

# EUROPEAN DIMENSION AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHING IN SLOVENIA

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## **Abstract**

The author aims to identify to what extent the 'European dimension' and 'European identity' exist within school geography curricula, and how they are represented and constructed. Surveys discussed in the paper cover a 15 year period and dealing with the three most important elements of (geography) education: teachers, content and pupils/students. Using the results of the surveys, the author suggests possibilities for the development of geography teaching, particularly with regard to subject areas concerning the implementation of European identity issues within the framework of European dimension.

**Key words:** curriculum, syllabus, European Union, European identity, European dimension, education system, geographical education

## **EVROPSKA DIMENZIJA IN EVROPSKA IDENTITETA Z VIDIKA POUKA GEOGRAFIJE V SLOVENIJI**

### **Izvilleček**

Avtorica ugotavlja, koliko in kako so učne vsebine o evropski dimenziji in evropski identiteti prisotne v geografskih učnih načrtih. Tri raziskave, predstavljene v članku, pokrivajo obdobje 15 let in izhajajo iz treh najpomembnejših strukturnih elementov (geografskega) izobraževanja: učiteljev, učnih vsebin in učencev. Na osnovi rezultatov raziskav so predlagane možnosti za nadaljnji razvoj geografskega izobraževanja z vidika učnih vsebin, povezanih z evropsko identiteto znotraj okvirjev evropske dimenzije.

**Ključne besede:** kurikulum, učni načrt, Evropska unija, evropska identiteta, evropska dimenzija, izobraževalni sistem, geografsko izobraževanje

## I. INTRODUCTION

Almost forty years ago, in 1973, the nine member countries of the European Community decided to draw up a document on European identity. Fifteen years later, in 1988, the European Community Council and the Ministers of Education adopted a Resolution for a ‘European dimension’ in education. Throughout this time, European identity, and to a lesser extent, the European dimension, have been discussed, analysed and scrutinized with one main goal – to become integrated into a pan-European collective consciousness. European education policy, as directed mainly by the EU and the Council of Europe, has long targeted the construction of a European identity and citizenship among its younger members. These concepts have been highly contested in academic writing because the manner in which regional identity is introduced into national educational systems – which historically have a ‘nation-building’ role – is not without problems (Green, 1997; Schissler and Soysal, 2005; Philippou, Keating and Ortloff, 2009).

Slovenian academic literature about European identity mainly focuses on sociological and political issues (e.g., Rizman, 2003; Šabec, 2006). The authors explain or define the position of Slovenia and Slovenian identity within an integrated European community. Discussions raise issues mainly about the relationship between Slovenian national and European identity. The first reference dealing with European Union issues in school, is a guide for teachers titled ‘EU v šoli’ (Krajc et al., 2010), which provides data about the EU and its member states, and offers didactic material which can be used for learning about EU issues across various subjects at different age levels.

With Slovenia joining the European Union, Slovenian citizenship is no longer merely national, but combines Slovenian and European identities. Although we try to be flexible and adaptable, it is not always easy to enter into European integration and globalization processes.

Nowadays, ‘the school of the information society’ is rapidly penetrated by new social curricular content, creating new democratic relations, ‘new education’, new learning cultures and new educational events, etc. In particular, largely due to this new globalized life, the social sciences are full of new and constantly changing learning content that a teacher must be very well acquainted with. In the increasingly complex world of teaching social studies, all these educational events are supposed to make an important contribution to the personal growth of young, emerging Europeans (Židan, 2009).

## 2. EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN DIMENSION

In Copenhagen, on 14 December 1973, a document on European identity was adopted. Its main aim was to enable member countries of the European Community to secure a better understanding of their relationship and responsibilities with one another. They decided to define European identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind, and their intention was to continue their work in the future, in the light of progress made in the building of United Europe (Declaration on European identity, 1973).

On 24 May 1988, the European Community Council and the Ministers of Education adopted a Resolution on the European dimension in education. The main purposes of the resolution were:

- to strengthen pupils' sense of European identity;
- to prepare them to take part in the economic and social development of the Community following the Single European Act;
- to improve their knowledge of the European Community and of its member states;
- to inform them of the significance of the co-operation between member states and other countries of Europe – and the world.

The Resolution required member states to set out policies for incorporating the European dimension in education and invited them to implement several measures. Accordingly, the aims of the European dimension were proposed as follows:

- helping pupils and students to acquire a view of Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community, encouraging awareness of the variety of European histories, geographies and cultures;
- preparing young people to take part in the economic and social development of Europe and making them aware of the opportunities and challenges that arise;
- encouraging interest and improving competencies in other European languages;
- imparting knowledge of political, economic and social developments, past, present and future, including knowledge about the origins, workings and role of the EU;
- promoting a sense of European identity through first-hand experience of other countries where appropriate;
- promoting an understanding of the EU's interdependence with the rest of Europe, and with the rest of the world.

The standing Conference of Ministers of Education in the Council of Europe agreed a Resolution on 'The European dimension of education: teaching and curriculum content' at their meeting on 16–17 October 1991. It stated that »Education should increase awareness of the growing unity between European peoples and countries and of the establishment of their relations on a new basis. It should also help to make the younger generation conscious of their common European identity without losing sight of their global responsibilities, and to their national, regional and local roots. ... Young people should be inspired to take an active part in shaping Europe's future.« (Resolution on ..., 1991).

It seems that European identity and European dimension are closely related, although it is rather difficult to evaluate their connection. European identity touches many different aspects of human life and therefore raises many questions (e.g., philosophical, sociological, psychological, etc.) while the European dimension tends to be more pro-action oriented. It may be said that the European dimension includes European identity as one of its major factors, although it was included into various acts later than European identity. The focus on the ultimate development of some kind of European identity mirrors the initial hope of the early advocates of European integration, namely that the »divisions and enmity associated

with nationalism would be replaced by something more harmonious which would transcend the nation-state system« (Girvin, 2010, p. 62).

Central to the integration process was the idea that citizens of the EU-member states would gradually but inevitably shift their loyalties away from their national governments toward the European institutions which were going to provide greater material benefits – and, at least until Maastricht, the Eurobarometer data confirm that Europeans have seen the European integration process as a good thing (Eurobarometer, June 1990; accessible at CESSDA – Council of European Social Science Data Archives). Nonetheless, this process was mainly led by, and for, elites and was inspired by a neo-functional approach (Haas, 1958), and has not commonly translated into an abandoning of national loyalties by the masses to embrace a common European identity (Castano, 2004, p. 40). However, what is often ignored within these discussions about the development of any form of European identity is the very fact that what is actually predicted in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome is a *union* among the peoples of Europe – not the *creation* of one European people!

The concept of European identity is fluid and cannot stand for something static and fixed, but reflects constant changes and can adapt its operational activities to suit. In public, and on the other hand, in more professional circles, this concept is interpreted very differently.

Castells (2002, p. 234) argues that there is a need of »a common European identity on whose behalf citizens around Europe could be ready to share problems and build common solutions«. Although the question remains how such an identity could be either discovered or built. According to Castells (2002, pp. 234–235), only in the realm of ‘values’ was a cluster of promising elements able to be identified. This cluster refers to the welfare state and explicitly embraces social protection. If European institutions were able to promote these values, then probably the ‘project identity’ would grow.

Almost no one doubts the existence of local, regional, ethnic and national identities in Europe. On the other hand, it is often called into question how and if there is actually a European identity. It is difficult to talk about the existence of a common and overall European identity. Maybe we should talk about pluralism of identities and search for common properties or their lowest common denominator, and only then start talking about the real content of a common European identity.

According to Højlund (2010), the European community was not bred from beautiful values and pure imagination, but as a response to a terrible collapse of all kinds of values between peoples and countries. Højlund is convinced that this historical knowledge is necessary for an understanding of the situation in Europe today. He argues that the Rome Union – later the EC and now the EU – was not bred from a solemn vision of a European identity, a European community of values regarding democracy, human rights and liberty, equality and fraternity, but was created out of a total collapse of all kinds of European values. It was created because everything broke down during the long process from World War I, over the economical, social and political distress and adversity of the interwar period, to the final disaster of World War II. Højlund is also sceptical about the word ‘identity’ as used for confirming one’s own values in opposition to the values of other cultures and peoples. But, as

the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur notes, the word 'identity' is not only rooted in the Latin *idem*, meaning 'the same', but it is also related to a different Latin word *ipse*, meaning 'self'. And in the sense of self-examination in relation to history, identity is indeed a good choice of word to be used (Højlund, 2010; Resnik Planinc and Ilc Klun, 2011).

Some authors consider the concept of European identity at the very least, problematic. They are convinced that to some extent, a great part of our continent's inhabitants feel themselves as Europeans, but the majority feel more intensely belonging to their national states. Identities are not easily separated and, often, different feelings of affinity – ethnic or racial group, gender, political ideas, cultural affinities, etc. – are mingled. Although a genuine European Union requires a European identity, it proves difficult to establish (Citizenship and identity, 2010). As Kohli states (2000, p. 119), there is growing accord that a supranational European identity would not be a precondition for a European society, but ultimately may develop as »a by-product of its institutional construction«.

As one of the ex-Yugoslav republics, gaining independence in 1991 and becoming a full member of the European Union in 2004, Slovenia is among those countries in which questions about identity are very important. Since the education system is one of the best representatives of a nation's orientation, we are asking ourselves what has happened with the idea of European identity and a European dimension within the Slovenian education system. Accordingly, we would also like to discuss the whole idea of European identity as already mentioned (see above) in the Resolution and tending to be a part of the current curricula.

### 3. SURVEYS ON EUROPEAN DIMENSION AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN SLOVENIA

In accordance with the discussion above, three surveys on a European dimension and European identity are presented and discussed. All three arise from the basic question: Why should teachers implement the ideas/concepts of a European dimension and identity into the teaching process?

One of the answers might be that to educate new generations of young people with the spirit of the European Union is indispensable for the long-term and sustainable existence of the European Union; that it is vital to develop a common political, but also cultural European space, and, consequently, to establish both the European dimension and the European identity as a common denominator. Young people are the ones who will continue to shape a common European space and it takes a lot of hard work to raise and educate a good, democratic citizen of the European Union.

#### 3.1. Survey on the European dimension

A survey on the European dimension was undertaken in 1997 as part of a Master thesis on the European dimension in geography teaching (Resnik Planinc, 1998).

### 3.1.1. Sampling

In 1997, a questionnaire with 21 questions, was sent to 300 randomly chosen primary and secondary schools in Slovenia. 103 (34.3%) geography teachers answered it. 31.1% of participants were employed in primary schools and 68.9% in secondary schools. Among the respondents those with degree in higher education prevailed (63.1%). The average working period was 13 years. At the time of the survey, 77.0% of the respondents taught Regional Geography of Europe, while 23.0% did not.

### 3.1.2. Analysis and results

Before the study, we assumed that teachers were not familiar with the concept of teaching the European dimension within geography. The results confirmed our prediction, because 19.4% of all respondents claimed they had a very poor and 40.8% of them at least poor understanding of the concept and only 17.4% had a good (16.4%) or excellent (1.0%) understanding. Knowledge of the concept was, however, better among the secondary school geography teachers (Table 1).

*Table 1: Knowledge of the term 'European dimension within geography teaching' among Slovenian geography teachers (Resnik Planinc, 1998)*

*Preglednica 1: Poznavanje termina 'evropska dimenzija pouka geografije' med slovenskimi učitelji geografije (Resnik Planinc, 1998)*

| Knowledge             | Geography teachers – primary and secondary schools (%) | Geography teachers – primary schools (%) | Geography teachers – secondary schools (%) |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Very poor             | 19.4   | 9.4                                      | 24.3                                       |
| Poor                  | 40.8   | 37.5                                     | 42.9                                       |
| Neither poor nor good | 21.4   | 37.5                                     | 14.3                                       |
| Good                  | 16.4   | 15.6                                     | 17.1                                       |
| Very good             | 1.0  | 0.0                                      | 1.4  |
| No answer             | 1.0  | 0.0                                      | 0.0  |
| Total                 | 100.0  | 100.0                                    | 100.0                                      |

Teachers obtained information on the European dimension in teaching geography from seminars, meetings and conventions, in study groups, from public media and from professional national and international literature.

From the mass of content relating to Europe, respondents proposed that the following should be included in the new Geography curricula:

- contemporary integrations (mainly political and economic) in Europe;
- environmental problems;
- migration and demographic problems;

- minority issues;
- differences in the development of European countries;
- and reasons for this and the disintegration of old and the creation of new countries.

However, nobody mentioned European identity. Accordingly, it needs to be mentioned that neither the new curricula (1998) nor the renewed ones (2008) didn't introduce any real changes regarding the proposed content, although it was obvious that geography teachers were missing the presence of the most pressing topics relating to Europe.

Respectively, 68.0% of respondents said it was more important to teach students for life within the international community and to understand international relations and problems, rather than solely pursue a curriculum. 67.0% of respondents felt qualified to enable their students to evaluate objectively these international and transnational developments, because they understood the geographic context of individual situations and decisions. In the classroom, 91.3% of respondents attempted to provide an objective interpretation of the European countries (Resnik Planinc, 1998, pp. 230–231).

The survey results proved our assumption that geography teachers, to a large extent, regardless of their limited knowledge of the concept, held views entirely within the spirit of the European dimension of teaching.

The respondents' ideas about a teacher's role in developing a sense of a European dimension among students were as follows:

- due to the lack of time during the lessons it could be developed during extracurricular activities;
- a teacher should receive as much information as possible;
- teachers should be acquainted with new educational trends;
- the co-operation between teachers and schools abroad should be promoted;
- discussions with students, presentations and excursions abroad were needed;
- students first needed reasonable knowledge about Europe and its inhabitants to better understand the differences, and to compare different problems in Europe;
- the importance of knowing foreign languages was stressed;
- teachers should strive toward objective truth and encourage students to think about a common European space and to develop a critical attitude toward chosen problems, and
- above all, to be aware that first a teacher must have a positive attitude toward the concept of a European dimension.

To conclude, we might say that 15 years ago Slovenian geography teachers had already developed a positive attitude toward the implementation of the European dimension in geography teaching, and within the educational system as a whole. Among them, an openness towards new European educational trends prevailed, together with the wish to educate critically minded young people, who hopefully would remain aware of their own country, identity, tradition and culture.

## **3.2. Surveys on European identity**

In Slovenia, two national surveys have been undertaken as part of the PAM-INA (Perception, Attitude, Movement – Identity Needs Action) project with the main aim of identifying perceptions and understandings, attitudes and attachments and means of articulating and experiencing the idea of European identity among European youth.

### **3.2.1. Survey A – content analysis**

The aim of the first survey was to identify to what extent content considering ‘Europe’, ‘European dimension’ and ‘European identity and citizenship’ exists in Slovenian national primary and secondary school Geography curricula, and how it is represented and constructed.

#### **3.2.1.1. Sampling**

Seven age groups/grade levels were included in the sample. The primary school level was represented by students in Grades 7, 8 and 9. At secondary school level (Grades 1 to 4), we included only the syllabi for the chosen subject in general secondary education (gymnasium), although Slovenian students can choose between different levels of secondary schools, i.e. gymnasium, secondary vocational schools, secondary vocational and technical schools, secondary technical schools. The reasons for choosing only students in gymnasium were twofold: about 40% of the generation in the age range of 15 to 19 attend gymnasia; most of subjects that include content of Europe, European dimension and European identity and citizenship are taught only in gymnasia.

So far, no study in Slovenia has tried to analyze how European identity is represented in official curricular documents on the subjects. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap. It explores how terms relating to Europe, EU, and European identity and citizenship are constructed and represented across the chosen subjects.

#### **3.2.1.2. Analysis and results**

To analyze the data, quantitative approaches were used. By quantitative analysis (counting of terms/words/phrases related to European content), we determined the presence of Europe by subject and grade as it appears in Slovenian official syllabi for Geography. Such kind of analysis will enable us to draw conclusions about the manner in which European identity and citizenship are taught and developed among students at primary and secondary school levels in Slovenia. So far, no study has attempted to explore how knowledge about Europe, EU, European identity and similar terms is constructed and represented in the syllabi of the social science subjects at the levels of primary and secondary education in Slovenia. Therefore, this study is an important indicator of the current state.

The majority of references to ‘Europe’ occurred in the Geography syllabus for Grades 7 and 13. The reason for that is because in Grade 7 students are taught about geographical



characteristics of Europe and Asia. Some terms are used quite frequently (e.g., Europe: 104 references, European: 38 references), but some terms are not mentioned at all (e.g., EU institutions, Council of Europe, symbolic markers); the terms 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' have just two references in the syllabus for gymnasium although those two references are not specified in which grade students have to know these two terms; they just have to know them at the end of schooling.

If we compare Geography and History syllabi, we may conclude that most references to Europe occurred in the syllabi for Geography (total 172 references; if we add those which are not specified for each grade the total number is 211) followed by the syllabi for History (total 66 (118) references). In the Slovenian Language syllabi some references to Europe are mentioned and explained in detail, and some are not mentioned at all.

First of all, it is surprising that the term 'EU' is used in Geography syllabi only in Grades 9 (but not in Grade 7, where the main topic is Europe) – 12 references, 3 (3 references) and 4 (3 references). European institutions are also very rarely mentioned. They are not mentioned at all in primary school syllabi for Geography. Even in secondary school syllabi the institutions are not mentioned. European symbolical markers are not used at all. The terms 'Europeans' and 'European identity and citizenship' are used, but very rarely (for example, the term 'Europeans' is used only in the Geography syllabus in Grade 3 – 2 references). The terms 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' are mentioned even more rarely; students have to know these two terms at the end of secondary school (gymnasium) in Geography and History but it is not specified in which grade they have to learn these.

On the other hand, students obtain a lot of knowledge about European nationalities or countries. In syllabi for Geography, students learn about the physical and socio-geographical characteristics of European countries. It should be noted that students learn more in detail about countries that are closer to Slovenia (e.g., Central and Southern Europe) than about distant countries (e.g., Northern Europe).

In Slovenian syllabi there are no definitions and explanations about European identity and citizenship. However, in the syllabi for Geography and History for gymnasium we find a statement that students have to »know the term European identity at the end of their secondary school level«, but it is not specified in which grade students have to learn this. The objectives related to European identity are written in general terms (at the beginning of the syllabi), but are not specified for each grade. They just mention that students have to know these two terms at the end of schooling. If we look at the textbooks, we may find that neither of these two terms is used. Therefore, we wonder how teachers interpret the general objective about European identity and how they implement this in the classroom (Resnik Planinc and Ilc Klun, 2011).

### **3.2.2. Survey B – attitude of youngsters towards European identity**

The survey on content was followed by a survey on the attitude of young people towards European identity. As part of the PAM-INA project, a questionnaire in seven national languages was prepared.

Table 2: Methodology used in Survey B

Preglednica 2: Metodologija raziskave B

| Methods of work   | Techniques                              | Instruments                               |
|---|---|---|
| Descriptive method<br>Causal non-experimental method<br>Non-parametric analysis | Survey<br>Quantitative analysis of data | Questionnaire<br>Statistical calculations |

### 3.2.2.1. Sampling

In Slovenia, the basic units for sampling were pupils and students (age 13 to 18) from schools which participated in the project. 250 questionnaires were distributed to nine primary and secondary schools and all 250 questionnaires were completed. There was a reluctance by school principals to participate in the survey due to a perceived lack of time for this additional work. Generally, however, the response rate was satisfactory. Most schools also expressed interest in the results of the survey.

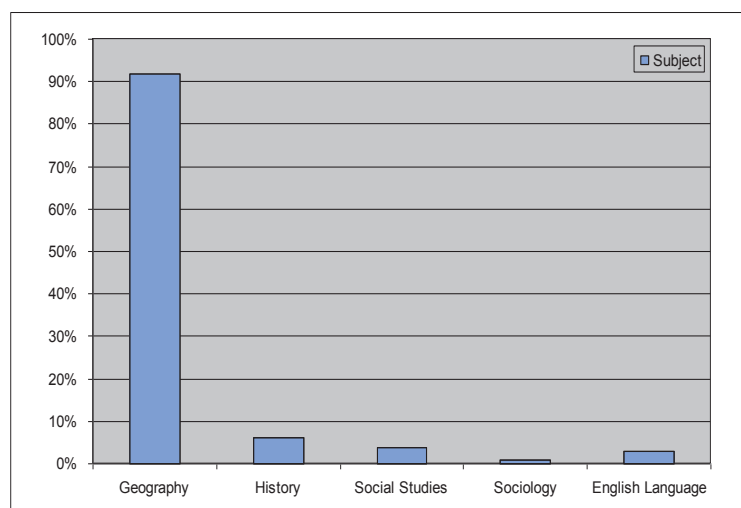
The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions dealing with three different modules: personal data of a respondent, knowledge about Europe and European Union and the emotional perception of Europe and European Union.

### 3.2.2.2. Analysis and results

In this paper we'll present only those results which are intertwined with the previously discussed surveys, to get a deeper insight into the knowledge and attitude towards Europe and the European Union among pupils and students.

Figure 1: The school subjects giving pupils and students the best knowledge about Europe

Slika 1: Šolski predmeti, ki dajejo najboljše znanje o Evropi



Although we expected Geography to rank high regarding its importance in giving young people knowledge about Europe (especially in accordance with the previously discussed results), we are rather surprised that 91.8% of respondents have chosen Geography as the school subject which gave them the best knowledge about Europe (Figure 1). Although Sociology, Social Studies and English Language are mentioned, the percentage does not exceed 8.2% taken all together.

Further on, we asked the respondents to complete the sentence: »For me 'Europe' means ...«. The results are presented in Table 3. It needs to be mentioned that each respondent could choose more answers, therefore, the total number of answers is not equal to the number of the respondents. However, the divider for our calculated percentages is the number of the respondents.

*Table 3: The meaning of 'Europe'*  
*Preglednica 3: Pomen termina 'Evropa'*

| <b>»For me Europe means ...«</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>%</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Space – location entity          | 22       | 8.8      |
| Economic entity                  | 42       | 16.8     |
| Political entity                 | 8        | 2.8      |
| Historical entity                | 32       | 12.8     |
| Sociological and cultural entity | 95       | 38.0     |
| Emotional perception of Europe   | 20       | 8.0      |
| No response                      | 79       | 31.6     |
| Other                            | 7        | 2.8      |
| Total answers                    | 305*     | 121.6    |

\* Each respondent could choose one or more answers.

The respondents chose the answers connected with sociological and cultural entity in 38.0%, while economic (16.8%) and historical entity (12.8%) are far behind, not to mention the others. However, it needs to be mentioned that there are no statistically significant differences among the age groups ( $\chi^2=9.253$ ; sig=0.508).

When asked to complete the sentence: »For me 'European Union' means« (Table 4) respondents gave the highest priority to space and location (32.8%) and political entity (28.4%) and the rest to economics (24.0%) and a positive emotional perception of Europe (29.2%). Again, there are no statistically significant differences among the age groups ( $\chi^2=17.042$ ; sig=0.148).

Regarding the answers to both questions, we may conclude that pupils and students understand both terms differently.

The respondents' knowledge about the countries which are part of the European Union is rather good since they marked the right countries with only a few mistakes. 69.2% also answered correctly about the number of countries in EU. On the other hand, they are not

well (or even, not at all) acquainted with four symbols of the European Union (flag, motto, anthem, Europe Day). In a long list, many things were mentioned without any of them being the correct answer. When asked if they consider it an advantage to be part of the European Union, 83.9% gave a positive answer and 16.1% a negative one. Among the reasons, political entity and economic entity prevail. No statistically significant differences among the age groups ( $\chi^2= 6.894$ ; sig=0.331) exist.

*Table 4: The meaning of 'European Union'*

*Preglednica 4: Pomen termina 'Evropska unija'*

| »For me EU means ...«                   | N   | %     |
|---|-----|-------|
| Space – location entity                 | 82  | 32.8  |
| Economic entity                         | 60  | 24.0  |
| Political entity                        | 71  | 28.4  |
| Historical entity                       | 0   | 0.0   |
| Sociological and cultural entity        | 15  | 6.0   |
| Positive emotional perception of Europe | 73  | 29.2  |
| No response                             | 41  | 16.4  |
| Other                                   | 2   | 0.8   |
| Nothing                                 | 17  | 6.8   |
| Total answers                           | 361 | 144,4 |

\* Each respondent could choose one or more answers.

Regarding the emotional perception of Europe and European Union, the results are in accordance with our expectations. Respondents were asked how they would feel if something bad was said about Slovenia or Europe or, on the other hand, if something good was said about Slovenia and Europe. Their answers are shown in Figure 2. As expected, almost half of them would feel very upset (49.8%) or quite upset (27.8%) if something bad was said about Slovenia, while only 19.2% would be very upset and 28.2% rather upset if something bad was said about Europe, and 30.2% claimed they wouldn't mind. On the other hand, 73.5% would be very pleased and 16.7% of them would feel quite pleased if something good was said about Slovenia while 44.1% would be very pleased and 30.6% quite pleased in the same case with Europe in mind.

When asked which statement described them best (Slovene; more Slovene than European; equally Slovene and European, more European than Slovene; more European), the results were as expected (Table 5). Almost half of respondents (47.6%) feel Slovene, or at least more Slovene than European (18.8%). Again, there are no statistically significant differences among the age groups ( $\chi^2= 3.594$ ; sig=0.731).

Figure 2: Emotional perception of Slovenia and Europe

Slika 2: Emocionalno dojetanje Slovenije in Evrope

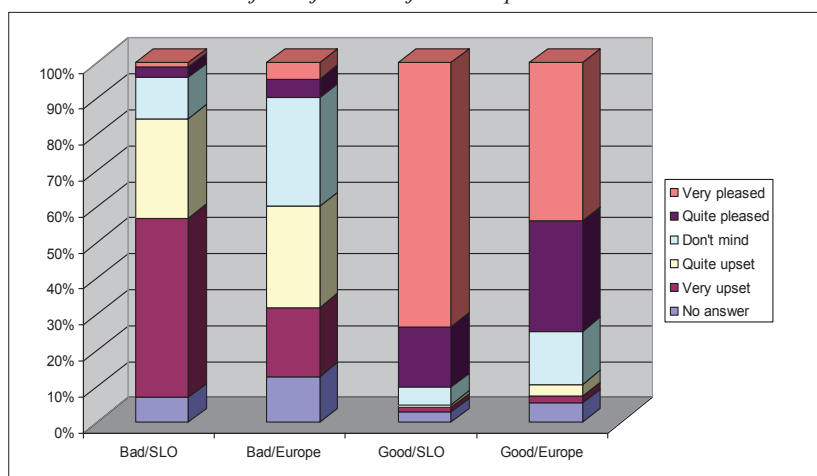


Table 5: Pupils' and students' personal perception

Preglednica 5: Osebna percepcija učencev in dijakov

| »I would describe myself as ...« | N   | %     |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Slovene                          | 119 | 47.6  |
| More Slovene than European       | 47  | 18.8  |
| Equally Slovene and European     | 58  | 23.2  |
| More European than Slovene       | 10  | 4.0   |
| European                         | 12  | 4.8   |
| No response                      | 4   | 1.6   |
| Total                            | 250 | 100.0 |

For 76.3% of the respondents (Table 6) it is extremely (53.8%) or very important (22.5%) to be the citizen of Slovenia. The percentage of the joint answers 'extremely important' and 'very important' is expectedly lower regarding the importance of being the European (52.5%) or a citizen of the European Union (48.5%). Nevertheless, the percentages are reasonably high and prove that 'Europe' and 'European Union' are becoming an important part of young people's lives.

The findings presented in this study have limitations: this was not a representative sample of pupils and those who participated were only in schools that proved accessible to the researchers. However, the findings provide some insight into how adolescent pupils in Slovenia think in relation to Slovenian and European identities.

Table 6: *The importance of belonging*  
 Preglednica 6: *Pomen pripadnosti*

|  | Extremely important | Very Important | Important | Not important | No opinion | No response |
|--|---------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| How important is it to you that you are a citizen of Slovenia? | 53.8%               | 22.5%          | 16.6%     | 1.7%          | 5.4%       | 0.0%        |
| How important is it to you that you are European?              | 27.3%               | 25.2%          | 26.6%     | 12.2%         | 6.7%       | 2.0%        |
| How important is it to you that you are a citizen of the EU?   | 20.3%               | 28.2%          | 22.5%     | 16.3%         | 12.7%      | 0.0%        |

## 4. DISCUSSION

The research presented here suggests that most young people questioned in PAM-INA partner schools in Slovenia are moderately indifferent to Europe and maintain traditional attitudes towards identity and nationality. This, however, is not to claim that their attitude towards Europe is over-sceptical, but rather that ‘Europe’ is for the most part viewed in instrumental terms.

Although the three surveys discussed here cover a period of about 15 years, dealing with three of the most important parts of (geography) education: teachers, content and pupils/students, it is hard to make definite conclusions about the European dimension and European identity. We should be aware that each individual comprehends the dimensions of time and place from the basis of reality and appearance. We are brought up and educated in school and by our domestic, and broader, environment. The development of different identities by an individual is influenced by primary reference groups such as school (knowledge), mass media (information) and the broader community (social system). Consequently, a modern school should be oriented towards critical thinking, action-oriented teaching, adopting a dynamic, interdisciplinary and problem-solving approach, but above all, it should regard learning as a process. Geography is definitely a subject that can readily adopt all the previously mentioned arguments and ideas into the teaching process (Resnik Planinc, 2008).

These findings could prove useful to those teachers, policy-makers or curriculum developers who would like to discuss ‘Europe’ with pupils while taking into account, and especially problematise, their views of national groups (within and without ‘Europe’) and their national–European identifications.

Future research could explore whether the responses from Slovenian pupils and students were different to those from other backgrounds in this sample or in other countries that participated in the PAM-INA project. Social developmental research could compare the ways pupils/students construct national out-groups at different ages across childhood and adolescence in chosen countries. It could also explore how pupils negotiate diverse socio-cultural contexts to construct their identities and how these might relate to their constructions of national out-groups. To address such aims, quantitative data will be important, but qualita-

tive data will also be necessary to support interpretations and in-depth understandings of the quantitative findings.

We should be aware that as the economy and society change, so the education system changes as well. Therefore the education system must be adaptable, flexible and quick to respond to new challenges. One of the challenges for the Slovenian school system in the 21st century should certainly be to find ways to include more knowledge about the European community in the Geography curriculum as well as in different Social Science curricula, how to strengthen the awareness of European citizenship among students and how to help students develop a stronger European (and not only national) identity (Resnik Planinc and Ilc Klun, 2011).

Questions regarding the nature and content of European identity, but especially the search for a new European identity, its relations with other identities and a possible loss of national identities are frequently asked in the context of the EU (Eastern) enlargement. These questions are discussed in all current EU member states. Initiated especially by opponents to the EU integration, they are or are becoming burning issues also in the candidate countries. The public (opinion) in these countries often fears that their national identities will be lost or, at least, substantially weakened with their full integration into the EU. So far, it seems that nobody really knows the answers to these questions (Resnik Planinc and Ilc Klun, 2011).

In a speech to the European Parliament on 8 March 1994, the poet Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic at that time, stressed the need for a Charter of European Identity. The idea was taken up by Europa-Union Deutschland, which, at its 41th Congress held in Lübeck on 28 October 1995, decided to undertake the work of producing such a Charter. According to Havel, it seems that perhaps the most important task facing the European Union today, is coming up with a new and genuinely clear reflection on what might be called 'European identity', a new and clear articulation of European responsibility, an intensified interest in the very meaning of European integration in all its wider implications for the contemporary world, and the recreation of its ethos or charisma (A Charter of European Identity, 1995).

According to Duchesne and Frogner (1998), the dream of the Community's founding fathers was, ultimately, to see the emergence of a European identity. That does not mean that European identity should replace national identities but that it should become strong enough, and be perceived as 'inclusive' enough by European citizens, for Europe to develop as a genuine political entity. On the other hand, it is true as Häkli and Paasi (2003, p. 148) argue that governmental agents often use rhetorical persuasion, and appeal to popular ideas and identities to gain support, while people mainly routinely express their cultural identity and distinctiveness in territorial terms even though at times the territorial dimension might be rather vague. Nevertheless, a development of European identity is regarded as a vital objective in pursuing the establishment of a politically, economically and militarily influential united Europe in the world. Equally important, it supports the foundations of common European values, fundamental human rights and the spread of welfare. It also inherently strengthens the supranational democratic and social institutions of the European Union (Pan-European Identity, 2010)

Building a new common European identity will mean having to build upon the positive experiences and traditions that form European-ness, but it will have to consider and fight the negative experiences that caused so much suffering, but which also contributed greatly to social and cultural developments, made positive contributions not only to science, technology and culture, but also to cultural diversity and richness. However, its negative impacts were substantial. Europe produced aggressive and hegemonic nationalism, colonialism, fascism, Nazism, gulags, concentration camps, the holocaust, ‘ethnic cleansing’, etc. Such negative phenomena can be avoided in the future only if they are well enough known and understood, and if people are aware of their possible negative consequences (Žagar, 2003).

The building of a new common, inclusive and pluralistic European identity is an important and desirable task which will require not only incorporation, but also a certain transformation of existing European identities. However, there are many dangers that can hinder or even prevent the realization of this goal. Explaining these dangers would require complex and lengthy discussions. The most dangerous phenomena in Žagar’s (2003) view are intolerance, national exclusivism (exclusiveness) and nationalism, racism and xenophobia, internal colonialism and inequalities, hegemony, tendencies of possible future monolithism and the lack of legitimacy and democratic deficit (Resnik Planinc and Ilc Klun, 2011).

The hypothesis that »the lack of a psychological existence for the EU may be one of the factors responsible for a weak level of identification with it« (Castano et al., 2003, p. 53) seems plausible in light of other related empirical evidence stemming from social-psychological experimental work. The importance of international contexts in fostering the psychological recognition of the EU is of course not restricted to the political realm and, therefore, an inclusion of a stronger *comparative* European dimension into primary, secondary (and tertiary) enacted (geography) educational curricula is – as it has become quite apparent in this study – an imperative step in the process of Europeanization among Slovenian youth in particular.

(Translated by Tatjana Resnik Planinc)

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## **EVROPSKA DIMENZIJA IN EVROPSKA IDENTITETA Z VIDIKA POUKA GEOGRAFIJE V SLOVENIJI**

### **Povzetek**

Pod pojmom evropska dimenzija izobraževanja razumemo skupino odnosov, veččin in izkušenj, ki bi vplivali na razumevanje drugih kultur in narodov v Evropi. Gre za ustvarjanje kritičnega odnosa, ne pa za golo sprejemanje dejstev. Poglobili in spremenili naj bi odnos do drugačnosti in enakosti, povečali samozavedanje posameznika kot člana družine, širše skupnosti in naroda. Mladim ljudem naj bi dali znanje in sposobnosti ter jim s tem pomagali, da se ne bi čutili tujce v drugih evropskih državah ter da bi v njih lahko živeli, delali in se izobraževali. Že pred 15 leti smo ugotavljali (Resnik Planinc, 1998), da je bil v primerjavi z mnogimi evropskimi državami, ki bi morale, če bi želele vključiti evropsko dimenzijo v pouk geografije, občutno spremeniti svoje učne načrte, ki jih je pogosto prevečala samozadostnost, zazrtost vase in skopo odmerjanje prostora 'Evropi', položaj slovenske šolske

geografije že takrat dokaj ugoden. Dogajanje na področju izobraževanja od takrat pa do danes je v veliki meri posledica ekonomskih in političnih težnj Evropske unije, pri čemer se ves čas postavlja vprašanje, če morda strah pred izgubo lastne samobitnosti in identitete le ni na nek način upravičen. Čeprav naj bi evropska dimenzija ne pomenila izgube »nacionalnih, regionalnih in lokalnih korenin« kot je zapisano v Resoluciji o evropski dimenziji (Resolution on ..., 1991), so se in se še vedno predvsem majhni narodi zavedajo, kako krhke so te meje. Ob dejstvu, da med evropskimi državami obstajajo razlike v zgodovini, jeziku, kulturi in navadah, se človek vpraša, kaj družijo in kaj razdružuje evropske narode, in kakšen smisel imajo z vidika današnjega dogajanja težnje po enotni, združeni Evropi.

Slovenija se pred vstopom v Evropsko unijo verjetno ni povsem dobro zavedala, s kakšnimi pričakovanji in zahtevami Evropske unije glede izobraževanja v državah članicah bo soočena. Posledično, žal, marsikatero spremembo nismo pričakali dobro pripravljeni.

Ker je evropska dimenzija več kot le znanje o Evropi, zahteva vključevanje koncepta Evrope v celotno vertikalo izobraževanja izdelan okvir učnih ciljev in učnih vsebin. V povezavi s tem sta že v 90-ih letih prejšnjega stoletja Shennen in Lawrence (cv: Marsden, 1994, p. 89) predlagala:

- pouk multidisciplinarnega koncepta Evrope pri različnih predmetih;
- raziskovanje koncepta Evrope prek geografskih, zgodovinskih in kulturnih dimenzij;
- upoštevanje vsega, kar je dalo Evropi identifikacijsko kulturno enovitost;
- razumevanje moči evropske raznolikosti;
- upoštevanje pomena kontinuitete znotraj evropske civilizacije kot izraza skupnih družbenih potreb ter
- upoštevanje posledic dejstva, da je bila Evropa vedno središče spreminjanja in inovacij.

S pojmom evropska dimenzija je tesno povezan in prepleten pojem evropske identitete, ki ju v strokovni literaturi redko zasledimo ločena. Deklaracijo o evropski identiteti je Evropska skupnost dejansko sprejela prej (decembra 1973) kot so Svet Evropske skupnosti in evropski ministri za izobraževanje sprejeli Resolucijo o evropski dimenziji (oktobra 1991). Ne glede na redosled dogajanja ostaja dejstvo, da sta evropska identiteta in evropska dimenzija tesno povezani, čeprav je njune povezave težko ovrednotiti. Evropska identiteta se nanaša na veliko število različnih vidikov človekovega življenja, zaradi česar sproža številna vprašanja (filozofska, sociološka, psihološka, itd.), medtem ko je evropska dimenzija usmerjena v samo delovanje. Zaključimo lahko, da vključuje evropska dimenzija evropsko identiteto kot enega glavnih dejavnikov, kljub temu da je bila v različne dokumente vključena pozneje kot evropska identiteta.

Koncept evropske identitete, ki se tako v javnosti kot tudi v bolj profesionalnih krogih različno interpretira, se ves čas spreminja, reflektira stalne spremembe in kot tak ne more predstavljati nekaj statičnega. Medtem ko nihče ne zanika obstoja lokalnih, regionalnih, etničnih in nacionalnih identitet v Evropi, se pogosto postavlja vprašanje, kaj evropska identiteta sploh je. Težko je govoriti o obstoju skupne in vseobsegajoče evropske identitete. Morda bi bilo lažje govoriti o pluralizmu identitet in iskati njihove skupne točke. Za nekatere avtorje je koncept evropske identitete že sam po sebi problematičen. Prepričani so, da se velik del prebivalcev evropskega kontinenta smatra za Evropejce, vendar pa večina čuti

močnejšo pripadnost lastni državi kot Evropi oziroma Evropski uniji. Identitete je težko ločevati, poleg tega pa so pogosto prepletene s pripadnostjo etničnim ali rasnim skupinam, spolu, političnim idejam, različnim kulturnim krogom, itd. Morda se bo, kot pravi Kohli (2000, str. 119), izkazalo, da naraščajoča težnja k nadnacionalni evropski identiteti ni predpogoj za evropsko družbo, ampak se bo razvila kot dodatni proizvod njene institucionalne konstrukcije.

Leta 1997 je bila opravljena raziskava med učitelji geografije na temo evropske dimenzije v geografskem izobraževanju (Resnik Planinc, 1998). V raziskavi so sodelovali 103 učitelji geografije na osnovnih in srednjih šolah. Rezultati so potrdili naša takratna predvidevanja, da so učitelji slabo seznanjeni s samim pojmom in konceptom evropske dimenzije. Informacije, ki so jih o njej imeli, so pridobili na seminarjih, srečanjih in zborovanjih, na študijskih skupinah, iz javnih medijev ter iz domače in tuje strokovne literature.

Skoraj 70 % sodelujočih je bilo takrat mnenja, da je bolj pomembno izobraževati učence za življenje znotraj mednarodne skupnosti ter razvijati razumevanje mednarodnih relacij in problemov, kot pa slepo slediti učnim načrtom. Skoraj 70 % se jih je tudi čutilo usposobljene za vzgojo učencev v osebnosti, ki bodo sposobne objektivno ovrednotiti mednarodno dogajanje na osnovi razumevanja geografskega konteksta posameznih situacij in odločitev. Raziskava je potrdila naše predvidevanje, da so stališča učiteljev geografije, ne glede na njihovo dokaj slabo poznavanje koncepta evropske dimenzije, popolnoma v skladu z duhom evropske dimenzije.

Vsekakor bi bilo smiselno raziskavo zdaj, po preteku 15 let in vsemu, kar se je v Sloveniji z vstopom v Evropsko unijo dogajalo in se še dogaja, ponoviti in primerjati odgovore. V našem primeru smo rezultate vzeli kot osnovo za interpretacijo rezultatov dveh raziskav, opravljenih leta 2010, ki sta potekali v sklopu mednarodnega projekta PAM-INA (Perception, Attitude, Movement – Identity Needs Action). V projektu, ki poteka pod okriljem Programa vseživljenjskega učenja Evropske unije, sodeluje osem evropskih držav. Glavni cilj projekta je ugotoviti dojemanje/razumevanje, odnos/povezanost in načine izražanja ideje evropske identitete med mladimi v Evropi.

V prvi raziskavi je bila opravljena analiza učnih vsebin, povezanih z Evropo, evropsko dimenzijo ter evropsko identiteto in državljanstvom v osnovnošolskih in srednješolskih učnih načrtih za geografijo. Do sedaj se ni v Sloveniji še nobena študija ukvarjala z ugotavljanjem, kako je evropska identiteta zastopana in predstavljena v učnih načrtih različnih predmetov. S pomočjo kvantitativne analize smo ugotavljali vključenost terminov/fraz, povezanih z evropskimi vsebinami v učnih načrtih za geografijo.

Geografija se je pri predhodnem pregledu učnih načrtov ostalih predmetov poleg zgodovine izkazala za predmet, ki dejansko vključuje največ povezav z evropsko identiteto oziroma 'evropskim'. Rezultati analize so potrdili našo domnevo, da učni načrti za geografijo ne vključujejo definicij ali razlag evropske identitete ali evropskega državljanstva. Cilji, ki se nanašajo na idejo evropske identitete, so napisani na začetku gimnazijskega učnega načrta za geografijo zelo na splošno in samo omenjajo, da bi učenci morali poznati ta dva termina pred zaključkom šolanja.

V drugi raziskavi nas je zanimal odnos mladih do evropske identitete. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 250 učencev in dijakov. Odgovarjali so na vprašalnik, ki je bil razdeljen na tri

vsebinske sklope in je vključeval 20 vprašanj. Kar 91,8 % sodelujočih je uvrstilo geografijo na prvo mesto med predmeti, pri katerih so pridobili največ znanja o Evropi.

Med odgovori na vprašanje, kaj jim pomeni Evropa, so se njihovi odgovori umestili predvsem v sociološko in kulturno entiteto (38,0 %), medtem ko sta bili ekonomska (16,8 %) in zgodovinska (12,8 %) entiteta daleč zadaj. Med odgovori, kaj jim pomeni Evropska unija, se jih največ uvršča v prostorsko in lokacijsko entiteto (32,8 %) in nekaj manj v politično entiteto (28,4 %).

Znanje učencev in dijakov o državah članicah Evropske unije je zelo dobro, slabše pa je njihovo poznavanje simbolov Evropske unije (zastava, moto, himna in Dan Evrope). Z vidika emocionalnega odnosa oziroma dojemanja Evrope napram Sloveniji je ta izražen izrazito v prid Sloveniji, saj učenci in dijaki tudi sami sebe dojemajo v prvi vrsti kot Slovence (47,6 %) ali vsaj bolj Slovence kot Evropejce (18,8 %). Zanimivo je, da med vsemi do zdaj omenjenimi odgovori ne obstajajo statistično pomembne razlike glede na starost sodelujočih. Kar za 76,3 % mladostnikov je izjemno (53,8 %) ali zelo pomembno (22,5 %) biti državljani Slovenije, medtem ko je skupni delež odgovorov 'izjemno' in 'zelo pomembno' pričakovano občutno manjši glede izražanja pripadnosti Evropi (52,5 %) ali Evropski uniji (48,5 %). Kljub temu pa sta deleža dokaj visoka in potrjujeta dejstvo, da postajata tako Evropa kot Evropska unija pomemben del življenja mladih ljudi.

Hipoteza, da » ... je morda pomanjkanje psihološke prisotnosti Evropske unije eden od dejavnikov, ki je odgovoren za nizko stopnjo identifikacije z njo« (Castano in sod., 2003, str. 53) je smiselna, še posebej, če izhajamo iz empiričnih dognanj socioloških in psiholoških raziskav. Spodbujanje psihološkega prepoznavanja Evropske unije seveda ni omejeno le na politično sfero, temveč je pomemben del vključevanja evropske dimenzije v osnovnošolske, srednješolske in visokošolske (geografske) kurikulumne. S tem bi bil – kar potrjujejo tudi rezultati predstavljenih raziskav – narejen pomemben korak naprej v procesu evropeizacije med slovensko mladino.

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