The textbooks chosen were commonly used in schools during the 2014/15 school year. There were four officially approved geography textbooks in the 2014/15 school year, both for Year 7 and Year 8; of these, we chose *Gea 3* and *Gea 4*, which were used in more than 50% of schools. No data is available on the extent to which the textbooks chosen for the 1997/98 school year were used in schools, so we decided to choose textbooks from the same publisher – Školska knjiga, the Croatian publisher with the longest tradition of publishing school textbooks.

the purpose of transmitting knowledge (facts, information, and statistical data), and not developing specific skills and attitudes about Europe.

Table 2. Descriptive characteristics of the textbooks chosen and analysed

Textbook specification		1997/98 school year	2014/15 school year
Year 7	Textbook	Ilić, M., Orešić, D. i Čečura, Ž. (1997), <i>Geography 3: textbook for Year 7 of primary school</i> , Zagreb: Školska knjiga.	Ilić, M., Orešić, D. (2014), <i>Gea 3: geography textbook for Year 7 of primary school</i> , Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
	The main units of the textbook	General characteristics of Europe; Western Europe; Northern Europe; Central Europe; Southern Europe; South Eastern Europe; Eastern Europe; European integration processes; Geographical problems of the contemporary development of Europe.	General characteristics of Europe; Countries of Western Europe; Countries of Northern Europe; Countries of Central Europe; Countries of Southern Europe; Countries of South Eastern Europe; Countries of Eastern Europe; Contemporary Europe.
	Number of pages	153	201
Year 8	Textbook	Curić, B., Curić, Z. (1997), <i>Geography 4 – textbook for Year 8 of primary school</i> , Zagreb: Školska knjiga.	Tišma, I. (2014), <i>Gea 4: geography textbook for Year 8 of primary school</i> , Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
	The main units of the textbook	Geographical characteristics of Croatia, Topographic maps; Coastal Croatia; Mountainous Croatia and Lowland Croatia	Geographical maps and orientation; General characteristics of Croatia; Relief; climate; vegetation and waters of Croatia; Population; Croatia and the world; Coastal Croatia; Mountainous Croatia and Lowland Croatia.
	Number of pages	112	178

The unit entitled European Integration Processes, which consists of three chapters (*Uniting Europe, the European Union and its role in the world*, and *The transport system and connecting Europe*) is of particular significance in terms of contributing to knowledge acquisition about the European Union. It includes a detailed description of the historical course of the European Union's development, a list of EU institutions, and a description of the economic importance of European unification. Relations between Croatia and the EU are not specifically described, which is understandable as Croatia had not yet begun its EU accession process. Descriptions of the European Union selected from this unit are as follows:

“... It can be seen, from everything stated above, that the EU is the most successful intergovernmental system in Europe. (...) The majority of other European countries want to join such a powerful alliance, however, it is not easy to obtain membership in the EU.” (p. 139)

The European Dimension in Education indicator related to European citizenship is apparent in the textbook's content, although to a lesser extent. This again relates to basic information about the concept of European citizenship; no incentives for deeper reflection on the opportunities, rights, and responsibilities of European citizens are apparent. The European citizenship indicator was identified in the following statements:

“... in most European countries one nation prevails. However, ethnicity should be distinguished from citizenship in a given country. No European country has only one nationality. This would be contrary to fundamental freedoms, human rights, and the freedom of movement. Regardless of affiliation to the prevailing or other nation, every individual citizen exercises their civil rights in their country.” (p. 17)

“... The EU strives to create a union of countries with a single foreign policy, defence, currency (i.e. ECU), and laws. Thus, the citizens of the member states would also become European citizens.” (p. 139)

Topics promoting the ideas of cultural diversity and the European identity are present in the textbook content. They point to the indicator of the European identity and mutual understanding among the nations of Europe, albeit implicitly. This is especially visible in the chapter entitled *European nations and countries*, which focuses on European cultural and linguistic diversity, the use of different scripts, and the re-

ligious diversity of Europe's nations. The variety and diversity of the European continent is evident through other chapters of the textbook as well.

It can be asserted that the specific subject matter of the analysed geography textbook for Year 7 from the 1997/98 school year contributes to the development of knowledge about Europe and the European Union, while promoting the importance of understanding the notion of citizenship and European diversity to a lesser extent. Other indicators of the EDE (European values, multilingualism, and mobility) are not apparent in the textbook content.

The main topic of the Year 7 geography textbook used in the 2014/2015 school year is also Europe. Compared with the previously analysed textbook, this textbook features fewer descriptions of Europe's specificities and the writing style is more factual.

It is interesting to note that, regardless of rapid social, economic, and technological progress, Europe is described in the same manner as almost 17 years earlier; this is evident in the following statement, which is identical to the one in the textbook from 1997/98:

“... Today, when developed world economies are based on the circulation of people, capital, and goods, Europe's favourable position fosters a successful economy and makes it one of the most developed parts of the world.” (p. 14)

The *Contemporary Europe* chapter substantially coincides with the content of the *European integration processes* chapter from the earlier edition of the textbook. The subchapter titles in both textbooks mostly correspond, however the amount of text in the newer edition is reduced. The newer edition contains an added chapter about Croatia and the European Union, which includes a brief description of the situation in Croatia after the Croatian War of Independence, followed by Croatia's inclusion in other European organisations (such as NATO, The Council of Europe) and the EU accession process. The presented content contributes only to the level of knowledge about the European Union, while other aspects (developing skills and attitudes) are completely neglected. The importance of the European Union for Croatia is portrayed as follows:

“... The progress of Croatia is closely related to inclusion in globalization processes, whereby inclusion in the European and global market under favourable conditions is extremely important. Thus, **since its independence**,

despite numerous difficulties, Croatia has striven to be included in European integration as quickly as possible.” (p. 180)

“... **The EU is Croatia’s most important foreign trade partner,**⁴ and that is why EU membership is a logical for Croatia to enter international economic flows as its natural orientation.” (p. 183)

Furthermore, part of the text refers to European values as an indicator of the European Dimension in Education, which was not explicit in the previously analysed textbook. It is stated that:

“... Democratisation, rule of law, and freedom are the main prerequisites for EU membership.” (p. 181)

The similarity in content between the two textbooks is apparent in the analysis of the chapter entitled *Numerous nations and countries* which, in terms of content, corresponds to the *European peoples and countries* chapter from the previous edition. The chapter describes the diversity of nations, languages, religion, and scripts, which implicitly suggests the idea of the diversity of European identities. In this context, the subchapter *People want to come to Europe* must be noted, as it describes migration processes proposing that Europe is a desirable place to live.

The analysis and comparison of these two textbooks indicates that the main purpose of both textbooks is to transfer facts and information about Europe to pupils. The textbook content does not explicitly contribute to the development of European values, identity, active citizenship, multilingualism, or mobility. The main difference between the two editions is primarily related to the amount of content, the earlier edition being more comprehensive. The issue of Croatia and the European Union is included in the newer edition of the textbook, however the information provided is scarce. It can be concluded that the differences between the textbooks do not sufficiently portray differences in Croatia’s relationship with the European Union.

⁴ The highlighted words are indicated in the same manner as in the textbooks.

4.2. Comparison of geography textbooks for Year 8

The geography textbook used in Year 8 in the 1997/98 school year covers the topic of Croatia. Its content displays noticeable ideas promoting awareness of the national identity, whereas topics related to the European Union are implicit in meaning. In the subchapter entitled *Croatia and international integration*, Croatia is regarded as a member of the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the International Monetary Fund, the International Olympic Committee, and the regional Alpe-Adria community. The European Union is described as:

“... undoubtedly the leading economic and political association and the headquarters of European unity. It aims to bring life to the idea of uniting the countries of Europe through a common foreign policy, defence, money (which currency?), laws...” (p. 27)

This is followed by additional information about the European Union, however, the focus is exclusively on communicating knowledge about the European Union and, to a certain extent, encouraging positive attitudes regarding the possibility of Croatia’s accession to the European Union. Nonetheless, the textbook provides a limited amount of information without any topics referring to raising awareness about Europe and the understanding of the politics behind the European Union.

In the context of raising awareness of the local, national, and European identity and their interconnectedness (the indicator *European identity*), topics are present related to raising awareness of the national identity, but not those regarding the European identity or the connection between the two. This is apparent at the very beginning of the textbook, where the author addresses the pupils in a text entitled “Traveling through our beautiful Croatia”; the author also states ‘... interesting graphics and attractive photographs will prove that the Croatian national anthem ‘Our Beautiful Homeland’ is completely justified’ (p. 4).

The textbook also contains content related to the Croatian War of Independence in terms of the causes and consequences of the war, as well as the suffering it caused:

“Serbian immigration intensified particularly after the establishment of the common Yugoslav state in 1918, which the Croatian people never accepted as their own. These Serbs were mostly members of the army, police, administration, executives, and politicians (officials) with many privileges.” (p. 18)

“Up until Croatia’s declaration of independence, Croatian emigrants faced numerous difficulties. Under the influence of Austro-Hungarian and then Yugoslavian (greater-Serbian) politics, there was no sensitivity to the problems of the Croats.” (p. 24)

It should be noted that national symbols such as the coat of arms and flag are also present in the textbook (p.5), as is a picture of the Croatian flag on the UN building (p.27) in the subchapter entitled *Croatia and international integration*.

Topics portraying the causes and consequences of the war, as well as an emphasis on national pride and identity, are noticeable throughout the textbook, while topics related to the EU have only an informative role and are scarcely represented. The aforementioned quotes are in line with the tendency that Koren (2001) and Pajtak (2018) have found in their research, which indicates that the purpose of textbooks used in the 1990s was mainly to strengthen the national identity and to focus pupils’ opinions in a certain direction rather than to foster critical reflection on the topics at hand.

The geography textbook used in Year 8 of primary school in the 2014/2015 school year also covers the topic of Croatia. The topics related to the European Dimension in Education are also implicit, although somewhat more comprehensive than in the previously analysed textbook. The subchapter entitled *Statehood and international recognition* contains information about the dates when Croatia attained statehood and sovereignty and some important events after Croatia’s recognition, including the following: “On 1 July 2013, Croatia became the 28th **member of the European Union**” (p. 25).

The subchapter entitled *Croatia and European organisations* is almost entirely dedicated to the topic of the European Union and the process of Croatian accession to the EU. There are brief explanations of Croatia’s EU accession process; the date of accession is also re-stated. All the aforementioned content is related to the indicator *Development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes about Europe, in Europe, and for Europe*, but the sole purpose is the acquisition of knowledge about the European Union.

Apart from the above indicator, the textbook also features content associated with the *European citizenship* indicator, which is used to inform pupils of certain rights and privileges of European citizens:

“Being a European citizen (a resident of the European Union) provides certain rights and privileges: the right to freedom of movement and residence on the territory of any country in the European Union; active and passive voting rights (to vote or to stand as candidates) in elections from the lowest local level to the highest level (elections for EU parliament); the right to diplomatic protection in countries outside the EU by any EU Member State; the right to seek employment in any service throughout EU countries (job exceptions are those in the armed forces of other member states).” (p. 87)

This quote represents a possibility to deepen knowledge on the subject of the European citizenship, to raise awareness of active citizenship, and to discuss the rights and privileges of European citizens in more detail, however, the extent to which teachers will exploit the provided content depends on the teachers themselves. It should also be noted that the official website of the European Union is listed as additional information for pupils. Like the previously analysed textbook, this one is also imbued with topics related to national identity, although to a lesser extent. Raising awareness of the local, national, and European identity and their relationship is absent from this textbook as well. In general, there is a larger amount of information about the European Union in the more recent editions of these textbooks. However, the focus is dominantly on knowledge acquisition about the European Union and not on developing attitudes about the European Union, raising awareness of European values, or developing competencies important for functioning within the European multinational environment.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The conducted textbook analysis leads to several conclusions. The first is that there have evidently been no significant changes in the content of geography textbooks across a 17-year time span, regardless of the changes that have occurred in the socio-political context in Croatia and changes taking place in national education policies. This suggests that educational policies find their way into practice very slowly and with difficulty, even as regards teaching materials, which are in theory closely bound to the curriculum. The analysis of changes in education policies has shown inconsistencies (for example, the adoption of the NCF and the recommendation to revise textbooks accordingly, but the simultaneous long-term persistence of the unchanged plan and pro-

gramme). Given that the NCF was directly connected to the School Textbook Act, the expected stronger influence was not attested. This can be explained through the fact that the authors of the textbooks were guided by the 2006 Teaching Plan and Programme, which had been in force until recently and which places more emphasis on developing national pride and identity. On the other hand, it is possible to assume that, despite major political changes (long-term preparations for joining the European Union), the values of the national identity remain dominant in Croatian society, while European ideas and their promotion are more related to political debates and have neither been successfully communicated to the public nor adequately internalised, which is apparent in the educational system.

The second conclusion is that European Dimension in Education indicators are not significantly present in any of the textbooks; where they are present, it is mostly for the purpose of transferring factual knowledge about Europe or the EU. In accordance with this, it is important to note the results of a recent qualitative study conducted on a sample of 25 geography teachers from Croatian primary and secondary schools (Miočić, Vignjević Korotaj, 2020), which suggests that geography teachers also recognise the factual orientation of (sometimes outdated) geography textbooks, which is one of the main obstacles for promoting EDE in their classes. Additionally, teachers indicate various other challenges, such as dealing with pupils' disinterest and a lack of time to deal with the topics of EDE and the EU, as well as the issue of finding an appropriate approach to tackle topics related to EDE (Miočić, Vignjević Korotaj, 2020). It can be concluded that textbooks do not serve as a resource for teachers and pupils, but rather as material for transferring factual knowledge. In order to properly deal with the topic of EDE, we believe that textbooks should provide opportunities for critical assessment, discussion, and forming opinions on the topics presented. Additionally, both textbooks and the teaching approach should encourage a critical stance and provide the opportunity to reflect on both the advantages and disadvantages of the European Union.

It remains to be seen how the idea of EDE will be included in future textbooks, as well as in everyday teaching practice. The new programme does bring changes in terms of content, but even more so in the approach to learning and teaching, which is a new challenge for teach-

ers. In terms of the teaching approach, the subject curriculum (from 2019) has high expectations from pupils and focuses on the research approach to studying space, whereby the teacher no longer only transfers knowledge but acts as a mediator and facilitator, as well as a co-operator and a mentor. It is also stated that pupils use textbooks, atlases, and workbooks as well as many other analogue and digital resources; this should contribute to a more successful realisation of educational outcomes, as well as stimulating curiosity. However, it should also be stated that teachers' and pupils' expected freedom and creativity along with their focus on the learning outcomes in the context of promoting the EDE concept, will certainly not be an easy task.

Acknowledgments: This paper has been fully supported by the University of Rijeka within the project: *The European Dimension in Education: Approaches and Challenges* (number 13.04.1.3.12).

References

- Apple, Michael W. (1993), "The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense?", *Discourse* 14(1), pp. 1–16. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630930140101>
- Banjac, Marinko; Pušnik, Tomaž (2015), "Making citizens, being European? European symbolism in Slovenian citizenship education textbooks", *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(5), pp. 748–771. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2014.916972>
- Biilman, Ove (1997), "Geography textbook analysis: A Danish perspective", *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 6(1), pp. 79–81. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10382046.1997.9965027>
- Diestro Fernández, Alfonso; Valle López, Javier (2015), "Towards a European supranational policy of education based on the European Dimension on Education", *Bordón*, 67(1), pp. 101–116. doi: <https://doi.org/10.13042/Bordón.2015.67107>
- European Parliament (2016), *European Parliament resolution of 12 April 2016 on Learning EU at school*. Strasbourg: European Parliament. Retrieved from: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0021_EN.html [17 January 2020]
- Issitt, John (2004), "Reflections on the study of textbooks", *History of Education*, 33(6), pp. 683–696. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760042000277834>
- Ivić, Ivan; Pešikan, Ana; Antić, Slobodanka (eds.) (2013), *Textbook Quality – A Guide to Textbook Standards*, Göttingen: Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung. doi: <https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737002240>

- Koren, Snježana (2001), “Minorities in Croatian history and geography textbooks”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 23(2), pp. 183–199.
- Ledić, Jasminka; Turk, Marko (2012), “Izazovi europske dimenzije u obrazovanju: pristupi i implementacija u nacionalnom kontekstu”, in: Hrvatić, Nenad; Klapan, Anita (eds.), *Pedagogija i kultura 1*, Zagreb: Hrvatsko pedagogijsko društvo, pp. 260–271.
- Ledić, Jasminka; Miočić, Ivana; Turk, Marko (2016), *The European Dimension in Education: Approaches and Challenges*, Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet.
- Malatesta, Stefano; Squarcina, Enrico (2011), “Where does Europe end?: The representation of Europe and Turkey in Italian primary textbooks”, *Review of International Geographical Education Online (RIGEO)*, 1(2), pp. 113–140.
- Miočić, Ivana; Vignjević Korotaj, Bojana (2020), “‘Stvar je u tome koliko će se netko potruditi’: nastavnici geografije o europskoj dimenziji u obrazovanju”, in: Čulum Ilić, Bojana; Buchberger, Iva (eds.), *Suvremeni trendovi i izazovi nastavničke profesije*, Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet, pp. 117–142.
- [MZOS] *Okvirni nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo kulture i prosvjete i Zavod za školstvo.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH (2005), *Vodič kroz Hrvatski nacionalni obrazovni standard za osnovnu školu*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH (2006), *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH (2011), *Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje te opće obvezno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH (2014), *Nove boje znanja, Strategija obrazovanja, znanosti i tehnologije*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja RH (2017), *Nacionalni kurikulum za osnovnoškolski odgoj i obrazovanje, prijedlog nakon javne rasprave*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja RH.
- [MZOS] Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja RH (2019), *Odluka o donošenju kurikuluma za nastavni predmet geografije za osnovne škole i gimnazije u Republici Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja RH.
- Pajtak, Petra (2018), *Sadržaji religijske tematike u hrvatskim osnovnoškolskim udžbenicima geografije i povijesti 1990-ih*, master’s thesis, University of Zagreb, Croatia. Retrieved from: <https://repozitorij.pmf.unizg.hr/islandora/object/pmf%3A4872/datastream/PDF/view> [17 January 2020]
- Pingel, Falk (2010), *UNESCO guidebook on textbook research and textbook revision: Second revised and updated edition*, Paris: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research Celler. Retrieved from: <https://www.ehu.eu/>

[documents/3120344/3356415/Unesco+guidebook.pdf/6bdf16d1-a184-4a42-a90e-033b77fdbd42](#) [17 January 2020]

Resnik Planinc, Tatjana (2012), “Evropska dimenzija in evropska identiteta z vidika pouka geografije v Sloveniji”, *Dela*, 37, pp. 5–25.

Savvides, Nicola (2008), “The European dimension in education: Exploring pupils’ perceptions at three European Schools”, *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(3), pp. 304–326. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240908096485>

Schmeinek, Daniela (2013), “‘They are like us’ – teaching about Europe through the eyes of children”, *Education*, 41(4), pp. 398–409. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2013.819623>

The Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2003), *Education – notes on methodology. Statistical Yearbook*. Retrieved from: https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/ljetopis/2003/metodologije/27_436_met.pdf [29 August 2019]

Zakon o udžbenicima za osnovnu i srednju školu, Narodne novine, NN 27/2010 (2010).

EUROPSKA DIMENZIJA U OBRAZOVANJU U UDŽBENICIMA GEOGRAFIJE U HRVATSKIM OSNOVNIM ŠKOLAMA: NAUČENE LEKCIJE I BUDUĆA OČEKIVANJA

Bojana Vignjević Korotaj, Jasminka Ledić, Ivana Miočić

Pristupanje Republike Hrvatske članstvu u Europskoj uniji, donijelo je, između ostalog, promjene u obrazovnim politikama putem koncepta europske dimenzije u obrazovanju. Koncept europske dimenzije u obrazovanju uspješno pronalazi svoje mjesto u Nacionalnom okvirnom kurikulumu, međutim ne postoje detaljnije analize putem kojih bi se utvrdilo je li ovaj koncept prepoznat i u nastavnim materijalima, točnije u udžbenicima. Stoga je cilj ovog istraživanja utvrditi je li i na koji način europska dimenzija u obrazovanju prisutna u udžbenicima geografije za osnovnu školu. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da je ideja europske dimenzije u obrazovanju dominantno prisutna u obliku činjeničnog znanja o Europi što nastavnicima i učenicima ne pruža dovoljno mogućnosti za razvoj stavova i kritičkog osvrta na spomenute teme.

Ključne riječi: europska dimenzija u obrazovanju, udžbenici geografije, komparativna analiza udžbenika, osnovne škole