

Susanne Popp/Jutta Schumann/Miriam Hannig (eds.)

# Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe

Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon  
as a Basis for History Teaching



PETER LANG  
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Jutta Schumann/Susanne Popp/Miriam Hannig

## **EHISTO – European History Crossroads as pathways to intercultural and media education. A report about the EU project (2012–2014)**

The EHISTO project deals with the mediation of history in popular (scientific) media and the question of the social and political responsibility of journalists and other mediators of history, especially teachers, in the field of the commercial presentation of history.<sup>1</sup> The project responds to the increasing significance of a commercialised mediation of history within public historical culture and reflects the fact that these representations, which do not always meet the EU standards for history education, can have a lasting impact on the younger generation's understanding of history.

The rationale for the EHISTO project was to explore how history in the mass media can be used for teaching history in schools, in the education of history teachers, and in continuing professional development for teachers, in order to enhance the critical media literacy of young people. This was to be achieved in particular by developing interactive online modules (Learning Objects) for schools whose aim is to further the development of the intercultural and media-critical competence of young people in dealing with commercial representations of history, which they encounter outside the history classroom.

The EHISTO project, which was supported by the EU-LLP, started in November 2013 and lasted two years. The project group consisted of four university experts in history didactics, one expert in media didactics and the FWU (Institute for Film and Pictures in Science and Education) as institute for the creation of educational media.<sup>2</sup> All university partners closely

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1 Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de> (1.8.2014).

2 Besides the Chair of History Didactics at Augsburg University (coordinator) also the Universities of East Anglia (UK), Dalarna (Sweden) and Lodz (Poland), Salamanca (Spain) and the Institute for Film and Images (FWU) in Grünwald, Munich are involved.

cooperated with local ‘EHISTO partner schools’. Eleven history teachers and more than 300 pupils contributed to the creation of the interactive on-line modules (Learning Objects); they also tested and evaluated them with regard to their practical suitability. The group was supported by an international research network reaching from Augsburg to Shanghai as well as by academic advisors and international networks such as e.g. the International Society for History Didactics (ISHD<sup>3</sup>) EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators<sup>4</sup>) and the DVV International, the Institute for the International Cooperation of the German Association of Adult Education<sup>5</sup>.

The following project report is divided into four parts: the prehistory of the EHISTO project is illustrated in the first part, which contains the current state of research as well as the basic considerations of the EU project. This part will elaborate on the use of popular history magazines as a focus of research, as well as on the basic concept of European History Crossroads (EHC) and the linkage of media-critical competences with intercultural competences (1). The second part introduces the aims and the implementation of the project (2) and the third part presents the project’s central results: learning modules, initial teacher training module and in-service teacher training course whereby the Learning Objects (LOs) on the two EHC ‘Columbus and the “discovery” of the “new world”’ and ‘The “outbreak” of World War One’ conceptualised in the scope of the project form the foundation for teacher training and advanced training courses (3). The report ends with considerations about the long-term practical implementation of the project results (4).

## **1. Prehistory of the project – current state of research and basic considerations**

### **1.1 Popular history magazines as a research object**

In order to examine the representation of history in mass media in school the EHISTO project focused on the phenomenon of popular history

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3 Cf. URL: <http://www.ishd.co> (1.8.2014).

4 Cf. URL: <http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php> (1.8.2014).

5 Cf. URL: [http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article\\_id=1405&clang=0](http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article_id=1405&clang=0) (1.8.2014).

magazines in particular, which have become increasingly popular and available across EU countries. However, there were further reasons why history magazines provided a good working basis for the project:

- The magazines are subject to commercial conditions. Accordingly, the specific question can be posed – also in comparison to presentations in school books – how ‘history’ is constructed and presented so as to ensure the commercial success of the product.<sup>6</sup>
- They represent a medium that both pupils and teachers consume and that covers manifold topics which are easily connected to the curriculum and which are ‘topical’ (due to their periodicity). In addition, the magazines feature curriculum-compatible mediality (text, image documents, graphics) and are readily available to be used in the classroom.
- The popular history magazines in Europe are – in contrast to other commercially characterised media products (e.g. films, video games, comics) – on the one hand strongly focused on national markets. On the other hand, as has been shown in previous studies (see below), the magazines from different countries have many topics in common (e.g. famous personalities; events with a pan-European impact such as wars, peace settlements, revolutions; transnational phenomena like migration, cultural exchange, religions, social and political movements). These features of history magazines were especially important for the project since the analysis of national perspectives on historical topics debated throughout Europe was to be a decisive basis for the LOs (see below, European History Crossroads).

Even though history magazines are readily available they have attracted comparatively little attention with history and media studies as well as history didactics, although these history journalistic products form a significant part of public history culture.<sup>7</sup> It is striking that the analysis of

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6 The deconstruction of commercially shaped popular history presentations is supposed to serve as a contribution to the enhancement of so-called ‘genre competences’. Cf. Hans-Jürgen Pandel: *Geschichtsdidaktik. Eine Theorie für die Praxis*. Schwalbach/Ts. 2013, p. 226 ff.

7 Even if the sales figures of the individual magazines are dropping it nevertheless becomes apparent, as our research has shown, that the range of history magazines has continuously expanded in Europe since the beginning of the century.

history magazines in a trans-nationally comparative perspective, which would make the differences and similarities visible in the presentation of history in different countries, has so far not been carried out.

So as to gain first insights, an internationally oriented conference was organised in Amsterdam preceding the project in 2010 that explored popular history magazines from a comparative European perspective and evaluated their potential for the advancement of LL key competences for history teaching.

In order to approach the topic in a useful way a market and cover page analysis was initially carried out by all participants in Amsterdam, which was implemented following a jointly developed catalogue of criteria. The evaluations performed in all countries revealed some informative results, which, however, still have to be confirmed by further research.<sup>8</sup>

It became clear that in all participating countries the biographical approach prevailed: popular presentations of history often work with a 'great' – mostly male – personality whose life story is connected to important contemporary events. Thematically, wars and conflicts dominate all history magazines. Even though the First and the Second World Wars surely have to be mentioned as central preoccupations of the magazines, the choice of the conflicts considered, is strongly aligned according to the great moments of the respective national histories. Similarly, this tendency is followed by the epochs to which particular attention is paid.

The insight that national history has a great share in all countries was a decisive criterion in shaping the EHISTO project since the history magazines therewith offered good starting points to compare national perspectives on history with transnational European and global presentations of history (see also the 'European History Crossroads' below).

All in all, the conference in Amsterdam made clear that the popular presentation of history in many countries is strongly oriented along the lines of 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography, which exhibits similar areas of focus

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8 The following countries were involved in the study: Germany, Denmark, England, Sweden, Estonia, Italy, Turkey, Brazil, Russia and the Netherlands. See the German volume: Susanne Popp/Jutta Schumann et al. (eds.): *Geschichte in Magazinen*. Frankfurt/Main et al. 2015 (forthcoming). In this volume also cf. the contributions by Gorbahn, Haydn, Springkart and Vinterek.

thematically, as well as in emphasising ‘great’ men who make history. More recent approaches to history such as the history of mentalities, gender issues or historico-cultural approaches are, in comparison, not entirely ignored, but are far less taken into account.

Besides the results which the conference in Amsterdam has brought about country-specific individual studies primarily existing in Sweden, Germany and France may be mentioned at this stage, which are all, however, from recent years.<sup>9</sup> The international overview of research on popular history magazines has so far revealed that the access is limited in three main ways. The studies (a) merely address one specific point in time in their analysis and neglect a diachronic perspective or (b) they develop a diachronic perspective, but thereby merely deal with one magazine. Lastly, (c) the studies are generally limited to a national market and do not draw an international comparison; moreover, trans-national questions

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9 Cf. on the medial presentation of World War One in history magazines the excellent study, which was recently published: Fabio Crivellari: *Die Medialität des Krieges. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der populären Erinnerungskultur nach 1945 am Beispiel populärer Geschichtsmagazine*. Konstanz 2014, URL: <http://bit.ly/10df5CJ> (1.8.2014); Cf. Hans Süssmuth: *Erzählte Geschichte in der Massenpresse. Darstellung und Analyse ausgewählter Beispiele*. In: Siegfried Quandt/Hans Süssmuth (eds.): *Historisches Erzählen. Formen und Funktionen*. Göttingen 1982, p. 171–203; Christian Spieß: *Zwischen Wissenschaft und Unterhaltungsanspruch. Aktuelle Geschichtsmagazine im Vergleich*. In: Sabine Horn/Michael Sauer (eds.): *Geschichte und Öffentlichkeit*. Göttingen 2009, p. 169–176; Christian Spieß: *Zeitgeschichte in populären Geschichtsmagazinen*. In: Susanne Popp et al. (eds.): *Zeitgeschichte – Medien – Historische Bildung*. Göttingen 2010, p. 61–76; Christian Spieß: *Zwischen populär und wissenschaftlich: Geschichtsvermittlung in aktuellen Geschichtsmagazinen*. In: Swen Steinberg/Stefan Meißner/Daniel Trepsdorf (eds.): *Vergessenes Erinnern. Medien von Erinnerungskultur und kollektivem Gedächtnis*. Berlin 2009, p. 133–151; Cf. also Achim Landwehr: *Magazinierete Geschichte* (30.12.2013), URL: <http://bit.ly/1rxuMPu> (1.8.2014); Valérie Hannin: *L'Histoire: revue et magazine*. In: *Le Débat* 175 (2013), issue 3, p. 190–197; Claire Blandin: *L'histoire sur papier glacé*. In: *Le Débat* 175 (2013), issue 3, p. 184–189; Laurène Pain Prado: *La Question de L'Histoire Grand Public: Étude Comparée de Deux Magazines D'Histoire: HISTORIA et L'HISTOIRE, 2004–2008*. Grenoble 2010; Marianne Sjöland: *Historia i magasin: en studie av tidskriften Populär historias historieskrivning och av kommersiellt historiebruk*. Lund 2011.

are missing. The EHISTO project is a reaction to this state of research: the analyses and Learning Objects are aimed at an international comparison and the ‘European History Crossroads’ address the trans-national similarities and differences of the national history culture in Europe.

## 1.2 European History Crossroads

The concept of ‘European History Crossroads’<sup>10</sup> first developed by the Council of Europe was also fundamental to the EHISTO project. The concept includes topics of European history that are a part of the national history narrative everywhere in Europe and which are taught at school.

With the ‘European History Crossroads’ the project follows the concept of ‘Shared Histories in Europe’.<sup>11</sup> This assumes that the European states and regions have indeed been involved in manifold trans-regional historical processes and have ‘shared’ them in a way, but thereby, however, have made different historical experiences, which until today are manifested in different, partially controversial interpretations and explanations. It can be deduced from this that the path leading to a European history culture first has to aim at the reciprocal perception and the basic recognition of plural history experiences and interpretations in Europe. This idea can also be found in Jörn Rüsen’s postulate of ‘overcoming Euro-centrism through experiencing difference’<sup>12</sup> as core part of a European identity. It denotes a concept of European identity which is centred on perceiving and

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10 Robert Stradling: *Crossroads of European histories: Multiple outlooks on five key moments in the history of Europe*. Strasbourg 2006 (Council of Europe).

11 Cf. the e-book as a result of the Council of Europe’s project ‘Shared histories for a Europe without dividing lines’ (2010–2014), URL: <http://bit.ly/1ywwRAD> (1.8.2014). EHISTO follows on from the broad spectrum of successful EU projects, which have so far fostered the intercultural dialogue in Europe by developing shared European themes for history teaching and by presenting multi-perspective approaches in terms of intercultural dialogue (e.g. European Council projects like ‘Shared Histories for a Europe Without Dividing Lines’ and ‘The Image of the Other in History Teaching’).

12 Cf. e.g. Jörn Rüsen: *Europäisches Geschichtsbewusstsein als Herausforderung an die Geschichtsdidaktik* [Historical Consciousness in Europe as Challenge for History Didactics]. In: Marko Demantowsky/Bernd Schönemann (eds.): *Neue geschichtsdidaktische Positionen*. Bochum 2002, p. 57–64.



accepting the plurality of historico-cultural identities in Europe as well as the democratic, tolerant and peaceful way of treating differences.

From the point of view of history didactics it has to be stated that history education in Europe, with a few exceptions,<sup>13</sup> still to a great extent neglects the necessary broadening of the national view required to perceive diverging history experiences and interpretational perspectives of other European nations or regions. Likewise, the teaching staff is hardly aware of which topics in the respective national or regional history curricula are and which are not ‘European History Crossroads’.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, obvious steps towards the ‘Europeanisation’ of the national history education and the development of intercultural and historico-cultural<sup>15</sup> competences remain untaken throughout Europe. The project, with its shift towards popular history magazines comes in at this point and with educational material<sup>16</sup> tries to provide practice-oriented suggestions.

### **1.3 The linkage of media-critical competences with intercultural competences**

The potential of EHISTO consists in a close linkage between the awareness of the diversity of the European heritage and of intercultural competences on the one hand with historical media competences (media literacy) on the other hand using the example of ‘European History Crossroads’ in popular history magazines. In order to include the strong influence of the extracurricular historical culture in the reforms of history teaching, EHISTO has put an innovative concept to the test. For the first time this concept has systematically combined intercultural competence with

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13 Cf. e.g. the – even though bilateral and therewith atypical – German-French history book: Peter Geiss/Daniel Henri/Guillaume Le Quinterec (eds.): *Histoire/Geschichte. Schülerband Sekundarstufe II: Europa und die Welt vom Wiener Kongress bis 1945*. Stuttgart 2007.

14 This also applies to the picture inventory of school books in Europe. The teachers on site usually do not know which image documents are common in school books across Europe. Cf. on this Michael Wobring/Susanne Popp (eds.): *Der europäische Bildersaal. Europa und seine Bilder*. Schwalbach/Ts. 2013.

15 Cf. on the notion of ‘historico-cultural competences’ Hans-Jürgen Pandel: *Geschichtsdidaktik. Eine Theorie für die Praxis*. Schwalbach/Ts. 2013, p. 232 ff.

16 Cf. URL: <https://media.sodis.de/ehisto/de/index.html> (1.8.2014).

media-critical competence in dealing with extracurricular representations of history, so that history lessons become a site to critically reflect on the commercial construction of history. This supplements the foundations for lifelong learning with important elements in the area of history education. Additionally, the comparison between different national representations of the same European historical events seen in mass media encourages the critical analysis of the differences and commonalities, sharpens the awareness for general characteristics of mass media representations of history and facilitates debates and questions concerning the common European identity.

## **2. Objectives and project implementation**

### **2.1 Objectives of the EHISTO project**

The primary goal of the EHISTO project was to link intercultural and media-critical competences in history lessons by using commercial mass media relevant to history. In order to achieve this primary goal the project group developed

- trans-national teaching material (secondary level) with teacher manuals on historical topics that cover the national magazines and syllabi of all partnering countries ('European History Crossroads'). The material consists of content which was history- and media-didactically edited in English (project language) as well as in the national languages of all partners, serving to induce media-critical and intercultural competence. The teacher manuals contain explanations for the LOs along with didactic hand-outs. Throughout Europe they are available free of charge on the project's homepage.
- a project seminar with a module guide to be used for initial teacher training, which integrates the new approach along with activating methods.
- a teacher course with a handbook to be used in in-service teacher training, which puts the project results into classroom practice.
- an interactive project website that presents all project results and working materials (for teaching in the classroom, initial teacher training and in-service teacher training), facilitating the exchange between teachers and pupils.

So as to ensure the sustainability of the project the project results are published combined with this volume of essays, which is designed to make the project known in specialised and associated bodies. Moreover, during the project a network of schools and training institutions was formed in which the project results are further pursued.

## 2.2 Implementation of the project

The implementation of the project followed the main working phases already considered in the application, which were all carried out and implemented without deviation.

During the first step of the project the baseline study was entirely completed. The baseline study was to provide the foundation of the LOs aimed at. The aim of this work was 1) to find out history teachers' opinions and practices regarding the use of popular history magazines, 2) to develop a tool that can be used by teachers and students in order to analyse popular history magazines and 3) to conduct research on the so-called 'European History Crossroads' in order to find out on which two examples of history crossroads the LOs should focus.

The empirical studies recorded the attitudes of history teachers regarding popular history magazines as supplementing educational material in the different countries, collected best-practice-examples and examined the national curricula and history magazines for European History Crossroads. The partners also analysed the national school books with regard to national tendencies in the presentation of the chosen topics (amongst others "The "outbreak" of World War One"). Besides addressing general questions, the instrument for the analysis of popular history magazines, by now available online,<sup>17</sup> particularly focuses on the magazine cover pages, the editorial, the table of contents, picture series and questions about the analysis of articles. It is designed to support the individual development of further topics. Research on the European History Crossroads made clear that the European-wide existing curriculum topics

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17 Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/baselinestudy/analytical-framework/> (1.8.2014).

‘First World War’ and ‘Second World War’ play a very important part in all European, history magazines; further European History Crossroads (according to the expanded EHISTO definition) are e.g. Columbus and the ‘discovery’ of the seaway to America, the spread of Islam, the Crusades, Industrialisation, Absolutism, and the Cold War. In general it can be said that regarding the cover topics of the magazines ‘great men who made history’ play a decisive part such as e.g. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charles the Great, Louis XIV, or Napoleon – and (inevitably) also Adolf Hitler.<sup>18</sup> Following the results gained in the baseline study as well as in consultation with the teachers involved in the project, the project partners eventually agreed that the LOs, which were to be conceptualised in the following phase, should deal with the European History Crossroads ‘Columbus and the “discovery” of the “New World”’ and ‘The “outbreak” of World War One’.

The second project phase was the central phase of the project work in which the online materials were developed for history education in secondary schools (Learning Objects), for teacher training (initial teacher training module with module guide) at colleges and universities as well as for further teacher training courses (in-service teacher training course with handbook). By now, the online material was available on the project website in the five project languages. Accompanying the conceptualisation of the online material, introductory teacher workshops were held in all partner countries during this phase so as to be able to test the online material in the following phase.

In the third project phase the online material was evaluated. Thereby a feedback-mechanism was used in close cooperation with the participating schools. The training course for the in-service teacher training was evaluated by the participating teachers (from pilot schools and from other schools); the project seminar at the university (initial teacher training) was tested and evaluated by the participating teacher trainees.<sup>19</sup>

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18 The results of this examination will be published in an anthology available online on the EHISTO website in autumn 2014.

19 These concepts were tested and evaluated in eleven EHISTO classes, five EHISTO university seminars and five further teacher training seminars; the results were positive without exceptions.

The concluding fourth project phase dealt with the dissemination of the project results. Amongst others, the final publication was written for this purpose, which shall introduce the project, the aims and the products developed in the scope of this project to a wider public.

### **3. The central results of the project: Learning Objects, initial teacher training module and in-service teacher training course**

#### **3.1 The Learning Objects (LOs with teacher manual)**

In close cooperation with the partner schools, five LOs about the ‘outbreak’ of World War One and five LOs about Columbus were developed based on the two chosen European History Crossroads. Furthermore, two multinational LOs in five languages, and an additional LO in English about the British Empire were designed. An overview of the LOs with links to each of them can be found on the website’s main page.

Regarding the design of the LOs it was important to the project participants not to provide examples of use which are conceptualised for 45 minute lessons, but to offer a wide range of ideas and suggestions for lessons which can be freely combined based on the material and the questions available. The open design also allows using individual elements of the LOs in higher age and ability classes. The aim of the LOs was to illustrate new innovative ways of mediation, which exemplarily show how media-critical competences can be enhanced in the classroom by means of the chosen European History Crossroads. It corresponds with these objectives that extensive material from the magazines is provided for both topics (‘outbreak’ of the First World War and Columbus) under the heading ‘additional material’, which can be freely combined and used in a supplementary way by teachers.

In terms of structure, all LOs are divided into five categories. All LOs start with an overview outlining the tendencies that influence the topic’s presentation in the relevant national history books. Moreover, experts provide information on common interpretations of the topic from a national point of view so that it becomes apparent in the comparative perspective whether the magazines analysed follow these basic tendencies or emphasise other aspects. The national perspective on the topic follows with questions

designed by each country's popular history material. Under the heading 'critical media analysis' the users find material with questions to encourage critical thinking about the chosen national magazine articles in terms of content and media features. The fourth category deals with the European comparative perspective (international comparison) whereby both the content-wise alignment of the magazines as well as the media-critical aspects are also addressed. Under the heading 'additional material', all the material from five countries is available making it possible for students and teachers to design their own ideas and new approaches for lessons. Users primarily find material on those elements of the magazines which are particularly suited for a comparison such as the cover page, the table of contents, the editor's preface, the picture series at the beginning of a main topic, the leading article about the main topic and the self-portrayal of the magazine.

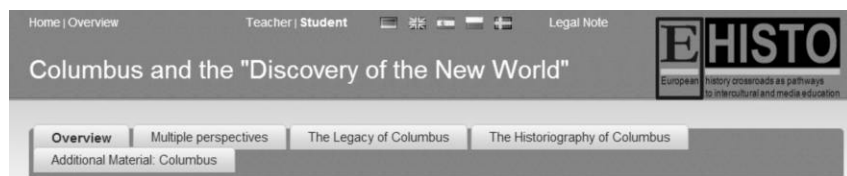
Fig. 1: Outline of the website in one of the LOs on 'The "outbreak" of World War One'.



Each European History Crossroad can be approached nationally and bilaterally. At the same time, the LOs allow teachers and students in every country involved to carry out as many comparative studies as they want – in transnational, media-critical and intercultural ways. Furthermore, the LOs allow teachers and pupils in all participating countries to conduct any number of comparative studies: bilateral, trilateral or multilateral ones. In that way a 'multi-perspective' learning space emerges, in which teachers and pupils can explore Europe's 'shared history' by comparing national magazines and textbooks.

Supplementing the five LOs each designed in this way, two multinational LOs as well as specifically chosen thematic aspects for the multinational approach provide a more general overview of the topic in popular culture.

Fig. 2: Outline of the website in the multinational LO on ‘Columbus and the “Discovery” of the “New World”’.



### 3.1.1 Basic information about the LOs on World War One

When analysing the history magazines from the participating countries<sup>20</sup> and further magazines e.g. from France, Belgium and the Netherlands it became apparent that the assassination of Sarajevo is like no other topic on the World War an integral part of the transnational European popular remembrance of the First World War.<sup>21</sup>

As expected, the assassination of Sarajevo is presented as key event of the immediate prehistory of the beginning of the war. Thereby, two different approaches can be generally discerned in the articles chosen: one narrative stages the ‘height of the fall’ of the event: one single, rather marginal event shaped by manifold ‘almost unbelievable’ coincidences causes the downfall of the entire European pre-war order. The figurative idea is prevalent here that ‘Sarajevo’ was the ‘spark’ that set the ‘fuse’ on fire, which lead the European ‘powder keg’ to explode.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, the happenings between the assassination and the beginning of the war are imagined as having a ‘domino effect’, which straightforwardly and inevitably

20 As a focus magazines from the last ten years (2004–2012) were examined and the results were supplemented by taking contemporary magazines into consideration.

21 Cf. GEO EPOCHE 15 (2004); DAMALS 5 (2004); LA AVENTURA DE LA HISTORIA 69 (2004); G/GESCHICHTE 11 (2007); MUY INTERESANTE HISTORIA 17 (2008); POPULĂR HISTORIA 10 (2008); ALLT OM HISTORIA 9 (2011); HISTORY REVIEW 69 (2011); BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE 11 (2012); SPIEGEL GESCHICHTE 5 (2013); DIE ZEIT GESCHICHTE 1 (2014); GEO EPOCHE 65 (2014); GEO HISTOIRE 13 (2014).

22 Cf. Franz Metzger/Jürgen Wilhelmi: In Europa gehen die Lichter aus. In: G/GESCHICHTE 11 (2007), p. 22–27.

led to the war. The other narrative, in contrast, presents an open development by emphasising important stages of the 'July crisis', discussing action alternatives and reasons as well as consequences of the options chosen.<sup>23</sup>

Thereby it is interesting that the magazines analysed do not indicate any specifically national differences in the perspective of the assassination. Both narratives mentioned, however, can be found in every country; this significant 'historiographical difference in quality' of the magazine types exists everywhere. Those presenting the 'fuse' narrative consistently show a clearly stronger pronounced tendency towards personalisation<sup>24</sup>, emotionalisation, simplification and sensationalism as well as towards the use of insufficiently examined, specified and often also anachronistic<sup>25</sup> image material. The latter can also be discerned for those magazines that historicise and present the 'July crisis' as an open process; however, they are prepared to 'challenge' the audience with controversial presentations, diverging opinions and open questions.

The 'picture canon' of European magazines for the presentation of the First World War has so far not been examined.<sup>26</sup> It is, however, clear that the image documents which are reproduced are used in a purely illustrative way and their potential as sources remains unexploited. No argumentative connection is established here between the pictures and the texts. This lack of rigour in dealing with the image documents is not only apparent regarding the captions, but also in the fact that, for example, staged photographs which were created and distributed by national propaganda machines, or also pictures which were constructed in the dark room are printed without

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23 Cf. Stig Förster: Die Juli-Krise 1914, Wochen der Entscheidung. In: DAMALS 5 (2004), p. 14–19; Peter Englund: En oundviklig katastrof? In: POPULÄR HISTORIA 10 (2008), p. 24–30.

24 Personalisation here means that the power to shape the historical process is above all assigned to 'great personalities'. Cf. Christian Heuer: s.v. Personalisierung. In: Ulrich Mayer et al. (eds.): Wörterbuch Geschichtsdidaktik. Schwalbach/Ts. 2006, p. 139 f.

25 Instead of contemporary image documents pictures from other epochs are used.

26 Cf. Julius Müller/Andreas Wagner: 'La Grande Guerre iconographique' – Bilder des Ersten Weltkriegs in modernen europäischen Schulgeschichtsbüchern. In: yearbook – jahrbuch – annales. Journal of the International Society of History Didactics 31 (2010), p. 27–42.



further explanatory indications – sometimes even on the cover pages of the magazines.<sup>27</sup> However, this use of pictures, which violates the ethics of conveying history,<sup>28</sup> is discernible not only in history magazines, but also in school history books.<sup>29</sup>

Regarding those magazines which in relation to the beginning of the war primarily focus on the ‘assassination of Sarajevo’ it is particularly interesting to compare the choice of pictures of the individual magazines. Since the amount of picture sources (photographs, illustrations<sup>30</sup>) relating to this event is very limited the same illustrations are found everywhere, which, however, vary in terms of size, basic design and caption depending on the style of the magazine and therewith – especially in a comparative perspective – provide useful information regarding the question about a responsible use of image material. An occasionally still faulty caption thereby stands out which indicates the depicted scene as the ‘arrest of Gavrilo Princip’.<sup>31</sup>

With regard to the evaluated magazine articles on the First World War a specific aspect has to be emphasised in conclusion which equally plays

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27 Cf. cover page: Die Westfront im Ersten Weltkrieg. In der Hölle von Verdun. In: G/GESCHICHTE 11 (2007), as well as Anton Holzer: „Going Over The Top“. Neue Perspektiven aus dem Schützengraben. In: Gerhard Paul (ed.): Das Jahrhundert der Bilder. Vol. 1: 1900 bis 1949. Göttingen 2009, p. 196–203; Cf. also Brigitte Hamann: Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wahrheit und Lüge in Bildern und Texten. München 2014.

28 Cf. among others: Council of Europe. Committee of Ministers: Recommendation rec (2001) 15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe, URL: <http://bit.ly/1qNy38i> (1.8.2014).

29 Cf. note 30 *passim*.

30 Cf. Illustrations by Felix Schwormstädt for the ‘Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung’ dated 30.6.1914, among others in: Heinrich Jaenecke: Kriegsbeginn 1914. Das Attentat. In: GEO EPOCHE 14 (2004), p. 25; Metzger/Wilhelmi (note 22), p. 23.

31 Cf. Jaenecke (note 30), p. 27; Metzger/Wilhelmi (note 22), p. 22; Søren Aagaard: Mordet som startade ett världskrig. In: ALLT OM HISTORIA 9 (2011), p. 32; and Gerhard Hirschfeld: Sarejevo 1914. Das bilderlose Attentat und die Bildfindungen der Massenpresse. In: Paul (ed.): (note 27), p. 148–155. The photograph by Philipp Rubel, which was further disseminated with the title ‘The arrest of the murder’, shows the arrest of Ferdinand Behr who was accused of helping Gavrilo Princip when he was arrested. Verifiably, Ferdinand Behr had nothing to do with the assassination on 28.6.1914.

a role in all magazine articles: the question about war guilt is always connected to the assassination of Sarajevo and the ‘July crisis’. Other than expected, there were no significant differences in interpretation and meaning to be discerned in the international comparison. The Polish magazines are an exception:<sup>32</sup> Some articles speak of clear ‘guilt’ – without further discussion – and blame the elites of the German Empire. In general, however, the magazines examined endeavour to achieve a differentiated and balanced presentation regarding this topic whereby controversies in research are often referred to, recent works – such as Christopher Clark’s ‘The sleepwalkers’<sup>33</sup> – included and interviews with historians presented.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.1.2 *Basic Information about the LOs on Columbus*

Regarding the topic ‘Columbus’, different directions may be discernible in the coverage. Two of the articles rather provide ‘event reports’, which almost ‘narratively’ report about individual periods of Columbus’s life. Thereby, however, the alignment of both articles is completely different. Whereas the German magazine *G/GESCHICHTE* allows the reader to participate in the moment of the first discovery of land<sup>35</sup> and therewith singles out a rather ‘glorious’ moment in Columbus’s story, the Swedish magazine reports about the decline of the two colonies which Columbus brought into being and therewith about the ‘failure’ of the hero.<sup>36</sup> The Spanish involvement in the New World is thereby evaluated from the

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32 Cf. Piotr Szlanta: Święto wojny, Społeczeństwa Europy wobec wybuchu pierwszej wojny światowej. In: *MÓWIA WIEKI* 8 (2009), 32–36.

33 Cf. Christopher Clark: *The sleepwalkers. How Europe went to war in 1914*. London 2012.

34 Cf. e.g. Annette Großbongardt/Uwe Klußmann: ‘Es gab keinen Alleinschuldigen’. Der Militärhistoriker Sönke Neitzel über die Totalität des Ersten Weltkriegs, Hypernationalismus und das Versagen der politischen Eliten. In: *SPIEGEL GESCHICHTE* 5 (2013), p. 14–19; Cay Rademacher/Joachim Tegenbüscher: Schuldfrage. Das Versagen der Eliten. Der Historiker Christopher Clark über die Verantwortung der Staatenlenker Europas für den Ausbruch des Weltenbrandes. In: *GEO EPOCHE* 65 (2014), p. 156–160.

35 Cf. Wolfgang Mayer: Kolumbus entdeckt eine neue Welt, Traumland in Sicht. In: *G/GESCHICHTE* 4 (2006), p. 14–16.

36 Cf. Stine Overbye: Columbus koloni blev en katastrof. In: *VÄRLDENS HISTORIA* 16 (2012), p. 36–41.

view of the indigenous population; Columbus's discovery thus leads to the death of more than 400,000 Indians – not only due to the exertion of violence, but also due to new diseases, which the Europeans brought with them – during the first 30 years after the great moment in 1492. In this way, both magazines make it clear in an impressive way how different chosen aspects of the life of the protagonists – but also the change of perspective – may alter the evaluation of historical personalities.

Whereas the different evaluations of Columbus in the case of the German and the Swedish example only become apparent by comparing both articles, a contribution from England illustrates on a considerably higher level the change of the image of Columbus during the course of the centuries within one article<sup>37</sup>. With the contribution titled 'Columbus – Hero or Villain' a central topic for historical education is clarified with the example of Columbus: history is reconstructed from sources and is tied to locations, i.e. the existing sources are adapted to the own world of ideas and to the time-specific leading norms as well as filled with new attributions of meaning according to the epoch and the geographic location. In this way, Columbus was able to mutate from the celebrated discoverer and brave conqueror to the founding father of America, but also to the root of all evil regarding colonialism. The article dealing with this question thereby manages to pass Columbus's entire life in review along the way.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, not only does the reader learn about the change of Columbus's image, but this question serves, as it were, as a vehicle to convey basic knowledge about the person Columbus. In the presentation of the different 'images of Columbus' the magazine follows a 'global' approach, so to speak, which clearly states national appropriation and different evaluations of Columbus in the past and at the same time critically deconstructs the motives standing behind these different perspectives on his person. Therefore, the text is especially suited for higher grades as

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37 Cf. Felipe Fernández-Armesto: Columbus – hero or villain? In: HISTORY TODAY 42 (1992), p. 4–9.

38 The same line is taken by a second article from England which also addresses the aspect that the person Columbus was 'used' over the centuries to provide a suitable background for their own ideas of the time and their argumentations, cf. David Armitage: Christopher Columbus and the uses of history. In: HISTORY TODAY 42 (1992), p. 50–55.

well as for the teacher training and teacher education module, but can also serve as a descriptive explanation for basic knowledge in history didactics at universities.

The Spanish contribution on Columbus also offers insight into the difficult process of reconstructing history, which is often based on different interpretations.<sup>39</sup> Different theses are discussed here in very detail on the question of the origin of Columbus and on the question in how far Columbus' plan to sail westwards to 'India' is to be evaluated as 'brilliant'. It is thereby apparent how great an effort different countries in individual epochs have still made to appropriate Columbus for their national history. This contribution can be compared with a presentation from a Polish history magazine which also deals with research theses concerning Columbus' possible country of birth<sup>40</sup> whereby the space this question takes in a Spanish and a Polish magazine surely appears somewhat surprising: on the one hand, in times of 'overcome' nationalism, considerations whether Columbus may after all be appropriated for the one or the other country are to be regarded as a rather secondary historical problem. On the other hand, these considerations are also surprising against the backdrop that the person Columbus is by no means positively evaluated without exceptions today, so that from a national perspective it may be rather ambivalent if Columbus is celebrated as a member of a certain country.

Apart from the comparison of the different point of views of the Columbus articles especially the use of images in history magazines can be critically illuminated with the topic. The 'discovery' of America is a 'number one issue', so to speak, in the repertoire of 'great' historical events. According to today's viewing habits, the reader expects that informative picture material is available for such a 'number one issue', which adequately illustrates this great moment of world history. However, there are indeed hardly any contemporary illustrations regarding the 'discovery' of America. A wood cut, which was added to the first

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39 Cf. Luis Arranz: Un tal Cristóbal Colón, descubridor. In: LA AVENTURA DE LA HISTORIA 91 (2006), p. 58–65.

40 Cf. Rafał Jaworski: Krzysztof Kolumbski czyli bajka o królu Władysławie na wyspie dalekiej. In: MÓWIA WIEKI 2 (2013), p. 22–25.

letter of Columbus, can be regarded as the first known image depiction of the event (1493)<sup>41</sup>. But it also has to be mentioned here that the artist himself did not take part in the discovery expedition and this is therefore a purely fictitious interpretation of the text of Columbus's letters. The likewise widely disseminated (and known also today) picture illustrations by Theodor de Bry (1593), who illustrated Columbus' discovery roughly 100 years after the 'voyage'<sup>42</sup>, are also not based on any kind of participation in the event. Against this backdrop it is informative to analyse how popular history magazines, which as a 'popular' medium are expected to illustrate the events with pictures, deal with this gap in historical heritage. Thereby, the work with the students may take two directions: 1. The timeline included in the German-English comparison, which allows an interactive time-wise categorisation of the picture material used to illustrate the article, can especially show the difference between source and representation of history. It thereby becomes apparent that the pictorial illustration of the article about Columbus often used the emotionalising, visually stunning pictures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which, however, are dated roughly 350 to 400 years after the event. This circumstance can be reflected critically with the pupils and therewith attention can be drawn to a central aspect of a media-critical attitude. 2. Based on the Columbus texts and their images, pupils can in general discuss and critically evaluate whether a chosen picture was appropriately used as illustration. Closely linked to this, the captions have to be included in the analysis, which are sometimes incomplete or faulty or even contain subtexts, which do not necessarily match the content of the article.

In order to analyse the articles in the most interactive way possible the tasks contain innovative approaches: accordingly, in the Spanish module the discussion about Columbus's birth place can be reconstructed with a

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41 La lettera dellisole che ha trovato nuovamente il Re dispagna, woodcut, Florence 1493 (illustration of a poem of Giuliano Dati based on a letter of Columbus about his discovery).

42 'Columbus, als er in India erstlich angekommen, wird von den Einwohnern aufgenommen und mit grossem Geschenk verehrt und begabet', copperplate engraving by Theodor de Bry, Frankfurt/Main 1593. In: Sammlung von Reisen in das westliche Indien: America, 9. copperplate engraving, 4. book, based on a report of Girolamo Benzoni from 1565.

video whereas the German LO with a focus on ‘media criticism’ invites students to arrange the pictures used in the magazines on an interactive timeline according to their time of origin. It becomes apparent that most of the illustrations of Columbus as well as the ‘discovery’ of America are from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which stimulates further critical questions. The language used is critically considered in the international module: with the help of ‘wordle’ the analysis of texts about Columbus and the discovery is stimulated in that the words are displayed bigger or smaller depending on how often they appear in the text.

The LOs briefly illustrated here exhibit different focuses, which can, however, be further expanded if the entire material available in translation (heading additional material) is used for the conceptualisation of lessons. It is supplemented by additional material for teacher education and teacher training, which is, among others, supposed to introduce the use of the educational material.

### **3.2 Initial teacher training and further teacher training**

The initial teacher training module is another important result of the EHISTO project. It is aimed at experts in initial teacher training who carry out history seminars about EHISTO related topics, modularised in line with the Bologna Process. It comprises fourteen steps each planned for 2x45 minutes. Elements from the resources or the entire package can be used depending on how much teaching time is available to explore the EHISTO project.

Not only does the initial teacher training module provide the general basics concerning the topics ‘transnational history in Europe’, ‘intercultural competences’ and ‘history culture in commercial mass media’, but it also develops seminar structures and describes guidelines for the didactical implementation of the topics within the scope of academic initial teacher training.

The project seminar itself consists of three parts. Part A deals with the topic ‘Diversity and specific forms of history cultures in Europe’, part B is dedicated to the ‘media-critical analysis related to transnational history culture and intercultural history competences’. The central part is the third part of the module (part C) which enables the students to develop their own teaching-/study-material for teaching intercultural and

media-critical competences related to the European History Crossroads (EHC). The three seminar parts follow several learning objectives at the same time: 1. students are enabled to recognise their national perspectives on history and to understand them as a starting point for transnational historical culture and intercultural history competences. 2. They gain a critical understanding of how commercial mass media transform the representation of history for economic success on a growing market. 3. They learn how to convey this knowledge as enduring competences and sustainable skills to pupils in secondary general education schools in Europe.

The initial teacher training module was partially carried out and evaluated by all partners whereby the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Accordingly, the evaluation report states:

‘The feedback suggested that the module guide provided a very thorough and helpful guide to student teacher participants who have been involved in piloting the EHISTO resources and activities. The materials do focus effectively on the stated aims of the project [...]. Another positive outcome from the project was the likelihood that the training and module guide have heightened the profile of popular history magazines and made student teachers aware of their potential for working to improve the critical media literacy of young people.’<sup>43</sup>

The initial teacher training module can thus be regarded as a valuable instrument to integrate the results of the EHISTO project in teacher training on a long-term basis and to ensure the sustainability of the project.

A further effort for implementing the objectives of the EHISTO project in the university practice was the development of a handbook for in-service teacher training. It was intended to be used by teacher instructors in both the university context and local institutions during in-service teacher training. So as to convey the content of the project and at the same time to introduce the use of the LOs a two-part structure was chosen: the first part introduces the reader to the main project outcomes both in terms of the methodology for the development of intercultural and media-critical competences among pupils and in terms of didactical strategies and materials to be used in secondary school history classes. The second part suggests the

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43 Evaluation of the initial teacher training module of the EHISTO project, unpublished.

structure for a course devoted to secondary school in-service teachers with the aim of providing participants with a framework as well as suggestions for a practical use of the learning material in the EHISTO LOs.

In the scope of the EHISTO project the conceptualisation of the modules for initial teacher training and in-service teacher training seemed central in order to be able to integrate the objectives of the project into initial teacher training and further teacher training on a long-term basis. The project therewith also reacted to the circumstance that in many EU countries specific training elements regarding the ‘mediacy’ of media literacy are still missing. This aspect finally leads to the basic question in how far the two-year project funded by the EU was able to set off important development processes and provide practice-relevant impulses with regard to history lessons. Moreover, it has to be asked in conclusion which suggestions and ideas can be provided for political decision makers and stakeholders based on the experiences with the project work.

#### **4. The long-term practical implementation of the project results**

The EHISTO project aimed at establishing intercultural and media-critical competences in civic and history education in Europe, whereby especially the gap between the scholastically conveyed conception of history and the history culture outside the school walls was supposed to become apparent to the learners. On the one hand, the project wanted to raise awareness for the European History Crossroads and support a multi-perspective approach to history. On the other hand, the comparison between in-school and extracurricular forms of history mediacy serves to enhance the media literacy of learners. This objective aroused great interest within and without the school sector already during the project, whereby it supervened that in choosing the European History Crossroad “‘Outbreak’ of World War One” a currently very topical subject was the focus of the conceptualisation of the learning modules. Therefore, with the ‘International Association for History Didactics’, the ‘DVV international – International Institute of the German Adult Education Association’, ‘L.I.S.A. – The Science Portal of the Gerda Henkel Foundation’ and ‘werkstatt.bpb’ institutions could be gained as associated partners who presented the conceptualised learning material



on their websites or even tested and evaluated it. Also manifold invitations to conferences and talks showed that educational institutions indeed regarded the results of the project as very important for school classes and teacher training.<sup>44</sup>

So as to ensure the long-lasting success of the project an international network operating via important educational platforms was aimed at e.g. the project results are made public on school-related networks such as the German Education Server and the corresponding servers of the different federal states, or on the 'Schulweb', and they are fed into existing and established media databases such as, for example, SODIS. These networks are not only databases but they also function as communication platforms so that the teaching material can be commented upon and provided along with didactical advice and best-practice examples. Together with the implementation of the project results in teacher training (see 3.2) the associations with important institutions of initial and further teacher training mentioned above and also the aimed at future close cooperation with EUROCLIO serve to not only implement the conceptualised learning material and the therewith connected methodically innovative mediating approach on a long-term basis, but also to make it known on a European-wide level.

The successful implementation of the EHISTO project can, however, merely be a first step in achieving the objectives for history lessons regarding

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44 EHISTO was represented inter alia in the conferences: TEEM conference: First International Conference on Technological Ecosystems for Enhancing Multiculturality: facing multiculturalism from different perspectives (14.-16.11.2013) at Salamanca, Spain, URL: <http://teemconference.eu> (1.8.2014); EUROPEANA conference (30.1.2014) at Berlin, Germany; DIDACTA at the FWU Booth, which is the biggest international trade fair for education and training (26.3.2014) at Stuttgart, Germany; Meeting of the steering group of the history department of the European Council (9.-10.4.2014) Brussels, Belgium; UMEÅ Stanford conference on history education 2014: Challenges in Teaching: Historical Thinking and Digital History (5.-6.5.2014) at UMEÅ University; EERA (European Educational Research Association) conference (2.-5.9.2014) at Porto, Portugal; History and Edutainment, conference of the International Society for History Didactics (8.-10.9.2014) at Wrocław, Poland; HEIRNET (History Educators International Research Network) conference (15.-17.9.2014) at Ljubljana, Slovenia; BERA (British Educational Research conference) (23.-25.9.2014) at London, Great Britain.

the intercultural education and the further development of media literacy of pupils sketched out in the scope of the project. Especially due to the close cooperation with schools and teachers the project partners were able to identify a range of future tasks, which should be supported and enhanced by stakeholders and policy makers in the following years:

1. Teachers who want to include current public commercial presentations of history in their lessons are missing a reliable method in terms of how these products can be used in line with modern multi-perspective history education. The EHISTO project has provided valuable groundwork whereby also the evaluation results have shown that the methodology developed by the project partners is regarded as suitable and very promising by teachers.

As a suggestion for policy makers and stakeholders it has to be mentioned, however, that the groundwork supplied by the project may indeed provide valuable impulses but it nonetheless still has to be based on a far broader foundation.

- 1.1 On the one hand, the tested methodological approach should e.g. be applied to further European History Crossroads (e.g. World War II, migration, Islam) in other projects – maybe also in comparison with non-European regions.

- 1.2 On the other hand, the methodology should also be tested and expanded with a broader range of media and communication devices in a comparative approach (e.g. film, video games, online presentations of history).

2. The basic research conducted in the scope of the project has pointed out deficits in the current practice in schools. Teachers have stated that they find the idea of the project and especially the media-critical aspect extremely important in lessons. At the same time, however, it has become apparent that these matters are not really taught since a) the methodology is unclear (see above), b) these aspects come off badly in teacher training, c) there is a lack of transnational teaching materials and also d) incentives are missing in most curricula. The EHISTO project has laid the foundation particularly for the initial, but also for in-service teacher training with the newly conceptualised material and training courses, but this does by no means suffice.

Policy makers and stakeholders should ensure that

- 2.1 curricula attach more importance to media-critical competences and the integration of public history and history culture into the curriculum.

This is extremely important for the idea of lifelong learning which has to be initiated by the history lessons at school.

2.2 Corresponding features are to be emphasised also in training institutions – particularly in the initial teacher training – so that future teachers can learn at an early stage how these aspects can be integrated into the history lessons in a meaningful way.

3. In the scope of the EHISTO project the conceptualised teaching material was translated into the five project languages (English, German, Swedish, Polish, Spanish).

3.1 An even further-reaching dissemination would be desirable so that teaching material from significantly more European countries could mirror the national view on different European History Crossroads and at the same time more languages would be available than before.

3.2 This would also entail further possibilities for bilingual history teaching and especially for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Accordingly, the implementation of further research and projects with this objective should be supported by policy makers and stakeholders.

4. The empirical glance into school practice has shown that history lessons still prefer the broadening of the national perspective towards the historical experiences and interpretational perspectives of other European nations or regions. There are a number of reasons for this: Firstly, teachers are not aware of the challenges posed by introducing transnational perspectives. So far, there are only some few exemplarily treated European History Crossroads which can be taught in lessons with this viewpoint. Secondly, many history teachers do not even know which topics of their national curriculum are part of a transnationally shared history in Europe. Thirdly, appropriate teaching material is missing which could help teachers overcome this obstacle. It has to be emphasised that history teachers can easily obtain and use history magazines from their own country written in their own language for their lessons. However, they are faced with insurmountable barriers when it comes to magazines from different countries written in foreign languages for a transnational comparison.

4.1 Therefore, policy makers and stakeholders should ensure that further projects pointing out new European History Crossroads are encouraged. Additionally, new teaching material about these Crossroads has to be added that includes practical implementation suggestions for lessons in

order to strengthen the intercultural aspects. This is very important for the educational concept of democracy in history lessons.

5. With regard to the current media landscape it has to be noted that traditional mediating authorities (history studies, educational institutions) are increasingly put into a competing situation with other media and are losing their previous prerogative of interpretation. Commercial popular media are gaining increasing influence and sometimes paint a picture of history that differs from academic and didactic standards of history. In this newly developing pluralism of opinions it is even more important that pupils in school learn how history products can be evaluated critically. Pupils e.g. have to acquire the skills and competences to distinguish quality multi-perspective forms of history presentations from purely bold presentations with a one-dimensional line of argument. Only in this way it can be ensured that learners are able to deal with otherwise presented images of history in a reflective way also later – outside of school – and thereby e.g. critically question a one-sided instrumentalisation of history.

For policy makers and stakeholders it can be noted that the EHISTO project has revealed the great importance of the subject history for the area of media literacy relevant for the future – even though it deals with the past. This results in the suggestion to make greater use of the subject history in this area and to regard the methods and questions developed in the EHISTO project as an important aspect of a media literacy programme, which in the future ought to be taught in an interdisciplinary way.

6. In the scope of the project, first discussions and networks among interested partners have been encouraged regarding the topic of ‘enhancing media literacy in history lessons’, but in general an even broader network would be desirable. In particular, these contacts would have to be aligned in an interdisciplinary way and especially include also associations of journalists and publishers so as to firstly get to know the viewpoints of the producers of commercial products regarding the above mentioned quality standards and secondly to also determine and discuss the question about ‘minimum standards’ in the area of history mediacy, as e.g. proposed by the Council of Europe.

Policy makers and stakeholders should thereby have a supporting effect in order to find ways to facilitate networking and discussions among these diverse experts working on national and international levels and thereby

to share the responsibility of a quality democratic history education in our media society.

7. A significant desideratum is the empirical research on reception. We hardly know anything about the question if, and if so, which short, middle or long term growth of knowledge the readers of popular history magazines gain, and if or how the ‘positivistic’ and ‘historicist’ history approach presented in the magazines effects the historical awareness of the readers. Another question that remains open is which media critical competences do the readers have and how do they apply them while reading – or do they fully indulge in the immersive experience of entertainment. Moreover, also empirical studies on the use of the magazines as learning objects in history education are especially important to history didactics.

Therefore policy makers and stakeholders should ensure that

7.1 empirical studies on the above mentioned questions are encouraged.

7.2 empirical studies on the effects of the EHISTO project are made possible. In particular, these should evaluate if and to what extent the development of trans-national, intercultural, and media critical competences in history education may be achieved with the developed online modules so as to create a basis for optimising the didactic concept and the intercultural, transnational and media-critical approach to history education in Europe.