



REPORT PARIS EVENT

PRESENTATION

The event took place on Wednesday 17 March 2010 at the Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris, France. The participants were invited to reflect on the following question 'History of Migrations in France and Europe: which challenges for the classrooms?' Lectures by French and international speakers offered an insight in the way migration history is taught in schools in France and Europe. Round-tables attended by small groups of participants gave the opportunity to learn and exchange ideas about innovative educational practices related to the topic of discussion. Participants had the possibility to visit the exhibitions held at the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration on the history of immigration in France. The event was organised jointly by the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration (CNHI), the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO), the French Association of History and Geography Teachers (APHG) and the National Institute for Pedagogical Research (INRP). This extended partnership within the Connecting Europe through History project was set up by EUROCLIO with the intention to widen the impact of the event and reach out to French teachers thanks to the networks of APHG, CNHI and INRP.

The seminar aimed to bring together a wide audience of teachers and various stakeholders in the field of education and research, as well as other areas of the civil society. The event was widely promoted by all partners involved on their respective website and magazine or newsletter. Several other websites posted the announcement (see www.migrationmuseums.org). Several contacts from the scientific community disseminated the announcement in their university or institute (Paris I – Sorbonne, Sciences Po, EHESS, Paris 8). (History) education sections of institutions such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe were informed. School teachers were contacted through the local educational authorities.

The organisers all contributed to give the event a European-wide dimension by contacting and/or inviting foreign experts on migration history and related didactical issues to contribute to the event. Giving room to comparisons across borders during the seminar was a key challenge which EUROCLIO stressed from the beginning and which all partners saw as the added value of the event. The cooperation with APHG was the most obvious for EUROCLIO as APHG is a member organisation, and the seminar was a unique opportunity to strengthen the links already existing. The CNHI was approached for the first time by EUROCLIO as a well-known institution dedicated to immigration history, with a proved pedagogical expertise through projects and research. The CNHI hosted the seminar, opened the doors of its exhibitions to the participants and provided all technical support needed for the organisation of the event. Researchers from INRP worked together with the CNHI to produce a report on how history of immigration is taught in France. The report was published a few months before the seminar, and served as a basis for discussions and comparisons during the event. The variety of partners involved (teachers' associations of national and European level, a cultural institution and a research institute) illustrates how migration history is a key topic to be addressed from a variety of angles.

OVERVIEW

83 people attended the seminar 'History of Migrations in France and Europe: which challenges for the classrooms?' at the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration on Wednesday March 17 2010. The event was opened by Patricia Sitruk, director of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Jacques Moret, director of the Institut national de recherche pédagogique and Bernard Phan, vice-president of the Association des Professeurs d'Histoire et de Géographie and member of the scientific committee of the CNHI. Blandine Smilansky from EUROCLIO presented the project Connecting Europe through History and the partner organisations EUROCLIO, EUROPÆUM and ISHA to the audience and explained how central was the theme of migration history in the work of EUROCLIO and its partners.

The day was divided in two main parts, one plenary session in the morning and three parallel round tables in the afternoon. Between these two parts participants had the opportunity to visit the CNHI's permanent exhibition 'Repères, deux siècles d'histoire de l'immigration en France' (two centuries of immigration history in France), or to follow a guided tour through the temporary exhibition 'Génération, un siècle d'histoire culturelle des Maghrébins en France' (a century of cultural history of immigrants from the Maghreb in France).

- 1- The key-note lectures in the morning presented results of research projects conducted in a variety of countries about the status of (im)migration history in textbooks, curricula and classroom practices in France and Europe:
 - Dr Christiane Hintermann, from the Institute Ludwig Boltzmann for European History and Public Spheres in Vienna, Austria, presented a research conducted in cooperation with a researcher from the University of Malmö in Sweden. It consists in a comparative analysis of school textbooks and (im)migration exhibitions in Sweden and Austria centering on the question of how the history of (im)migration as well as (im)migrants themselves and their histories are collectively remembered and represented.
 - Dr Charles Heimberg, from the university of Geneva, Switzerland, talked about migration history in school curricula in Switzerland, Italy and Spain.
 - Benoit Falaize, from the Institut national de recherche pédagogique in Lyon, France, presented the main findings of a report he wrote in 2009, *Enseigner l'histoire de l'immigration à l'école* (Teaching history of immigration at school), a rather unique research project in the sense that it investigates not the textbooks nor the curricula but the classroom practices themselves.
- 2- The parallel round tables in the afternoon gave a more practical insight into how to introduce migration history in the classrooms. Teachers, cultural mediators and other actors of the educational field presented inspiring examples of untouched topics and creative projects and thus showed how diverse and innovative can be the teaching approaches to migration history. The results of the round-tables were presented by the rapporteurs during a concluding plenary session.
 - One session dealing with the topic 'the Germanic invasions' was an invitation to reflect on the deconstruction of stereotypes in history teaching. Dr Rainer Riemenschneider from the G. Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany, showed how discourses on the Germanic invasions reflected in French and German history textbooks shifted away from two nationalistic monologues towards narratives in which shared understanding and meeting points are possible. Vincent Marie, high school history teacher from Nîmes, presented an example of good teaching practice using visual sources (mainly paintings) to deconstruct the stereotype of the 'barbarian' as it is presented sometimes when dealing with the Germanic invasions.

- In a session on workers' migration Charles Heimberg, teacher trainer from Geneva, Switzerland, talked about the status of seasonal workers in Switzerland after WW2. He promoted the introduction of more social history in the classrooms, based on this example of working migration after WW2 as a topic which can help students to understand the mentalities of that time. Laurence De Cock, high school teacher in Nanterre, had a presentation on the massacre of Italian immigrant workers in Aigues mortes (South West of France) in 1893 and questioned the reasons why such event was afterwards forgotten. Her presentation offered a variety of sources, from official documents to individual testimonies, and was thus a very rich example of how local history can be used in the classroom.
- The third round-table intended to inspire teachers and other educational actors on how to set up projects dealing with migration history and how the topic is addressed in other countries. Najjia Zeghoud and Alain Barbé from the CNHI presented the pedagogical work of the institution: online teaching modules ready for the classroom and school partnerships. They described a variety of initiatives conducted recently, with a special focus on a project in which 13 year old students from Fontenay-sous-Bois examined the process of settlement of migrant populations in their own city through the development of football clubs. Umberto Baldocchi, an Italian high school teacher and teacher trainer, exposed the results of a transnational project entitled Europe, a Continent of Migrants. In this project teachers and teacher trainers from 5 different European countries worked on innovative teaching modules using life trajectories of migrants and fostering active learning and multiperspective approaches. Benny Christensen, high school teacher from Odense, Denmark, exposed how the history of migrations is addressed in his country within the cultural studies curriculum. He based his talk on the topic he studied this year with his classroom 'Danish Identity – Cultural Encounters'.

Ralph Schor, professor of contemporary history at Sophia Antipolis University and expert on migration history presented in a final talk his reflections on the results of the day and the ways to think further.

ANALYTIC DESCRIPTION

Who attended the event?

History teachers clearly constituted the main group (31 participants), with 22 from secondary level (14 high school teachers), 6 from primary level; 4 other teachers did not mention the level they teach to.

- ✓ The fact that no teachers from other disciplines seem to have attended the event has to be noticed. Indeed, it is in contradiction with the fact that migration history offers a lot of opportunities for a multi-disciplinary work, as it was mentioned during the presentations and discussions.
- ✓ The participation of a good number of teachers was a satisfaction for the organisers given the difficulties they had to leave their school for an event which is not considered a registered training day by the local educational authorities (rectorat).
- ✓ Because the seminar was not organised with any official support, there was no financial means to help teachers from outside Paris and its region to travel in order to participate, and hardly any of them were present.

The second group of participants consists in staff members from national and local educational authorities (16 participants), mainly inspectors for history and geography. This group includes also teacher trainers, with at least 4 of them identified as such. One former teacher trainer from the Netherlands participated.

13 participants came from various associations mostly active in the field of cultural dialogue, with one of them based in Luxembourg.

The academic world was represented by 12 participants, approximately half of them university teachers and the other half post graduate students. The international dimension was slightly more important in this group with a professor from NYC University, one from Luxemburg; one student from Greece, one from Italy and one from Belgium. The fields represented were not only history but also political sciences and psychology.

2 social workers completed the group, and 6 persons did not mention their profession.

What did the participants expect from the event?

The idea that history of immigration is still insufficiently addressed in the classrooms was the starting point of the initiative and a common concern for all organisers and participants. In the case of France, this situation was highlighted in 2009 in the report by INRP (Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique) which was presented and commented during the seminar by its author Benoit Falaize¹. Indeed, the history of (im)migration is not seen as a school topic like the others, but more as something to be addressed through either great ambitious projects, or on the contrary, cautious and discrete researches on family memories. The participants, most of them active until the end of the day, insisted on the need to give more consideration to this theme and to develop nontraditional ways to address it. There is in particular in the case of school history a need to go beyond a conception of (im)migration restricted to only colonisation and the end of the empire.

What was the added value of the event for the participants?

The presentations and discussions of the day offered an opportunity to draw interesting comparisons on a variety of levels: comparison between countries of course, but also between teaching methods, and between former and present curricula and textbooks. A very stimulating reflection developed throughout the day on the basis of these comparisons, which combined the theoretical approach questioning the discourse on (im)migration as a historical object, and the practical approach aiming to inspire and give tools to educators.

The European dimension of this seminar was for a lot of participants a new experience, which they very much appreciated despite the linguistic obstacle. Teachers were enthusiastic about the opportunity they got to discover how teachers were working with similar issues in other countries. One of them even mentioned that such transnational initiative should take a few days instead of only one in order to prolong the dialogue and go deeper into the shared understanding of a sensitive topic. The reactions to Benny Christensen's presentation on the teaching of migration in Denmark history were telling of the participants' interest. The teaching practice in Denmark presents some striking differences with the one in France, with a very open history curriculum and a more hands on approach of the topics. Some participants were really surprised that this kind of methods could actually be implemented and turn successful. Even if they kept critical and did not totally adhere to the idea, they expressed their satisfaction to hear about such alternative way of teaching by the teacher himself.

What were the main findings of the seminar?

¹ Benoit Falaize (dir.), *Enseigner l'histoire de l'immigration à l'école*, CNHI et INRP, 2009.

As Christiane Hintermann showed in her lecture, curricula as well as corresponding textbooks in many countries no longer depart from a solely national perspective but emphasize nowadays the “wider world” as a reference point. A significant shift have been made in most cases towards a less negative depiction of the encounters with “the other” and a positive emphasis on the importance of intercultural exchange. The ‘thematization’ of immigration issues in history and civic education is used as a way to work towards countering prejudices and xenophobic tendencies in society.

In this context teachers are compelled to become more militant: they are commissioned to not only transmit knowledge but educated the students, the core of their work becomes the transmission of values (the promotion of ‘the good’). This situation creates a tension between history and civic education. One is more and more tempted to define his teaching practice in relation to present challenges. The issues related to the ‘living together’ become more important than the history itself, as Charles Heimberg explained in his lecture. Textbooks illustrate such evolution with the use of sources from a more and more recent past (for instance the French soccer team winner of the World Cup in 1998 in order to talk about a multicultural country). In this respect the comparison which was made by Charles Heimberg with the situation in Spain is interesting: there, this dominant concern for the present is illustrated by the fact that migrations are exclusively addressed in geography classes, not at all in history classes (with the exception of the region of Galicia).

The risk exists therefore to give more importance to the moral ends than to the historical objectivity and the methodology which goes with it. In the name of diversity and generosity a kind of ‘laissez-aller’ can sometimes be observed in the definition of the historical object or the selection of sources which have to first convey a message (the example was given of a confusion between French citizens from overseas departments and French citizens who immigrated from other countries in the interpretation of a picture in one textbook).

The education to diversity and multiculturalism applies to different subjects and disciplines. The teaching of history cannot be totally identified to it and has to keep its specificity and distance from an intercultural learning which answers some social requirements. In the case of migration, the historical point of view take into consideration a different timeframe and shows how (im)migration is an old phenomenon. Migration history can be used to show complexities in time, but also in the definition of identity: the construction of an image of the other within a given society also helps to understand how this very society used to see or still sees itself.

RESULTS

- ✓ The **local participation** was a success with more than 70 French teachers, members of the educational staff and other actors of the civil society (see above). This is a true especially because this day was not officially freed for teachers willing to receive training.
- ✓ The **programme** was rich and diverse enough to fulfill the goals set for the event, mainly the transnational sharing of knowledge and good practices on the history of migration. Indeed, the speakers came from various countries (France but also Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Switzerland) and professional backgrounds (historians, pedagogical experts, history teachers, teacher trainers and cultural mediators)
- ✓ The **partnership** between EUROCLIO, APHG, CNHI and INRP was a unique and very fruitful experience (despite the differences of commitment amongst the partners) and the cooperation between these organisations strengthened the impact of the event.

- ✓ The theme of the seminar was especially relevant in the French political context of the period when it was organised, and the initiative was successful in its attempt to at the same time use this momentum and propose a distanced perspective on issues such as multiculturalism and diversity.

CHALLENGES

- ✓ The international participation was rather limited for this event (not more than 10 foreign participants), mainly due to the fact that the seminar was mostly in French with no possibility for simultaneous translation. The focus of the event was also very much on teaching practices, therefore targeted to teachers, and obviously the participation was easier for French ones.
- ✓ The integration to the overall project was clearly mentioned during the promotion of the event and at the beginning of the event itself. Leaflets, logos and power point presentations were widely disseminated for this purpose. However, the fact that the event itself was organised in coordination with additional French partners which also brought the majority of the participants certainly blurred somehow the link to the umbrella project Connecting Europe through History.
- ✓ The fact that a number of participants did not speak English and some of the speakers did not speak French created some extra work and sometimes some slight delays and difficulties of communication. Due to the fact that there were not enough financial means to have simultaneous translation, some presentations had to be translated in advance, and/or translated consecutively.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- ✓ The plenary session of the morning has been (partly) recorded and will be available in the library of the CNHI and on the EUROCLIO website.
- ✓ The Connecting Europe through History survey has been translated into French and sent to all participants (only 2 of them sent it back until now)
- ✓ APHG will publish a report of the event in French in the magazine *Historiens et Géographes*
- ✓ The cooperation between EUROCLIO and APHG will be strengthened in future projects such as Historiana and on the occasion of the APHG's 100th anniversary. Contacts will be kept with the other partners and possibilities to cooperate in the future will be explored. The 3 French partners stressed their interest in getting more European and comparative perspective in their work, and became convinced that working with EUROCLIO in the frame of the Connecting Europe through History project or in other circumstances was a successful way to bring in such perspective.

ATTACHEMENTS

- ✓ Programme (to be translated in English?)
- ✓ Participants list (paper version received at the office)
- ✓ Photos of the event (Eleni?)