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Rewriting history in school-books in Russia

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presented by Ms LUNDGREN

History is important for our view of the world of today, how we look at the future. The past is vital in how we relate both socially, economically and politically. For us, as members of the Council of Europe, it is of tremendous significance to encourage our youth to approach history through developing their critical skills and their free search of knowledge.

Critical thinking and the ability to investigate are among the most important tools. Through critical thinking our citizens of Europe are not to develop us subjects but rather as individuals and citizens who question and actively participate in their societies and political processes.

It has always been the objective of the Council of the Europe to promote democratic, tolerant and open societies. One of the grounds for that is objective educational system free from history revisionism. Rewriting history, making heroes out of tyrants and wars into accepted means of politics, is neither coherent to the Council of Europe's norms or with principles of democracy.

It is of a vital importance that we all, as members, follow the standards of the Council of Europe regarding the educational system in Europe, which was mandated to be product-oriented producing innovative teaching and furthermore, rather than approaching events through learning of facts, it was to help both students and teachers to develop critical skills of investigation.

What is now happening in Russia is arousing worries about free thinking. We have seen it before, how political leaders and systems have tried to re-write history, to forbid books that have other opinions than those of the system, to interfere and decide which history books that teachers may use – just to reshape history in the wanted way and for special political purposes. That history shows us that if we see that development, we can foresee a rather fundamentalist attitude towards the world. Instead of creating an educational climate to meet the globalisation challenges and the openness and democracy that Europe as a whole is striving to achieve, the Russia of today seems to promote an opposite future by their new way of teaching history.

It is time for action, to speak out loudly about how the members of the Council of Europe must act to promote the spirit of the Council. Every citizen in Europe has the right to freely create and express their opinions, which is what makes Europe different and unique.

Due to what is mentioned above, I would like to know what the Committee of Ministers think should be done regarding the rewriting of history in the school books in Russia?

Signed:

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