



## Research Article

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# Comparative Analysis of History Teaching in Albania and Kosovo: Council of Europe Recommendations for History 9

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## Abstract

History teaching is particularly important to increase intercultural dialogue between people who live in different countries. History textbooks should reveal history in all its complexity, promoting democratic values, tolerance, and cooperation for a better future, without creating prejudice or negative visions of others. This research is focused on history teaching referring to the recommendations of Council of Europe (COE) and their implementation in Albania and Kosovo curricula. The method used in this research integrates both qualitative and quantitative analysis referring to the content of history textbooks in a comparative approach. We used a questionnaire to understand teachers' feelings about COE recommendations and if they are implemented in history texts. Referring to the results, the recommendations of COE are not fully reflected even though they are mentioned in pre-university' curricula framework. Meanwhile, the questionnaire submitted by the teachers shows to what extent they know the COE recommendations and how much these recommendations develop student's competencies.

**Keywords:** history teaching, Council of Europe, recommendations, textbooks, Albania, Kosovo

## 1. Introduction

The Council of Europe (COE) is one of the oldest and largest European organizations, founded in 1949; the first sessions of COE were held in Strasbourg. European cooperation initially started with the

European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950 and continued with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Since 1954, the founding members of COE, among all realized the importance of history teaching to build a peaceful Europe. We will analyze the COE recommendations about history teaching and their implementation in Albania and Kosovo. Both countries have a similar approach toward them because of their historical developments from antiquity till nowadays. This is the main reason we compared history textbooks of Albania and Kosovo. Looking into historical background, we will find similarities in political, economic, social, and anthropologic issues. Even though remained out of border because of London Conference in 1913, Kosovo manifested a close relationship with Albania like “mother and daughter”. Throughout the XX Century, Kosovo struggled for autonomy and identity under former Yugoslavia rule. This situation continued further, until Kosovo was declared independent. After this historical moment, the curriculum framework was changed according to international partners’ recommendations. Presently, History 9 in Kosovo examines Albanian history from the First World War till 2008, when Kosovo became independent state. History teaching in Kosovo is closely related with Albanian history and vice-versa. Beyond the historical context, there were signed several agreements about history teaching since Albanian is the official language in both countries. We will examine to what extent COE recommendation are used to shape curriculum framework and to teach history in Albania and Kosovo.

## **2. History Teaching under Council of Europe Recommendations**

Today, education is increasingly discussed on a transnational level – for example, the European Union and European attempts to harmonize education policy. The difficulties that these political attempts meet, and which are discussed may well relate to the fact that despite the transnational policy approach that they stand for, the national education systems still bear often invisible elements of national identity that have not vanished (Tröhler, 2016). This article aims to analyse and compare the main principles of European policy in history teaching, in the context of non-European countries such as Kosovo and Albania. Firstly, we will focus on a descriptive analysis of European recommendations of history teaching in the timeline of the XX century till nowadays.

The first Conference was held in Calw, Germany, to achieve a reform on history textbooks. The format of the conference also defined the working method towards open dialogue (Council of Europe, 1953). The main goal of this reform was to cut traditional mistakes and prejudices based on facts. For this reason, teachers should start history teaching from local/regional history. The textbook reform highlighted the fact that European history was an integral part of world history and the analysis of events had to be carried out under the importance of cultural facts, economic and social problems, political, economic, religious ideas, etc. According to this open dialogue, it was underlined that conflicts between states or sovereigns in the past not necessarily should involve people themselves (Council of Europe 1953).

The cultivation of a common European conscience in the citizens originated from the fact that they were not only citizens of their country, but they should consider themselves as citizens of Europe and the World too. According to the Resolution (64)11 “European citizenship and education” all European governments should try everything possible to ensure the contribution of disciplines as history, geography, literature, and modern languages in creating a common European belonging. The education process and democracy citizenship are an ongoing process that extends beyond a single curriculum. A significant part of this process should be pre-university education curricula as an incentive for European youth with important values like respect and solidarity with other peoples and cultures, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Therefore, it was considered helpful to design a syllabus, which would serve as a model for school curricula (Council of Europe, 1964). The engagement in this process was comprehensive for member states but also for Georg Eckert Institute (International Textbook Research) as an important partner of the European Council in the progress of this process. In this context, Resolution (65) 17 emphasized the establishment of national information and documentation centres to improve history and geography textbooks.

In addition to the involvement of informal structures in the history teaching process, the compilers of educational curricula should be considered a key factor. During the drafting process they should specify the goals, content, and methods of teaching in these programs, focusing on the importance of teachers training. Such a priority was set by Recommendation (83) 4, which aimed to organize necessary courses for teachers, senior administrators, inspectors, advisers, and school principals. Teachers and other actors should be encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities for study and exchange programs between European countries. These opportunities will help them to supply concepts of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance and pluralism, interdependence and cooperation, human and cultural unity and diversity, conflict and change to the students. (Council of Europe 1983) Furthermore, Recommendation (84) 18 emphasized the lifelong learning process, so teacher easily can develop various form of cultural expression to the students, avoiding ethnocentric attitudes and stereotypes, which harm the individual and society as a whole (Council of Europe, 1984). The concept of diversity is a key component in history teaching, so COE compiled Resolution (85) 6 on European cultural identity. Diversity in the common European wealth is the product of a common culture, thanks to the cooperation of the peoples, the member states of Europe and beyond (Council of Europe, 1985).

History is one of the many ways to bring back the past and to create a cultural identity based on understanding, tolerance, and trust among the people of Europe - or it can become a force for division, violence, and intolerance (Council of Europe, 1996). To further democratization of European societies, COE recommended teaching and learning encouragement of human rights early in schools. Recommendation (85) 7 highlights the fact that teachers should avoid imposing their personal beliefs on students and engaging in ideological battles (Council of Europe, 1985). Although history begins at school, they are not the only source of historical information and opinion. Family, peer groups, local and national communities, and religious and political groups influence history teaching. Other sources include mass media, movies, literature, and tourism too. All political systems have been used in history for their own purposes. They have imposed their own version of historical facts and have found the "good" and the "bad" figures of history. The state must protect the right of citizens to learn objective history and encourage a proper scientific approach, without religious or political prejudice. It is important to take measures against speech on hate, racial, national, and religious bases. Governments of COE member states, public authorities/institutions at national, regional, local level should distance themselves from hate speech or prejudice statements based (Council of Europe, 1997). A cooperation program between Central and Eastern Europe countries towards their transition to democracy helped in achieving this goal.

Many activities in the field of history teaching were organized to support this program; a crucial step was creating new history textbooks in countries that had just become member states/candidates of Council of Europe. (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine). The "Enhanced Graz Process and the Stability Pact for Eastern Europe" (starting in 1998) also served this purpose, which came as an initiative of the Austrian EU presidency in 1998 (Council of Europe, 1996). This process aimed to promote democratic and peaceful development in Southeast Europe by supporting and coordinating educational cooperation projects in the region in two priority areas: education and youth. During 1999 and onwards, the COE compiled new recommendations and organized many educational activities. Recommendation (99) 2 emphasized the importance of considering the European dimension in teaching methods and curricula design. Highlighting this European dimension did not mean standardizing curricula across Europe, but encouraging partnerships and collaborations between schools, project-based teaching, training in the use of information resources (surveys, libraries, museums, CD-ROMs, the Internet, etc.) (Council of Europe, 1999).

Following COE initiatives, it was proposed new curricula and textbooks-based cooperation in Southeast Europe with UNESCO. Through the document "Disarming History", the Swedish Conference emphasized the fight against stereotypes and prejudices in the History Textbooks of Southeast Europe (UNESCO, 1999). Furthermore, Sofia Conference accentuated a practical framework draft for educational activities to know more about the countries' needs of this region.

The final statement of this conference highlighted the benefits of collaborations in the field of education improving tolerance, mutual understanding and awareness between member states and abroad (Council of Europe, 1999). An education system based on common values and principles is a precondition for democratic development based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. According to the Budapest Declaration for a "Greater Europe without dividing lines", Appendix I praises the use of added information technologies in teaching and Appendix III evidenced the importance of COE recommendations and partnership between educational institutions, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and political authorities (Council of Europe, 1999). The aspect of empowering history teaching would ease a joint dialogue reflected in Recommendation (2000) 1. Consequently, it would improve cross-border cooperation in youth and sports activities, cultural heritage, and media (Council of Europe, 2000).

In the next meeting of COE in Krakow, Poland (2000) history was considered a key factor in the development of civic democracy. Besides general information about European Institutions, curricula should highlight and promote respect to human rights and individual freedoms, tolerance and understanding to the others, protection of minorities and active participation in democratic life as it was reflected in the Recommendation (2000) 24 (Council of Europe, 2000). However, a country cannot become fully democratic if the citizens do not objectively recognize the elements of their history. Creating a non-manipulated and objective history based on concrete facts urged COE to draft Recommendation (2000) 13 on a joint European policy to access archives. Such an initiative came from problems faced in accessing national and international archives. Those problems came due to diversity of the constitutional and legal framework, conflicting requirements of transparency and secrecy, protection of privacy and access to historical information, which are all perceived differently by public opinion of each country (Council of Europe, 2000).

A year later was adopted Recommendation (2001) 15 focused in designing of new textbooks in former Russian Federation, the Caucasus countries, Southeast Europe, and the Black Sea region (Council of Europe, 2001). The next meeting of Poland took place in Warsaw (2005) and highlighted the intercultural dialogue intensified even more by an accurate understanding of history (Council of Europe 2005).

Ongoing COE project was Portugal meeting, which approved Faro Declaration. This statement reaffirmed earlier intentions to build a "Europe without dividing lines", promoting dialogue and cooperation with neighboring regions and the rest of the world. The enlargement process beyond Europe through the instruments issued by Faro Declaration was another focus of this declaration (Council of Europe, 2005). The next meeting in Istanbul (May 2007) discussed the challenges of diversity in European societies. At the end it was adopted Recommendation (2011) 6, which re-evaluated intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching focused in formal and non-formal education on civic democracy (Council of Europe, 2011). In this context, Recommendation (2012) 13 was compiled to provide quality education for all individuals, and to define the role of public authorities in this process as well (Council of Europe, 2012). In recent years, even more attention has been paid to the implementation of Recommendation (2020) 2 on the inclusion of Roma and/or travelers in school curricula arguing that their European cultural heritage is underestimated in formal and informal education (Council of Europe, 2020). Through the recommendations of the COE awareness of the common historical heritage of the member states has been raised, conflict prevention and the promotion of reconciliation processes through history teaching. In addition, history teaching creates and strengthens various inclusive democratic societies.

### 3. Research Question and Methodology

Our research aims to analyze history teaching referring COE recommendations, in a comparative approach between History 9 textbooks used in Albania and Kosovo. The research question in this article relates to the problems of history curricula: *To what extent have been followed the recommendations of COE during the drafting process of History 9 textbooks in Albania and Kosovo?*

What are the teachers' perceptions of application of RCOE of History 9 textbooks in Albania and Kosovo?

The methodology used in this research is interpretive, characterized by objectivity and constructivism. The research has a representative character because it compares the textbooks of History 9 in the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo. Data analysis was compiled thanks to random sample of history teachers in Albania and Kosovo. The method of this paper combines both qualitative with quantitative analysis performed in two phases. First, the content analysis of the two history textbooks has been carried out in the comparative perspective; secondly, quantitative analysis was performed using questionnaires as a selected instrument on the reflection of the EC recommendations in these textbooks. To answer our research question, we have followed some steps:

Selecting textbooks was the first step; it was selected one history textbook in Kosovo (History 9) and various textbooks in Albania. According to Albanian Ministry of Education, since 2005 has been implemented a system known as Alter text (several textbooks are licensed for the same subject). Teachers have the right to choose the text they consider the best, referring to some defined criteria. The selection of our history textbooks was made through a random method.

Secondly, we compared topics and sub-topics of history textbooks through the content analysis to understand the implementation of COE recommendations in the history textbooks of both countries.

The next step is the quantitative analysis of questionnaires distributed to teachers in Albania and Kosovo. According to these data we collect information about: their recognitions about the implementation of COE recommendations in history teaching; teachers' perceptions about the history textbook and their willingness to make proposals to improve curricula and textbooks too.

Finally, graphic presentation of concrete data obtained from the questionnaires results about the importance of recognition of COE recommendations by teachers. They are among the key factors in shaping students' attitudes and in developing competencies.

### 3.1 Participants

The sample of teachers (n = 98; T-Al: n = 47; T-Ko: n = 51)<sup>1</sup> who took part in the survey completed the questionnaire started by their perceptions about the implementation of COE recommendations in history textbooks. The characteristics of the teacher sample are described in table (1). Participant demographics data include:

Albanian teacher group includes 34% (n = 16) of teachers with experience less than 5 years, 34% (n = 16) of teachers have experience from 6 to 10 years, 32 % (n = 15) of teachers have more than 10 years' work experience.

The Kosovo teacher group includes 25% (n = 13) of teachers with experience of less than 5 years, 10% (n = 5) of teachers have experience from 6 to 10 years and only 65% (n = 33) of the teachers have more than 10 years' work experience.

**Table 1:** Years experience of teacher's sample as history teachers (years)

Teachers				Tot.
	0-5 y	6-10 y	>10 y	
T-Al	16 (34%)	16 (34%)	15 (32%)	47
T-Ko	13 (25%)	5 (10%)	33 (65%)	51
Tot.	98			

<sup>1</sup> T-Al is the short name for Teachers of Albania; T-Ko is the short name for Teachers of Kosovo.

### 3.2 Survey instrument

Each participant anonymously completed the questionnaire designed by the authors; the questionnaire serves as an instrument to know more about: teachers' perceptions on recognizing or not fully recognizing COE recommendations; teachers' perceptions about the implementation of COE recommendations in history teaching.

**Table 2:** Variables of the questionnaires

Variables	Codes
Teachers' knowledge about the COE recommendations in history teaching;	Tech.Know
Teachers' perceptions about the implementation of COE recommendations in history teaching;	Tech.Perc.Imp
Teachers' willingness to make proposals to improve curricula and textbooks too.	Tech.Will.

**Table 3:** The questionnaire items and coded variables

Codes	Items
Tech.Know	3. Have you heard about the (COE) recommendations for history teaching? 7. Have you heard of educational cooperation projects in South East Europe during the Enhanced Graz Process and Stability Pact? 8. Do you know Recommendation (2001) 15 which set out the designing process of new curricula and textbooks for the common history of the 21st century? 9. Do you have information about European projects on building a "Europe without dividing lines", "The image of the other in history", "Towards an inclusive democratic society", etc.? 11. How are you informed by your superiors and / or governing bodies about COE recommendations regarding history teaching?
Tech.Perc.Imp	4. Have the COE recommendations been implemented in the history textbooks? 5. How much the text conveys the feeling of having a common European wealth in respect of democracy values? 6. In your opinion, how much does the history text convey to the students the virtues of living together, without prejudices of the past, towards a common European future? 10. Have you been part of any exchange program or project with counterparts from European countries related to history teaching? 12. Can you easily identify the integration of political, economic and socio-cultural aspects in history textbooks? 13. Do global / European / regional events integrate within history topics fulfilling the concept of "history without borders"? 18. How true, not objective, without religious, political prejudices are history textbooks?
Tech.Will.	17. Do you feel to propose changes to the history curricula referring COE recommendations?

### 3.3 Procedures

The questionnaire was uploaded and completed using the Microsoft form. The link for completing the questionnaire was sent by email to 178 teachers (107 teachers from Albania and 71 teachers from Kosovo). The answers to the questionnaires were elaborated in Excel.

### 3.4 COE recommendation (non) shaping History 9 in Albania and Kosovo

This article aims to emphasize to what extent COE Recommendations are implemented in Kosovo and Albanian curriculum on history teaching. Even though recently, Albania and Kosovo governments decided to unify pre-university educational curricula,<sup>2</sup> there are still differences

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo signed a joint agreement about "Unification of the Curriculum of the Pre-University Education System of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo" on 03.06.2014, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/article/kosova-dhe-shqiperia-me-kurrikule-te-unifikuar-te-arsimit-parauniversitar>

between them. According to the National Curricula Framework of both countries, the 9th grade History textbook supply knowledge of the developments of human society, highlighting moments of daily life, aspects of social, economic, political, and cultural organization, which help the students to understand human society evolution throughout a century. Considering this approach, we found it necessary to analyse the implementation of COE recommendations in this history textbook, as well as comparing and finding the similarities and differences in history curricula of Albania and Kosovo.

During recent decades, the pre-university education system in Albania has been affected from reform changes until the definition of the curricular framework of 2014. Drafting this framework came as a necessity to "clean up" subsequently the education system from the communist ideology, political and ideological manipulations, to create a better balance of knowledge, skills and attitudes focused on competence learning. Meanwhile, the curricular framework in Kosovo has been revised several times since 2011 when it was changed from a content-based curriculum to a competency-based curriculum, till in 2020, the time when Ministry of Education and Science of Kosova has implemented the new one. Designing curriculum of history subject has been challenging because history itself is a complex and multidisciplinary human science (Dugolli, 2018). Therefore, in both history curriculum of Albania and Kosovo, the information is arranged into different topics, following the program, practical activities, projects, which require research whether in the real or virtual world. The text's structure is built by balancing new knowledge, the form of their expression, the pedagogical apparatus and the language used. Such an approach encourages creative and critical thinking, the ability to research and analyse, as well as the development of skills to use various sources of information.

A positive approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the Council of Europe of the teaching of history is seen in all teaching units. Knowledge is revealed bearing in mind the concept of "history without borders", integrating the knowledge of the history of the Albanian people with world historical events (Bezeraj, Kreka and Dugolli, 2022) According to the recommendations of COE, history teaching should promote the values of democracy, tolerance, multiculturalism etc, to incite mutual understanding between citizens of all countries. This approach toward European recommendations has been considered a crucial contribution towards a common European future, overcoming the prejudices of the past.

Specifically, History 9 textbooks of Albania and Kosovo have been compiled in accordance with the ninth-grade curricula of lower secondary education in the Republic of Albania (Educational Development Institute 2019) and the Republic of Kosovo (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019). Approved by the relevant ministries. The subject of history is part of the curricular areas Society and Environment, and it is taught two times a week. The textbook content creates a balance between cognitive skills, pedagogical apparatus and used language. Meanwhile, the subject program is different in both textbooks of Albania and Kosovo. Specifically, "History 9" of Kosovo introduces students with the contemporary period (1914-2008), while "History 9" of Albania introduces students with the history of Albanians from antiquity to 2010. To make a correct analysis of the two textbooks of History 9 we must refer to the same period, the contemporary one, from 1914 to 2008. Since Albanian History 9 textbook analyses only the Albanian history, then it is necessary to analyse "History 8" textbook because it analyses the contemporary world history. This approach helps us to realize a representative analysis about the implementation of COE recommendations. Referring to the content analysis, the contemporary history is studied divided in two textbooks in Albania.

Using two textbooks (respectively History 8 and 9) for the same period does not manifest the implementation of one of COE Recommendation in history teaching. Therefore, it creates difficulties in integrating historical events into a single context. Specifically, local history should be part of world history context. Meanwhile, History 9 in Kosovo is compiled following this COE recommendation. This text is described by the idea of developing "history without borders", in a world without borders, integrating cognitive skills of both Albanian and world history. Such an approach creates a balanced relationship between national, European and world history, promoting democracy, diversity, tolerance, multiculturalism values. It also cultivates the values, attitudes, and behaviours of a

responsible citizen, who will accept and respect the identities, affiliations and cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientations, etc. The harmonization and integration of political, social, cultural, economic history as well as events from everyday life reflects the effort to implement COE recommendations on history teaching.

The second half of the twentieth century is characterized by numerous developments in the global context, referring also to the Cold War. European countries were positioned in a new world reality, part of which was Albania as a Balkan country, protagonist in the events of Cold War. To understand the concepts of this period students must know the main developments in the world context. History 9 textbook of Kosovo analyses both the global and the Albanian context in a single text. It is described and analyses the “new world order” set up after the end of Second World War, the main developments in Southeast Europe during Cold War, and Albanian and Kosovo geostrategic position in this period of time (Dërguti, *et al.*, 2018) So, Albanians history is introduced in the background of Balkans and Europe history. During the events of 1988-1990 in Eastern Europe and the fall of Berlin Wall there were great hopes for Albania and Kosovo toward democratic process. Albania's journey and its transition to democracy and market economy is analysed detached from the new European reality. Let's go again to History 9 textbook of Kosovo; the difficult transition of Albanian society and the movement of Kosovo toward independence goes in the same line with recommendations of Strasbourg Conference on "Education for Democratic Development and Stability in Southeast Europe", the Budapest Declaration for a "Greater Europe without dividing lines" and the Resolution (85) 6 on "European cultural identity and the importance of diversity in the common European wealth".

The last topics of History 9 textbooks of Albania introduce the integration processes in OTAN and EU, without detailed arguments about the importance of European integration of countries like Albania and Kosovo. Meanwhile, History 9 textbook of Kosovo makes a detailed analysis of the rights and responsibilities of EU member states, as well as highlights the status Quo of Balkan countries aspiring to become part of the European institutions. This textbook introduces the importance of collective security, institutions and decision-making as well as the concept of transitional justice in post-conflict countries, referring to “Improved Graz Process and Stability Pact,” as well as Recommendation (2001) 15 on “Teaching of History in Century Europe XXI”.

The topics of History 9 textbook of Kosovo include the recommendations of the Council of Ministers of Education for Environmental Education and Sustainable Development. According to it, importance should be given to the rational use of natural resources and the responsibility of states or international organizations for the preservation of the environment (Rexhepi, 2007). In this comparative approach between two textbooks, we must return to the above argument; we must see if the COE recommendations on environmental education topics have been implemented in History 8 or not. Besides the implementation of Resolution (85) 6, Recommendation (2001) 15 on the inclusion of environmental education in pre-university education textbooks, it is seen the implementation of other COE recommendations too. In this comparative approach (History 9 Kosovo vs. History 8 Albania – world history) we conclude that themes about globalization and its interdependence between different countries of the world, violent extremism and terrorism are the latest themes of contemporary history.

### 3.5 Data Analysis collected by questionnaire about teachers' perceptions

The data collected by questionnaire about the teachers' perceptions are performed in a descriptive analysis considering Albanian and Kosovo group of teachers. Regarding the Albanian teachers, analyzing their responses, we found that the sample is split in half as far as the knowledge they have about COE recommendations is concerned. However, we find that fewer teachers have knowledge about the recommendations as it shows in the answers given by the teachers presented in percentage values in the table below. Regarding item 11, on how much teachers are informed by their school administrators about the COE recommendation on history teaching, we see that the school

administrators in the Albanian schools have a significant role in information transmitted to teacher, as well as the impact of them in the development process of teachers' knowledge.

**Table 4:** Data about Teachers' knowledge

Albanian teachers						
Teachers Knowledge	I3	I7	I8	I9	I11	Tot.Med.(I3;I7;I8;I9)
Have knowledge	47%	43%	36%	56%	62%	45.5%
Don't have Knowledge	49%	49%	32%	45%	38%	43.7%

Concerning the same variable, teachers' knowledge of COE recommendation in the responses of Kosovo teachers, we see that more teachers respond that they have knowledge of such recommendations. Regarding the role of their school leaders, the sample of teachers is split in half as regards the information they receive about COE recommendation from their school leaders (see table below).

**Table 5:** Data about Teachers' knowledge

Kosovo teachers						
Teachers Knowledge	I3	I7	I8	I9	I11	Tot.Med. (I3;I7;I8;I9)
Have knowledge	53%	37%	72%	63%	49%	56.2%
Don't have Knowledge	35%	35%	27%	37%	51%	33.5%

Regarding teachers' perceptions about the implementation of COE recommendations in history teaching (Item 4), the data collected show that the Albanian teachers, to the question: "Have the recommendations of the COE been applied in the history texts?", only 9 of them (18% of the sample) responded positively and the 42 of them (72% of the sample) responded negatively. In questions 5 and 6, where teachers are asked how much of the values described in the COE recommendations are transmitted, the data collected from their answers show us the following:

**Table 6:** Data analyses about item 5, 6

Sample	Items	Not at all	0-20%	20%-50%	50%-70%	>70%
Albanian teacher (n=47)s	Item 5	3 (6%)	15 (32%)	15 (32%)	13 (28%)	1 (2%)
	Item 6	2 (4%)	10 (21%)	14 (30%)	9 (19%)	12 (26%)
Kosovo teachers (n=51)	Item 5	3 (6%)	18 (35%)	20 (39%)	6 (12%)	4 (8%)
	Item 6	7 (14%)	15 (29%)	10 (20%)	13 (25%)	6 (12%)

Regarding the participation of teachers in exchange projects of history teaching with their counterparts from similar educational institutions in the countries of the European Union, 94% (n = 49) of Albanian teachers replied that they had never taken part in a similar project. Only 6% (n = 3) replied that they have sometimes participated in exchange projects with homologate institutions of EU countries. Instead, teachers from Kosovo, 69% (n = 35) replied that they had never took part in exchange projects in history teaching with teachers from homolog institutions in EU countries. Only 31% (n = 16) of Kosovo teachers replied that they had taken part in teaching experience exchange projects with teachers from similar institutions in EU countries. As regards the integration of historical events in the political, economic, social-cultural fields (Item 12) and on different levels referring to the geographical extension of the events (Item 13), 91% (n = 43) of teachers Albanians and 82% (n = 42) of Kosovo teachers confirmed the integration of different aspects (political, economic, socio-cultural) in the presentation of historical events in school texts. While 74% (n = 35) of Albanian teachers and 69% (n = 35) of Kosovo teachers confirmed with their responses that historical events

are intertwined at diverse levels referring to geographical extension. Instead, on this data we find that 26% (n = 12) of Albanian teachers and 31% (n = 16) of Kosovo teachers do not perceive this intertwining of historical events in school history texts.

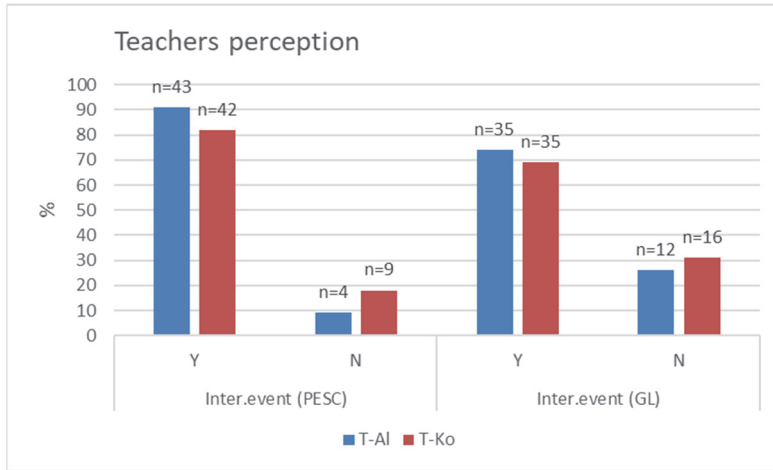


Figure 1: Teachers’ perception: interweaving of historical event

Regarding teachers' perception about “How truthful, non-manipulated, without political or religious prejudices, etc. are the textbooks of history?” (Item 18), the data was collected on a four-level rating scale, as reported below:

Table 7: Teachers’ perception about prejudices and objectiveness in history textbooks

Teachers	Teachers’ perception			
	>80%	50-80%	30-50%	need review
T-AL	43%	23%	4%	26%
T-Ko	22%	33%	22%	24%

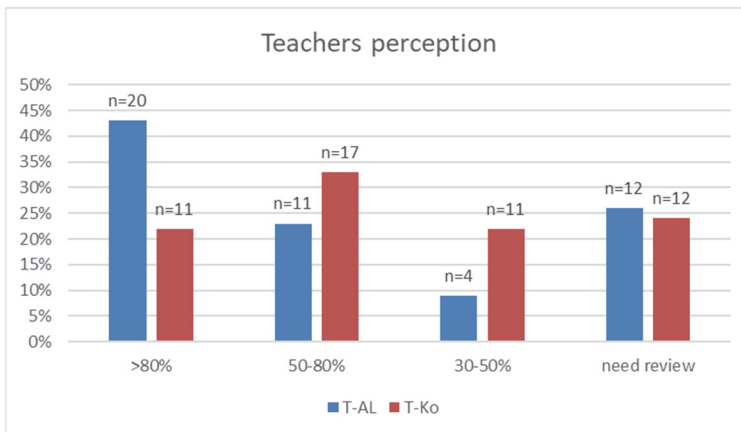


Figure 2: Teachers’ perception prejudices and objectiveness in history textbooks

Meanwhile, when they are asked about the willingness to propose changes at the curricular level on history textbooks referring to the COE recommendations (Item 17), teachers from both countries have expressed: 62% (n=29) of Albanian teachers say that changes should be include curricula framework, 9% (n=4) of them says that curricula shouldn't change, and 30% (n=14) of them are unsure.

#### 4. Conclusion

The approach to history has been characterized by one-sided interpretation of events for a long time and this has led to conflicts, clashes, and wars. Referring Eric Hobsbawm "history is the memory storage", so it is the duty of historians to "remember" and to not repeat historical events (Hobsbawm, 1995). Such intentions helped humanity to learn from the past, as well as to prevent prejudice between peoples.

The globalization means the "world without borders" toward a uniformity that today is manifested through the common language (English), clothing, consumption, behaviour, cultural and sports activities, etc. In this context appears the importance of "history without borders", as an integrating unit of political, social, cultural, and economic history (Filo, 2017). The essence of "common histories" concept can be identified in the dialectical interaction of the subjects involved in a historical event. By analyzing aspects of a certain historical event, they consider all the interactions, convergences, conflicts, making the methodological approach more complex and productive. This approach allows the unraveling and interpretation of stereotypes, myths of identity, negative visions of the other, consequently, in this way, can lead to an intercultural dialogue without conflicts. It unfolds history in all its complexity, promoting the values of democracy, tolerance, and cooperation. History textbooks should be used for the future perspective, especially in the development of concepts like "learning to live together" or "educating pluralism". It is especially important that historical dates that create tensions, antagonisms or conflicts serve as an incentive for reconciliation, cooperation and understanding between peoples. History should not be explained as something "once upon a time", but as today and tomorrow history, creating a balanced relationship between national history, European history, and world history.

Referring to the recommendations of COE, the sense of national identity should firstly be strengthened and secondly should be expanded the European dimension in the study of history. In this way, young people are prepared to live in a multicultural society dominated by a culture of peace and tolerance. These are the right values that history textbooks should transmit.

Educational governing structures in Albania and Kosovo have tried to design a curricular framework, preparing the legal basis as a condition for general change. There was no curricular framework in Albania until 2014 (Ministry of Educational and Sport, 2004). The design of curricular framework started referring to the analysis of the education system and the educational reforms undertaken up to that time. The changes affected the whole structure of the education system, the curricula, and the management systems. The new curricular framework was a necessity for a democratic education, considering the requirements for equal opportunities towards quality education. In this way, the education system in Albania detached from the traditional system to a learning area and competencies-based system. At the same time, it was valued cultural, linguistic diversity, contemporary information, and communication technologies, giving students the confidence to challenge the global environment. Kosovo went through the same educational reforms and developments.

Based on the concerns and challenges raised during the practical implementation, external evaluations, and recommendations of various local and international experts, in 2016 was revised the Curricula Framework of 2011. The revised Curricula aimed to develop competency-based education in lifelong learning, to ensure the quality of education and to create sustainable and trending education system with the developments and demands of the time. The next step was designing textbooks according to the relevant curricular areas.

Although the whole curricular framework is permeated by COE recommendations, the assessments of national and international agencies showed that the quality of student achievement was not pleasing, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire system in Albania and Kosovo. Recognizing latest experiences and developments, it was paid attention to the COE recommendations in history teaching. History textbooks should be evaluated for their role and importance in educational and training of students with the values and ideals of democracy. Author textbooks should not only be familiar with COE recommendations but should also reflect them within the text. In this process, the teacher's role should be evaluated because they develop student's knowledge and competencies. Appreciating this significant factor, we designed a questionnaire for history teachers in Albania, and a questionnaire for history teachers in Kosovo, considering them as a key factor in development students' competencies.

The analysis of the questionnaire data helps us to understand the factors that influence the implementation of COE recommendations in history textbooks. Firstly, the working group in higher education that designs curricular framework should know and implement the European recommendations within the framework. Secondly, author textbooks should recognize COE recommendations and designs textbook following this recommendation. Thirdly, continuous training and lifelong learning of teachers and other educational staff is a principal factor in achieving the goals through history teaching. In this contact should be considered the role of universities in teacher training. Finally, we can say that in addition to formal education, informal education plays a significant role in the implementation of COE recommendations in history teaching, through NGOs, associations, and other groups.

Referring to data analysis collected through the questionnaire, it is noted that the knowledge of Albanian teachers about COE recommendations is lower than the knowledge of Kosovo teachers. The analysis of the perceptions of Albanian teachers on the implementation of COE recommendations in the current history textbooks shows that these recommendations have been implemented at low levels. Meanwhile, regarding teachers' suggestions to change curricula and history textbooks, 1/4 of the teachers of Albania and Kosovo are in favor of the above changes. Most of them admit that textbooks have prejudices, manipulations, and low objectivity. This study is not exhaustive but is the beginning of a series of studies in elaborating other aspects and factors that affect the implementation of COE recommendations. In the case of countries like Albania and Kosovo, which recognize and implement COE recommendations in their curricular framework would be more helpful to set standard models by COE, which would help in a better progress of the complete process.

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