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Reinhold Hedtke

Country Report

Twenty-five years of the European dimension in education in Croatia: Research origins, theoretical deficiencies, and the future development pathway

Marko Turk

University of Tyumen, Russia

Keywords: european dimension in education, the development chronology, theoretical framework, political praxiology of education

- The European dimension in education was formed as a multilateral project of the Council of Europe and the European Union to improve European integration processes.
- From the scholarly perspective, the development of the European dimension in education in Croatia is analysed from 1996 until 2020
- Political praxiology of education is introduced as a possible theoretical framework for future development.

Purpose: This paper aims to present the twenty-five-year evolving pathway of the European dimension in education in Croatia. Furthermore, the paper critically problematises the lack of a theoretical framework that has marked this concept's research and partly contributed to its conceptual dispersion and scholarly ambiguity.

Design: The paper design is based on chronological and content analysis of the European dimension in education development, primarily focusing on the Croatian context. The period analysed is from 1996, when the first paper on the European dimension in education in Croatia was published until 2020.

Findings: The development frame of the European dimension in education is proposed, with an overview of appurtenant phases, followed by chronological and detailed elaborated thematic groups. As an answer to detected theoretical deficiencies, the political praxiology of education is introduced as a direction of its future theoretical development and a partly new shift in the conceptual definition of the European dimension in education is proposed.


Corresponding author:

Marko Turk, University of Tyumen, School of Advanced Studies, Ulitsa 8 Marta 2/1, 625000 Tyumen, m.turk@utmn.ru

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1 INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION: FROM THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION TO THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF TEACHING

The European dimension in education, the European dimension of education, or the Europeanization of education was formed as a multilateral project of the Council of Europe and the European Union (in that time the European Community) to improve European integration processes (Zidarić, 1996). Ledić, Miočić and Turk (2016) pointed out that the first indications of the concept of the European dimension in education might be found in the 1953 European Cultural Convention. The indications are reflected in the commitment to studying the language, history, and civilisation of all member states and their harmonisation to promote cultural activities of European interest. The following focal year is 1957, when the Treaty of Rome was signed, creating the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Although the Treaty of Rome did not explicitly emphasise the European dimension in education, education was not wholly neglected. There was a more significant focus on vocational training policies, which is necessary for the harmonious development of the national and common labour market and building a common European educational area.

The concept's first policy definition was introduced at the 1973 meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education of the European Union. However, it is essential to emphasise that several events preceded the meeting. In July 1972, the European Commission invited the former Belgian Minister of Education and Culture and Professor of the Free University of Brussels Henri Janne to draw up a report defining the direction of European Community education policies development. The Report's key starting point should have been the Treaty of Rome's conclusions, which focus educational policies on joint actions to encourage teachers and pupils' mobility and reduce and/or abolish administrative, social, and linguistic barriers within the Community.¹

Professor Janne compiled a report, "For Community Policy on Education", better known as the Janne Report. The Report emphasises in particular "... *the irreversible recognition of an educational dimension of Europe*" (Janne, 1973, 10) and the commitment that "*Teaching should have a European dimension wherever possible. In this context geography, history, cultural, political and civic education can be mentioned.*" (Janne, 1973, 26). As specific objectives for developing European Community education, the Report highlights the following: need to learn and teach (foreign) languages; develop mobility process and (educational) exchange, and cooperation; invest in continuing education, and new educational technologies. The document is considered crucial for further developing the European dimension in education and an indispensable element of the future development of European education policy.

In the following years, the concept of the European dimension in education built its development pathway primarily based on the strategic documents of European education policies. *The Resolution of the Ministers of Education* (1976) states that the European Community will promote the European dimension to pupils and teachers in primary and secondary schools, develop services to promote mobility, and continuously encourage

teachers' training on European education policies. The *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning the promotion of awareness of Europe in secondary schools* from 1983 emphasises the importance of member state governments to promote European awareness to secondary school pupils and teachers as much as possible. In June 1985, Pietro Adonin Italian member of European Parliament drafted the *Report from the Ad Hoc Committee 'On a People's Europe'* or *Adonnino Report* which in the chapter on the European picture emphasises, in particular, the importance of giving "... a new impetus to the European dimension in education." (Adonnino, 1985: 24). In 1988, the Council of Ministers of Education issued a *Resolution on the European dimension in education*, proposing several measures to implement the European dimension in education. The importance of school curricula and teaching materials is emphasised. Furthermore, teaching (foreign) languages and literature, history and geography, and new fields, economics/ entrepreneurship and art, as school subjects suitable for implementing the European dimension. In 1989, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe issued a *Report of the Committee on Culture and Education*, which highlighted two aspects: 1) the European dimension in education is not a substitute for a school subject(s), and 2) foreign language learning is a fundamental prerequisite for its development.

The *Resolution on the European dimension in education: teaming and curriculum content* from 1991 emphasise fostering the European community and developing a European identity through education. *Treaty of Maastricht on European Union* from 1992, in addition to being essential for the creation of the European Union, in the chapter "Education, Training and Youth" emphasises the importance of further developing the European dimension in education through foreign language learning, encouraging mobility, development of cooperation between educational institutions and distance learning. In 1993, the European Commission published a *Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education*. Green Paper determines the goals and subject of the European dimension in education and the possibilities of joint actions by defining strategies and instruments of action. The concept of the European dimension in education is seen as an "added" value to educational content. It emphasises European citizenship's contribution based on the shared values of interdependence, democracy, equal opportunities and mutual respect to improve the quality of education and assist pupils in social integration. The Green Paper emphasises that teachers and pupils need to be trained to overcome language and cultural barriers and learn about the common European heritage. It also highlights the need to invest in lifelong learning programs, the development of e-learning at all educational levels and especially emphasises the development of teachers' and pupils' linguistic competencies.

It is indisputable that the end of the 1980s and the decade of the 1990s, from a *policy* perspective, can be considered as a ramifying period for developing the concept of the European dimension in education. That is also confirmed by Diestro Fernandez (2014). The author considers the period of the 1990s to be the most important for developing the European dimension in education based on European institutions' *policy* documents.

The idea of the European dimension in education in the following years was (in)directly the subject of numerous documents and reports at the level of the European Union - Lisbon Strategy (2000), Copenhagen Declaration (2002), Maastricht Declaration (2004), Helsinki Declaration (2006) and the Bordeaux Statement (2008). In 2000, the Lisbon Strategy set a very ambitious goal that envisioned Europe becoming the most dynamic and competitive economic area in the world in the ensuing ten years, based on knowledge, and capable of sustainable economic growth with the highest employment rate and strong social cohesion. Unfortunately, a report on the Lisbon Strategy from 2005 revealed disappointing results, which were a consequence of too broadly defined goals, an overly extensive programme, insufficient coordination and contradictory priorities, as well as the insufficiently clear distribution of responsibility between the European and national levels (Kesner-Škreb, 2008). In the following years, the European Union issued several pronouncements on the issues of education, but not one explicitly dealt with the expression *European dimension*, as had been the case in the 1970s. Nevertheless, the European dimension was, in a more or less straightforward manner, integrated into those documents. For example, in the *Copenhagen Declaration* from 2002, which focuses primarily on vocational education and training, the following is stated as one of the main priorities: "*Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners*" (p. 2). The *Maastricht Communiqué* (2004) provides a review of the Copenhagen Declaration, and it focuses on the future priorities for the enhancement of European cooperation in vocational education and training.

Furthermore, in 2006 the *Helsinki Communiqué* was signed, and in 2008 the *Bordeaux Communiqué* as well, both with the same goal – to enhance cooperation in vocational education. "*From Copenhagen to Maastricht, Helsinki and Bordeaux, a European VET area is being built, based on transparency and mutual trust.*" (p. 2, Bordeaux Communiqué). An analysis of the mentioned policy documents suggests that the beginning of the 21st century has been marked by a focus on vocational education and its empowerment in the Member States. This finding is expected since, in the mentioned period, most member states and countries in accession negotiations faced numerous challenges of vocational education and requirements for its essential reform (Sos, 2015).

In 2009, a new strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training known as *Education and Training 2020* was introduced, and it established the objectives for the period up to 2020. The European dimension can be recognised in four strategic objectives: (1) to implement lifelong learning and mobility; (2) to enhance the quality and efficiency of education and training; (3) to promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; and (4) to stimulate creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all educational and training levels. In the following year, education

was listed as one of the main strategic goals of the *European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Growth* (Europe 2020). In the context of education, and especially mobility, the *European Qualifications Framework (EQF)* should be highlighted, with its goal of connecting the national qualification systems and facilitating their recognition in the European area. Besides the free movement of workers on the labour market, the EQF supports greater mobility of workers and students and more accessible access and participation in lifelong learning, which, if viewed from a broader perspective, contributes to the union of European cultures and peoples.

In the following years, the European dimension in education was only an element in the traces of European *policy* documents, not alluding to the repudiation of its importance, but as a concept did not take a strategic focus. However, its indicators were evident in European policy direction - identity, active citizenship, multilingualism and mobility, values, and social cohesion.² Although, it should be noted that the key strategic document for the development of Europe until 2025 - *White Paper on the Future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025* issued in 2017, education mentions only once contextualise it in the debate related to lifelong learning due to the ageing European population. Such findings can exceedingly indicate Europe's educational future and lead to the question - how does Europe plan its future with a minimal focus on education? However, in the same year, the European Commission issued a communication document between the European Commission and the European Parliament - *Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture*, which emphasises developing the social dimension and strengthening European identity through guided education with the slogan "unity in diversity".

For twenty-five years after the issuance of the final *policy* document, which focused on a European dimension in education (Green Paper from 1993), in the year 2018 was delivered *Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching*. The Recommendation's implementation brings together around 20 actions through various policies and programs in education, youth policy, culture and sport, and to promote shared values and inclusive education. There is no doubt that particular emphasis is placed on the social dimension and inclusive education and the European dimension's earlier determinants. What is particularly indicative is that instead of discussing the (European dimension in) education, the (European dimension) of teaching starts to be addressed. In this way, the European dimension's implementation is increasingly directed towards the teaching process and, consequently, towards teachers as crucial stakeholders in its implementation. The same terminology is used in the most recent communication document of the European Commission and the European Parliament from 2020 - *On achieving the European Education Area by 2025*. The document, referring to all previous indicators of the European dimension, uses the exact name of the concept as the Recommendation from 2018 - the European dimension of teaching.

Even though there is no policy explanation for why the concept has been reduced (from education to teaching) from the scholarly perspective, possible (hidden) reasons should be discussed. It might be assumed that policymakers want to underline teaching importance and teachers' role in implementing and further developing the concept's mechanisms. Moreover, such a conclusion would not be surprising considering that teachers in primary and secondary schools are accentuated as an essential key point in these processes. Contrarily, this turnover might be analysed as a reduction in the concept's wider scope and focusing responsibility of its implementation only on prescribed regulations, which does not leave a place for teacher's autonomy and freedom, and potentially resulting in meritocratic or authoritarian rather than democratic or participative teaching and learning. Such an interpretation might be approached from Arendt's (1954) debate about teachers' responsibility in introducing the world reality to the pupils and Giroux's (2010) critical pedagogy positions. According to Arendt (1954), in education, this responsibility for the world takes the form of authority. Additionally, she asserts, *"The authority of the educator and the qualifications of the teacher are not the same thing. Although a measure of qualification is indispensable for authority, the highest possible qualification can never by itself beget authority. The teacher's qualification consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it, but his authority rests on his assumption of responsibility for that world."* (Arendt, 1954: 179). In line with that, Giroux (2010) views schools as laboratories of democracy and teachers as critical intellectuals whose role is to offer pupils an opportunity to understand education. He perceives that as a concrete reminder that the struggle for democracy is, in part, *"...an attempt to liberate humanity from the blind obedience to authority and that individual and social agency gain meaning primarily through the freedoms guaranteed by the public sphere, where the autonomy of individuals only becomes meaningful under those conditions that guarantee the workings of an autonomous society."* (Giroux, 2010: 713). Suppose both positions and identified policy reduction of the European dimension in education are taken into account. In that case, it might be questioned if teachers' will have a position for developing their qualifications and authority concerning the responsibility for the world and how they might be perceived as critical educational intellectuals bound by (strict) policy instructions and instructional regulations. However, that would be left for further discussions and analysis since the European education policy still has not elaborated what this reduction has meant and what it would mean in educational practice.

The presented analysis shows that the concept of the European dimension in education "owes" its foundation and development to European educational policies. However, the challenges of its terminological definition and the impossibility of unambiguous definition should be emphasised and discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The latter is especially noticeable in various terminological definitions from the initial stage of the concept's development (European dimension in education, the European dimension of education or Europeanization of education) and even more emphasised in the recent revisions (from the European dimension to education to the European dimension of

teaching). Therefore, it can be concluded that it will be intriguing to follow its evolutionary pathway in the future and consequently detect the focus and direction of development of European educational policies. From an academic perspective, such terminological changes, which educational policymakers introduced *ad hoc* without valid and scholarly set reasoning and argumentation, can be a starting point for questioning the research-based approach to European education policymaking.

2 THE ROAD TO INFINITY OR HOW TO DEFINE THE CONCEPT OF THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION?

One of the fundamental challenges in discussing the European dimension in education is conceptual (in)definition and terminological dispersion. Among the first authors, Shennan (1991) defines the European dimension in education as a dynamic and evolving concept of educating pupils "about Europe, in Europe, and for Europe". Ryba (1992) emphasises the terminological contraposition in the concept's definition - unity and diversity, which the author interprets as a growing togetherness of the European Union countries and the broader family of the countries over the European continent. Those interpretations lead the author to the conclusion, which imposes the need to introduce a common (European) dimension in school curriculum content. However, the intention is not to develop a supra-national standard European curriculum but rather to add a transversal theme to the national curriculum (Ryba, 1995: 26). It is a response to "the need to help young people in European countries to understand the new situation in which they are increasingly finding themselves, to know something of the new rights and responsibilities which this new situation brings and to develop their capacities to act sensibly, if they should wish to do so, within this additional, rather than alternative, European context" (Ryba, 1995: 27). Tulasiewicz and Brock (1994) define the European dimension in education through knowledge, skills and attitudes. As a knowledge dimension, pupils should be informed about the European continent and possess language, communication and social skills. At the same time, attitudes should imply a commitment to the development of European identity and awareness. Sultana's (1995) approach has a broader perspective discussing the European dimension in education. The author refers to the curricular and extracurricular modes by which schools are being encouraged to teach pupils "...not only information and knowledge about the European Union but also an emotional identification with Europe..." (Sultana, 1995: 131).

Additionally, he underlines "...that it is not just a question of learning about Europe, but learning to be European, a familiarisation with European institutions, but also the inculcation of a European identity, conscience and citizenry" (Sultana, 1995: 131). Ritchie (1997) points to the confusion of the term and the possibility of its diverse and comprehensive interpretation that encompasses a wide range of indicators. From identity and values issues, democracy, multiculturalism and interculturalism, tolerance, solidarity, human rights, social equality, and justice to various (practical) implementation

and implementing activities - multilingualism and mobility, project activities and civic participation. Walterová and Ježková (1999) point out that this is a concept present in the education system that improves understanding of the broader European context and educational perspectives, opening global thinking and intercultural understanding horizons.

For the study of the concept of the European dimension in education, the definition given by Seebauer (2002) can be considered particularly important, and it can be compared with the earlier interpretation of Tulasiewicz and Brock (1994). The author emphasises that this concept includes cognitive (knowledge about Europe) and affective (attitudes and experiences about Europe) dimensions. The author emphasises that defining the European dimension in education must be approached from a broader, predominantly qualitative discourse that includes anthropological, cultural, cognitive, emancipatory, egalitarian, economic and social perspectives. In doing so, a grounded theoretical framework will be necessary for each of these perspectives, depending on the authors' disciplinary starting positions who will deal with it (Seebauer, 2002). Hence, the author points to two critical elements in the research of the European dimension in education. The first is that it is an interdisciplinary concept that needs to be explored from the perspectives of various disciplines, and it is impossible to perceive it as an isolated concept inherent to one disciplinary pattern. The second refers to the necessity to approach research on the European dimension in education based on analyses of European educational policy documents and a clearly defined theoretical framework.

Following the previous conceptual determinants, Philippou (2005) defines the European dimension in education as the promotion and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in Europe, about Europe and for Europe. Also, the author highlights two approaches in the concepts' research - *prescriptive* based on the analysis of policy documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe, and *research* which starts from theoretical and research questions about the concepts' goals, principles and content (Philippou, 2005). The approach that Philippou (2005) defines as prescriptive could also be called *prescriptive-implementing*.³ Namely, European education policy documents, in addition to prescribing (or answering the question "What needs to be done?"), very often provide implementation mechanisms (answering the question "How to be done?"). With a stronger emphasis on the implementation element, it is possible to analyse the works published in the following period.

Convery and Kerr (2005) define the European dimension in education as the concept of (European) identity, cooperation and integration. The authors underline the importance of developing a common European identity, without neglecting national and local identities, developing cooperation activities (voluntary and philanthropic) and political, legal and economic integration that would enable active citizens of the Union, European status and supranational rights and duties. Furthermore, Savvides (2008) defines the European dimension in education through direct implementation mechanisms such as pupils' stay in diverse cultural and linguistic environments, promoting the European

dimension through curricula, language learning, empowerment through subjects such as history, geography and economics, extracurricular activities, pupil excursions, the celebration of national and European holidays and pupil simulations of key European bodies such as Parliament and the Council. Similarly, Wahlström (2010) defines the European dimension in education through the four determinants of European citizenship - 1) knowledge of European history, current events, cultural heritage, institutions and human rights; 2) conflict resolution skills and intercultural competencies; 3) attitudes towards the European institutions, multilingualism, openness and acceptance, as well as 4) a sense of European identity and the regional identity of Europe.

Diestro Fernández (2014) also contributed to the European dimension in education scholarly development. The author understands this concept as a pedagogical paradigm of European heritage and culture and an essential aspect of European supranational education policy. Also, Diestro Fernández and Valle López (2015) highlight European identity (which is the euro global and open), cultural interaction (interculturalism) and European citizenship (politically and legally promoted through vibrant democracy and Europeanization) as three key elements of the European dimension in education. Tăușan (2015) points out that the European dimension, as an essential component of education policy, aims to overcome specificities in national education systems, respect diversity, and emphasise pluralism and interculturalism. The development of the European dimension at the level of education and training involves linking two factors: a) the increased cultural identity of each nation and b) the affirmation of cultural diversity, which generates tolerance and mutual respect (Tăușan, 2015). Simões, Lourenço and Costa (2018) highlight that the European dimension based on the shared values of democracy, equal opportunities, and mutual respect should be seen as an "added value" that will enable pupils' active social integration, expand employment and participation in labour markets. The European dimension in education is similarly defined by Ogienko (2020), emphasising concepts' dimensions of integration and harmonisation in education and primarily pointing out its importance in linking education and labour market needs. The latter trend is especially emphasised in the recent discussions and has turned concepts' development sail towards stronger connections with the labour market needs and expectations.

It turns out that the conceptual pathway in defining the concept of the European dimension in education moved in parallel with its development in the documents of European educational policies. Therefore, it might be concluded that this concept is primarily prescriptive-implementing (founded and developed through European educational policy documents). An analysis of the concepts' development, summarised in the first chapter, shows that European policies have set and defined the direction of its development over the years. Simultaneously, researchers drew ideas for developing research questions on goals, principles and content primarily from policies and rarely positioned them in a broader (inter)disciplinary-theoretical framework. Arguments for such a statement are mainly found in the previously cited scholars whose conceptual definitions of the European dimension in education are almost always based on a

defined *policy* framework. Especially considering the changes in its terminology that occur without argumentative academic discussion, it is possible to problematise its theoretical basis and detect it as a severe shortcoming of the research approach in dealing with this concept. It will be clear from the next chapter that researchers will face similar challenges in the national environment.

3 THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION IN CROATIA: THE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY FROM 1996 TO 2020

Although discussions of European education in Croatia can be found in parallel with the emergence of the concept in the international literature (for example, Petričević, 1991), to detect the first published discussion related to the concept, it is necessary to go back twenty-five years to the past. In 1996, Vinko Zidarić published *The European Dimension in Education - Its Origin, Development and Current Status*. Zidarić (1996) presents a historical overview of the new concept's development and its main features. In addition to highlighting various implementation challenges as well as theoretical shortcomings, he concluded that "*the European dimension is an interesting, challenging and educational project, which still lacks a broader theoretical elaboration and definitive patterns of action.*" (Zidarić, 1996: 177). In this way, he laid the foundations and opened numerous questions for future research.

Even though in the mid-1990s, the European dimension in education in Croatia was a scholarly *terra incognita* and should therefore be a fertile ground for researching, the next sixteen years had passed while the first paper on the concept was published. In 2012, in the publication *Pedagogy and Culture: Theoretical and Methodological Definitions of Pedagogical Science*, the article *Challenges of the European Dimension in Education: Approaches and Implementation in the National Context* (Ledić and Turk, 2012) was presented. The paper sought to present a "*chronological overview of the development and challenges of defining and conceptualising the concept of the European dimension in education*" and "*... to encourage discussion on the challenges and possibilities of implementing the European dimension in education in the national education space.*" (Ledić and Turk, 2012: 260). Also, the authors proposed recommendations for the concepts' implementation in the national educational environment. In particular, they focused on teachers, educational specialists,⁴ and teaching media (primarily school textbooks) as crucial factors in implementing the European dimension in education.

Following the mentioned recommendations, many research papers dealing with the European dimension in education were published in the following period. The content analysis⁵ was done for this paper's purpose. It included published papers by Croatian authors from 2013 to 2020, extracting that period as exceptionally productive and prosperous for developing the European dimension in education in the Croatian academic area. Specifically, only in the period of 7 years, 13 publications dealt with the concept of the European dimension in education in Croatia.

Turk and Ledić (2013, 2014a, 2014b) deal with this concept from the educational sciences' perspective, publishing a national survey on primary and secondary school educational specialists and pedagogy/educational sciences students' attitudes towards the concept and competencies required for its implementation. In 2014, the article *Contents of Civic Education in the National Framework Curriculum* (Sablić, 2014) was published, touching on the European dimension in education through a discussion of civic education as one of the concept's indicators. In 2015, two papers were published. The first paper deals with research results on teacher education students' understanding and attitudes towards the European dimension in education (Turk et al., 2015). The second paper was published under *Croatian School Teachers' Familiarity with the European Dimension in Education* (Turk and Ledić, 2015). In the same year, Bušljeta (2015) presented the paper *Achieving the Objectives of the European Dimension Through History: An Analysis of Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovina Fourth Grade Gymnasium History Textbooks*.

The following year, Ledić, Miočić and Turk (2016) issued the bilingual publication (in English and Croatian) *European Dimension in Education: Approaches and Challenges*, presenting national results on the European Union's and the European dimension in education attitudes and perceptions among the Croatian educational specialists' population. In 2017, the paper *Educational Specialists: the Agents of (European) Changes in Education?* (Miočić and Turk, 2017) was given to the audience. While two years later, Turk and Ledić (2019) handed out a paper on *Educational specialists and the European dimension in education in Croatia*. In 2019, Pavičić Vukičević (2019) dealt with European values as one of the indicators of the European dimension in education in the article *Teachers' attitudes towards chosen dimensions of European values*. In 2020, two articles were written, *"It is about how much effort you put into it": geography teachers on the European dimension in education* (Miočić and Vignjević Korotaj, 2020) and an article based on the analysis of geography textbooks in Croatian primary schools *The European dimension in education in geography textbooks for Croatian primary schools: Lessons learned and future expectations* (Vignjević Korotaj, Ledić and Miočić, 2020).

The presented fifteen papers, published in the twenty-five-year period from 1996 to the end of 2020, can be divided into two development phases, followed by three chronological and thematic groups linked to the relevant authors. Those elements (phases, groups and relevant authors) presented in Table 1 show the European dimension's national development pathway in education in Croatia.

The first phase covers 1996 to 2012 and correlates with the first thematic group - *initiation of the European dimension in education*. This group considers papers that deal with introducing the concept of the European dimension in education in Croatia. The discussions indicate a new concept that predominantly derives from European educational policies and requires a solid theoretical foundation and preconditions for implementation in the national educational policy. Additionally, these papers have laid a decent foundation for research recommendations to develop this concept further.

Table 1. Development pathway of the European dimension in education in Croatia from 1996 to 2020

Development phase	Period	Thematic group	Relevant authors
The first phase	1996. - 2012.	Initiation of the European dimension in education	Zidarić (1996), Ledić and Turk (2012).
The second phase	2013. - 2020.	Educational stakeholders and indicators of the European dimension in education	Turk and Ledić (2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2019), Sablić (2014), Turk et al. (2015), Ledić, Miočić and Turk (2016), Miočić and Turk (2017), Pavičić Vukičević (2019), Miočić and Vignjević Korotaj (2020).
	2015. - 2020.	The European dimension in education in the school textbooks	Bušljeta (2015), Vignjević Korotaj, Ledić and Miočić (2020).

The second development phase covers the period from 2013 to the end of 2020. However, chronologically and thematically, it is possible to divide it into two periods and coexisting groups.

The chronological period from 2013 to 2020 is marked by the second thematic group - *educational stakeholders and indicators of the European dimension in education*, including eleven published papers. Papers deal with teachers, educational specialists and teacher education students' attitudes about the European dimension in education, propose and define indicators of the European dimension in education, and deal with research on particular indicators. These papers point to complex challenges that the national education system has been facing for many years to implement and develop the European dimension in education.

The research results published in that period present worrying facts. For instance, educational specialists and educational sciences' students in Croatia consider competencies of the European dimension in education⁶ the least important for their (future) work (Turk and Ledić, 2013, 2014a). Furthermore, educational specialists are considered only partially informed and equally somewhat competent to discuss and include the content of the European dimension of education in their professional environment (Turk and Ledić, 2014b; Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016). In addition,

educational specialists have relatively low factual knowledge of European educational policies and believe they are not sufficiently familiar with European educational goals and their implementation mechanisms (Miočić and Turk, 2017; Turk and Ledić, 2019). Related to the discussion on introducing changes in one's work, where the implementation of the European dimension in education is perceived as a key and essential change, "... *educational specialists are predominantly perceived as followers, not agents of changes in the education system.*" (Miočić and Turk, 2017: 110).

Similarly, teachers in primary and secondary schools show a low level of factual knowledge and understanding of the European dimension in education and relatively limited knowledge of European and national educational policies (Turk and Ledić, 2015). In a similar vein, teacher education students' refer to their knowledge of European educational policies and the European dimension concept in education (Turk et al., 2015). Concurrently, teachers consider national more important than European and global values and are prouder of Croatian than European citizenship (Pavičić Vukičević, 2019). Moreover, teachers in Croatia are primarily considered as local and state citizens, and secondarily they perceive their European or global citizenship (Turk and Ledić, 2015; Pavičić Vukičević 2019).² Also, outdated legislation in education does not indicate monitoring the direction of development of European education policies and, at the same time, the weak representation of the European dimension in education indicators in key legislation (Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016).

Although most of these results might be perceived as concerning, this paper should also be highlighting the encouraging ones. In contrast to the legislative ones, the strategic documents indicate "... *a well-thought-out and European-oriented direction of the development of Croatian education*" (Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016: 48). Educational specialists recognise the school as central for achieving the European dimension's goals and accentuate positive attitudes towards integrating the concept into the curriculum. Furthermore, educational specialists point out affirmative attitudes towards some of the indicators of the European dimension in education (such as mobility and European project funds) (Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016; Miočić and Turk, 2017). In the affirmative direction, it should be pointed out that geography teachers clearly perceive and can concretely explain what is promoted by European education policy and relatively well define what the concept of the European dimension in education implies. Additionally, geography teachers recognise their role and the role of the subjects they teach in promoting indicators of the European dimension (Miočić and Vignjević Korotaj, 2020).

Moreover, the papers included in the second thematic group define the concept of the European dimension in education indicators', which might be considered an essential research contribution. Ledić, Miočić and Turk (2016) present the indicators guided by the prescriptive-implementing approach's logic. The authors propose five primary contents of the European dimension in education ("What?"). Moreover, for each of the contents, they suggest implementation mechanisms ("How?"). These primary contents with the corresponding implementation mechanisms are European values, European citizenship,

European identity, multilingualism and mobility, and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes "about Europe, in Europe, and for Europe".⁸ The authors also emphasised that the contents and mechanisms are inseparable and that their complementarity is inevitable in practice.

From 2015 to 2020 represents the third thematic group - *the European dimension in education in the school textbooks*. This group includes analysis of the European dimension indicators representation in history and geography textbooks (Bušljeta, 2015; Vignjević Korotaj, Ledić and Miočić, 2020). The first results suggest that history textbooks in Croatia are still mostly fact-oriented, which leaves little place for contemporary issues and topics such as the European dimension in education. Bušljeta (2015:17) concludes that Croatian educational policies "... does not recognise the fact that the European dimension in teaching history could provide an opportunity for young people to examine historical events, even the sensitive issues of national history, from the perspective of future European citizens, aware of and willing to accept national, religious and cultural diversity". Similarly, Vignjević Korotaj, Ledić and Miočić (2020: 188) identify that "... there have evidently been no significant changes in the content of geography textbooks across a 17-year time span, regardless of the changes that have occurred in the socio-political context in Croatia" and point to the minimal presence of European dimension indicators in education in geography textbooks. Like Bušljeta (2015), the authors conclude that textbooks do not serve as a source for critical thinking of teachers and pupils, which is a prerequisite for implementing European dimension indicators in education but only as material for the transfer of factual knowledge.

Based on the presented research and their development, chronological and thematic grouping, a research rise of the European dimension in education in Croatia from 2013 to 2020 is evident. It can be concluded that academically the most fruitful period was undoubtedly the second phase, i.e. the period of the second and third thematic groups.

The entry into the third phase of the European dimension in education research should be marked by opening a thematic group defining its theoretical framework. Simultaneously, this thematic group's determinants represent the most significant shortcoming of the respectable number of research conducted in Croatia. Namely, published papers supported by research results made a significant step in the prescriptive-implementation context. Furthermore, they brought essential insights from European policies and international research into the national educational area. Moreover, indicators of the European dimension in education indicated key activities which might be applied to educational practice. However, the authors' have left the concept without an adequate theoretical framework. By way of explanation, analysing the current development pathway in Croatia (and beyond), it can be concluded that there is a potential danger for the European dimension of education, of "...permanent rotation without theoretical relevance" (König, 1990: 924). Even though this was stated for another disciplinary context, it might be applied to debate about the theoretical framework of the European dimension in education. Therefore, this paper's next chapter will represent the

entry into the third phase and propose a possible theoretical framework for further scholarly discussions of the European dimension in education.

4 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

This chapter will elaborate on the definition of a possible theoretical framework for the European dimension in education. The discussion starts from the theoretical background of educology, which sees the issues of education from an interdisciplinary perspective, which is in line with the definitions of the European dimension in education, to which Seebauer (2002) refers in particular. Educology, or as Pastuović (1999) delineates it, the integrative science of education, seeks to systematise and connect knowledge about education from various disciplines and theoretical angles of vision. Primarily educational psychology, pedagogical theories, philosophy of education, sociology of education and economics of education, and anthropology and ethnology of education. At the same time, educology does not give preference to any of them but observes educational phenomena interdisciplinary using the knowledge of all the above-stated disciplines (Steiner, 1977). These knowledge Christensen and Fisher (1981) classified as analytical (knowledge of the philosophy of education, history of education and the jurisprudence of education), normative (knowledge of analytical and normative philosophy of education) and empirical (science and praxiological knowledge). For this paper's purposes, the focus will be on the group of praxiological knowledge that also makes up the discipline *praxiology of education* (Christensen and Fisher, 1981). Practical knowledge is based on scientific knowledge and knowledge, verified by empirical research and can be divided into practical knowledge at the macro and micro levels (Pastuović, 1999). Practical knowledge about education (cro *obrazovanje i odgoj*, deu *Bildung und Erziehung*, rus *образование и воспитание*) at the macro level is knowledge about the formulation and implementation of educational policy. It forms *political praxiology of education*, knowledge about planning, administration and management, and educational systems reform (Christensen and Fisher, 1981). So, political in the praxiology of education means support through (educational) policies. While policies are constitutive rules for social organisations, making them what they are, those rules prescribe their culture and structure (Steiner, 1977). The micro-level of praxiological knowledge includes applying scientific / research / empirical knowledge on general educational issues and practical education of children, young people and adults, which is in line with Biesta's (2015) view that praxiology of education has to do with how education has to be practised. Moreover, the author underlines that praxiology of education is essential "*...in order to think about the possible ways in which educational research might inform, support and enhance practice*" (Biesta, 2015: 19).

The political praxiology of education originates from the necessary consensus in adopting and understanding educational policies by policymakers and educational

practitioners (Christensen and Fisher, 1981). For instance, policymakers may assume that practitioners have successfully implemented a new educational concept (model or reform) without understanding the justification of the particular concept. Concerning that, the political praxiology of education insists on finding answers and/or appropriate mechanisms to enable educational practitioners to accept (new) educational concepts while emphasising its essential understanding and evaluation, which includes concepts' normative and analytical background and proper way of implementation in practice (Christensen and Fisher, 1981). It might be concluded that the political praxiology of education does not accept the exclusive application of lower levels of cognition but implies the necessary procedural and partly metacognitive knowledge of contemporary educational concepts in practice and might be intertwined with the principles of deliberative democracy in educational policymaking.

The spectrum of deliberation is comprehensive and implies that all stakeholders participate, emphasising those segments of social structures that will directly feel the consequences of the decisions made. Also, it develops a culture of dialogue and provides an opportunity to change attitudes through openness to arguments (Dryzek, 2000). At the (supra)national level, which is crucial for the European dimension in education, deliberative democracy also enables better coordination of actions necessary to implement complex policies. Also, as Landemore (2017) points out, this model has great potential to improve political decisions' epistemic qualities.⁹ To be expected, developing (educational) policies following the above-described process results in a transition from factual to the level of procedural and metacognitive knowledge. In other words, precisely what the political praxiology of education insists on. Estimating the research results carried so far, this seems to be most lacking in the national context.

This discussion brings us smoothly to further elaboration. Suppose the concept of the European dimension in education were contextualised in the proposed framework of political praxiology of education. In that case, it represents practical knowledge at the macro level. Notably, the European dimension in education is formulated and designed as a concept of European educational policies. Its development pathway can be analysed through educational *policy* documents, thus representing practical knowledge at the macro level.

Moreover, the initial introduction of this concept had, in part, its research background set by Henri Janne (St John, 2018). Also, the prescriptive-implementing approach of the concept finds its connection with the macro-level of practical knowledge. Namely, in addition to answering the question "What needs to be done?" it also guides "How to be done?". However, from the perspective of political praxiology of education, the essential for the European dimension in education would be the concept's understanding by educational practitioners. In other words, the missing element is creating mechanisms that would provide educational practitioners with an essential understanding and evaluation of the concept and knowledge of the normative and analytical concept's background. Consequently, it is not surprising that most research results of the second

thematic group point out various challenges in understanding the acceptance and implementation of the concept in the national education system. Analysing the context of the European dimension in education in Croatia from the perspective of the proposed theoretical framework, it can be concluded that there is a kind of vacuum in its discussions and implementation.

Videlicet, the European dimension in education concept is taken from European policies and implemented more or less successfully in national documents. Furthermore, various examples of its practical application can be found (e.g. project Europe in school, civic education, mobility programs and multiculturalism projects). Moreover, researchers have researched educational practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the concept and the emergence of its indicators in school textbooks. However, there were no appropriate mechanisms to enable educational practitioners to introduce the (new) concept, the possibility to understand and evaluate it and understand its normative and analytical background. It is possible to conclude that deliberation, as a type of participation that requires that participants are well-informed about a topic and consider different perspectives, failed.¹⁰

The previously presented discussion offered arguments for the theoretical positioning of the European dimension in education within the political praxiology of education framework. However, the proposed framework and laying the foundations for future research on this concept also leave room for further theoretical and/or empirical analysis and research. It would be needed to find research-based answers about the evident vacuum in introducing the European dimension in education in the Croatian educational area. It should also be required to analyse this process from the decision-making perspective through the model of deliberative democracy. This paper has only opened the stage for further discussion.

5 CONCLUSION OR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY OF THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN EDUCATION (IN CROATIA)

This paper aimed to present the development pathway of the European dimension in education in Croatia, critically problematise the lack of the theoretical framework, and suggest an existing one as an adequate basis for future research and discussions. The European dimension in education is presented through the key documents of European educational policy and academic research results. Particular emphasis was placed on the Croatian context from 1996 to the end of 2020. For future (historical) research, the proposed development phases were followed by chronological and thematic groups. The research results discussed this concept's fundamental challenges - terminological uncertainty, theoretical deficiencies, and implementation obstacles and difficulties.

Following the defined paper goal, the political praxiology of education as a theoretical framework was proposed, which has detected new horizons for academic discussions and empirical research of the European dimension in education. Although various research

pathways of the European dimension in education are possible, to get the complete empirical spectrum of the second and the third thematic groups remains a detailed analysis of language and literature and history textbooks for primary and secondary schools. Moreover, in respect to including the diversified educational area, all key stakeholders in the education system need to be included. Therefore, from the empirical position, school principals as crucial stakeholders in introducing changes in the educational institutions left uncovered, as well as history and language and literature teachers in primary and secondary schools. Also, empirically neglected in Croatia is a group of teachers in vocational education who should be given significant attention, notably in new directions of the European dimension in education development and concept's connections with the labour market needs. Furthermore, pupils from upper grades of primary and secondary school and students as research populations are only fragmentarily covered. Further research should focus on them, as they are essential for implementing the concept in daily social and educational communities.

Concerning advantages and challenges related to the European dimension in education, emphasised and elaborated in this paper, it would be needed to propose a new viewpoint of the concept's definition and envisage its further development. The European dimension in education is an educational paradigm striving to prepare responsible and independent global citizens based on diversified educational perspectives, including opening global thinking, intercultural understanding, and mutual respectfulness. Even though its initiation emerges from the European Union's policies, it should not be seen or promoted as a Eurocentric idea and aiming, but as a paradigm that helps young people on the European continent to understand different local, regional, national and global (educational) horizons. While the origins of the European dimension in education are rooted in European continent diversity, democratic and participatory teaching and learning approaches are at their core. As an educational paradigm, the European dimension in education has to be implemented as an added value in the national curriculum following the prescriptive-implementing approach. In that case, questions "What needs to be done?" and "How to be done?" are mainly answered. Even the second question always should be part of specific consultations of policymakers, researchers and practitioners. However, the essential part for national policymakers would be to answer, "Whose are responsible for doing (implementing)?" and "Do those responsible for doing (implementing), know, understand and justify what and how should be done?". The first question might be answered from the research positions - teachers and educational specialists, as critical intellectuals whose role is to offer pupils an opportunity to question and understand the European dimension in education settings. The second question is more critical to answer, and it poses the educational paradigm future development. According to the presented research results, teachers and educational specialists only partially know and understand the European dimension in education, what it is striving for, and why it is important. Moreover, national policymakers have not provided an essential framework (models, mechanisms and tools) in helping educational practitioners

enhance needed understanding and competencies. Precisely the opposite, some recent policy changes have shown that national educational policies reverse the direction that aligns with the European dimension in education tendencies (see particularly Endnote 7).

From the position of the newly opened third phase of research, it will undoubtedly be necessary to deeply explore and problematise the process of adoption and essential understanding of this concept by educational practitioners, which has so far been absent. Also, the interdisciplinary approach to the discussion on the way of decision-making on educational policies, which is open as a consequence of the analysis within the political praxiology of education and contextualised through the model of deliberative democracy, will serve as a framework for discussing this concept and analysing existing and future processes of educational policy decision making.

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ENDNOTES

1. To fulfil his task, professor Janne coordinated 30 interviews with leading figures in 20 European cities from 8 countries (St John, 2018).
2. Even though authors (Zidarić, 1996; Convery and Kerr, 2005; Ledić and Turk, 2012; Ledić, Miočić and Turk, 2016) and policy documents discuss active citizenship and other concepts as indicators of the European dimension in education, discussions and elaborations have not had the intention to approach the concept's indicators as a hierarchical structure. That means that the European dimension in education indicators are not perceived as subordinated or subsumed under the concept's umbrella but are viewed as harmonised elements in the development and implementation practices. Many indicators have a much more comprehensive (global, not only European) goal and cannot be subsumed only under the European dimension in education.
3. In this paper the author will use the proposal for the name prescriptive-implementing, as a partially modified name taken from Philippou (2005).
4. This paper will use the term educational specialist for the profession in the Croatian language known as a pedagog (Cro). The author finds the term educational specialist more suitable for the English language and more understandable for a broader international academic community. Even more, the term is found more equivalent with the professional descriptors of the pedagog's profession. According to Ledić, Staničić and Turk (2013), a school pedagogue is an educational practitioner who has competencies for professional work with young people or adults to learn new knowledge, perspectives, value orientations, and systematic development various abilities. They are perceived as experts who manage social, administrative and innovative work, introduce changes in school operation, direct and encourage teachers in their proactive work, prepare pupils for life in modern society, and promote the idea of civil society and community engagement. In addition, it would be essential to clarify that usage of the term educational specialist does not mean advocating for changes in the frameworks or concepts of the pedagog's profession or advocating for the changes in the national professional terminology.
5. The published papers were searched in three international (Scopus, ScienceDirect and Web of Science) and two national databases (CROSBİ and HRČAK). The analysis included papers containing the concept's full caption in the title and/or keywords list. Further, it should be noted that the analysis includes books, papers in scholarly journals, book chapters, papers in conference proceedings and PhD thesis. The analysis does not include BA and MA thesis, conference abstracts, and conference presentations. For the years from

1996 to 2012, Ledić and Turk's (2012) paper is taken as a reference which confirms that only one paper was published in that period.

6. Discussing the European dimension's competencies in education authors, for example, emphasized: knowledge of European education trends, knowledge of at least one foreign language, understanding of democratic citizenship and human rights.

7. According to the GONG (2019) public announcement, these Croatian teachers' self-perceptions and beliefs are even more strengthened with the national curriculum changes for the cross-cultural topic of Civic education. Namely, through the policy changes, patriotism as a cross-curricular topic is even more stressed while the European and global contexts are included in places but barely throughout the document.

8. For a detailed description of the proposed mechanisms and implementation processes, see Ledić, Miočić and Turk (2016: 30).

9. On how the debate in the decision-making process improves the quality of decisions, in other words, what is epistemically valuable in democratic debates or deliberation, can be viewed more in Prijić-Samaržija (2014).

10. When potential mechanisms are discussed might be raised the question of the following: 1) common curriculum for the European dimension in education in Croatia (with suggested competencies, learning outcomes and content) developed in cooperation with all essential stakeholders; 2) professional development programmes for primary and secondary school teachers, and/or 3) public consultations for educational specialists on

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Marko Turk, PhD, is a professor at the School of Advanced Studies, University of Tyumen. He got an MA degree in Pedagogy and Philosophy at the University of Rijeka (Croatia) and a PhD in educational sciences at the University of Zagreb (Croatia). Since entering academia in 2007, his research and teaching interests have focused on topics related to higher education (teaching and learning, instructional design, early career researchers and well-being in academia). Simultaneously, in his scholarly publications since 2010, he has been dealing with the concept of the European dimension in education.