Religious Toleration and Peace

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Policy report with regard to (formal and non-formal) education

Final report

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Summary of policy report with regard to (formal and non-formal) education: integrated conclusions and policy recommendations

Retopea examined	Retopea found	Retopea aims to foster (and tackle what it found)	Retopea realized	Retopea recommends
1) Representations of religious diversity in past and present in/by: - Textbooks - Museums - TV series and YouTube channels - Political discourse - faith-based and pluralistic organizations - members of new spirituality groups - Islamic tradition in late al-Andalus and in contemporary Islamic transnationalism (= formal and non-formal educational settings)	- Wide variety of representations, between one-sided and nuanced, and positive and negative - often simplified - instrumentalization of the past - representations of religious diversity in past and present - often stereotypes and us-them thinking accompanying the representations of R.D. - An often limited understanding of R.D., in terms of agency, one-sidedly framed, its contextualization within religious, political, economic, social, and cultural contexts - From very much to only limited fostering of critical literacy skills	1) Content knowledge of religious diversity in past and present 2) Procedural knowledge (skills) of how representations of R.D. are constructed (i.a. digital literacy) 3) Critical knowledge on the complex relationship between past and present: how are representations of R.D. in the past (mis)used for present aims and to stir us-them-thinking, to foster stereotypes etc. (empower young people to critically deconstruct) 4) critical citizenship, open and democratic society: fostering an inclusive sense of belonging, dialogue between diverse people, building a multilayered identiy, overcome us-them-thinking etc. 5) a creative and reflective engagement with the past, as an attitude as such, yet also in order to inspire/affect societal attitudes in the present ➔ Wants to do so in - Formal educational contexts: young people (students), teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, publishing houses and textbook authors - Informal educational contexts: among young people, educators, youth workers etc. ➔ Always while respecting the freedom of education	1) Create an academic book: as a scientific basis for engaging with the past in the overall project 2) Create 400 clippings (= …) working on: content, procedural and critical knowledge → meant for formal and non-formal learning contexts ➔ Via website 3) Didactical methodology of making docutubes (= …) working on: content, procedural and critical knowledge critical citizenship creative and reflective engagement with the past → meant for formal and non-formal learning contexts → examples on website 4) BOC for teachers and teacher trainers 5) Dissemination via articles, webinars, professionalization initiatives etc. 6) Book on clippings	1) Monitoring of representations of religious diversity, toleration and peace in formal and non-formal educational settings 2) Supporting educators as well as learners to deepen their knowledge of religious diversity 3) Ensuring society at large to be offered a sufficiently nuanced representation of religious diversity in past and present, via algorithm changes 4) Supporting educators as well as learners to deepen their knowledge of critical digital literacy. 5) Supporting educators as well as learners to foster their capacity of addressing sensitive issues in a respectful and constructive manner 6) Curriculum change 7) Broad view on education and its major goals 8) Particular focus on primary education 9) Encouraging and facilitating encounter and collaboration 10) Providing sufficient digital infrastructure and easy access to it
2) Representations of religious diversity in past and present among young people	- Idem + - Presentist thinking among young people - The ability to deconstruct stereotypes - The desire to learn more - Widespread sensitivity for religious/ identity issues			
3) Religious peace treaties in the past; ways of organizing peaceful religious coexistence and toleration	- Show a more nuanced picture - Show how different contexts influence each other - …			

Policy report with regard to education

The Horizon 2020 project 'Religious Toleration and Peace' (RETOPEA) started from the finding that although we live in a largely secular society today, religious issues emerge once again, and in identity debates religious symbols abound. The project raised questions about how this happened, and about the relationship between religion and conflict. It sometimes seems as if religion always leads to conflict, while in reality, this is not always the case, nor has it been. But how did people then neutralize religious tensions in the past? And can we learn from, or rather with those experiences? Those questions were at the core of RETOPEA, that examined the different ways in which religious coexistence is thought of in different environments and how religious peace treaties have been established in the past. The insights gained from this research have been subsequently used to inform and enrich thinking about present-day peaceful religious co-existence, particularly among young people. Active engagement with ideas, problems, solutions and processes from the past has been used, in order to encourage them to critically reflect on present and future forms of religious coexistence in an informed, nuanced, and empathetic way.

In what follows, this policy report on education first addresses what RETOPEA examined, and what its main findings are. From there, it explains what the project aimed to foster (and tackle what it found) and how to do that, and what it actually accomplished. This then leads to concrete policy recommendations with regard to education in both formal and non-formal settings.

1. What did RETOPEA examine?

Representations of religious diversity, tolerance and peace in past and present

History is everywhere, it is sometimes said. Representations of the past are everywhere, and contribute in shaping young people's representations of that past. This is the case in education, in the public space, in all kinds of media, in popular historical culture, etc. The first goal of RETOPEA was therefore to examine these historical representations, specifically with regard to religious diversity in the past and present. This was done through very different carriers and actors:

- Representations have been examined in **secondary school textbooks for history and religious education** in a broad range of eight European countries: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.

- In addition, the representation of religious diversity in **museums** has been analyzed focusing on Judaism[1] and Islam collections[2] in museums. In addition, museums in the Balkans were assessed: in the Republic of North Macedonia[3], the Republic of Serbia[4], Slovenia[5], and Bulgaria[6].
- **TV series and YouTube channels** have been analyzed. The TV series selected for analysis were: "Koreni" (Roots), "Vikings", "Prespav", "Na Ista Strana" (On the Same Side), "The Borgias", and "Citizen Khan"[7]. In terms of YouTube channels, the focus was on TV/online news and coverages in the form of short documentary, film and TV series trailers, educational channels, and popular youtubers/influencers.
- **Political discourses** of religious toleration and peace, and how they draw on the past have also been examined. The focus was on political discourses used in the specific context of the 'refugee crisis' between 2013 and 2017, when large numbers of refugees, predominantly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan started arriving in member states of the European Union (EU). This focus was chosen, as these debates offer good examples of how notions of history and transnational memory have been utilized to discursively frame contemporary understandings of religious toleration and peace. Political discourses

[1] POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Jewish Museum Berlin, Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia in Skopje, Sephardic Memorial Center in Granada, Sephardic Museum in Toledo, Jewish Museum London, Jewish Museum Frankfurt, The National Museum of Italian Judaism and Shoah (MEIS) and The Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives in Budapest

[2] The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, The 'Longing for Mecca' exhibition at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, The "Islam Splendor and Bliss" Temporary Exhibition in Den Haag Stedelijk Museum, Imagine IC Amsterdam, The Islam colletions in the Brussels Museum of Art and History, Islam It's Our History Temporary Exhibition in Brussels, KADOC Exhibition "Veldlijnen. Ontmoetingen met Islam Tussen Fascinatie en Afkeer" in Leuven, The Islam collections in the Louvre Museum, The Institute du Monde Arabe, The Albukhary Foundation gallery in the British Museum, The Islam collections in Victoria and Albert Museum, Everyday Muslim Heritage Organization in London, Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, Neues Museum Temporary Exhibition "Cinderella, Sinbad and Sinuhe Arab-German Storytelling Traditions"

[3] National museum of North Macedonia (focus on the ethnographic collection); Museum of the City of Skopje; Museum of the City of Bitola; Museum of the Albanian alphabet – Bitola; Museum of the Macedonian struggle – Skopje; Holocaust memorial center – Skopje; National Archeological museum – Skopje; National gallery – Daut Pasha hamam – Skopje; Monastery of Raicica near Debar (workshop of the monastery).

[4] National museum of Serbia; Serbian war museum – Belgrade; Museum of national history – Belgrade; Museum of the City of Belgrade; Jewish museum – Belgrade; Museum of Yugoslavia; Special exhibition in honor of the NATO bombardment of Belgrade), Croatia (National museum of Croatia – Zagreb; Museum of the city of Zagreb; Croatian war museum – Zagreb, Museum of the City of Zadar; Archaeological museum of Zadar; Church museum of Zadar; St. Donatus – church museum.

[5] National museum of Slovenia – Ljubljana; National Ethnographic museum – Ljubljana; Museum of the City of Ljubljana; Metelkova War Gallery.

[6] National museum of Bulgaria – Sofija; Museum of the City of Sofia; National Ethnographical museum – Sofia; Church museum – Aleksandar Nevsky – Sofia.

[7] "Koreni" (Roots) – a Serbian TV show depicting the political and economic life in early 20th century rural Serbia; "Vikings" – an internationally popular TV show reflecting on the life, adventures, and cultural habits of the Vikings; "Prespav" – a Macedonian TV show taking place in a small touristic village close to the natural lake of Prespa, where diversity (ethnic, religious, ideological and sexual) tries to prevail over the conservative local narratives; "Na Ista Strana" (On the Same Side) is a documentary show presenting the different religious groups peacefully co-existing in North Macedonia. It deals with many issues like inter-confessional marriages, inter-religious co-existence in small villages throughout the country, cooperation between local religious leaders etc.; "The Borgias" – a popular historical TV show presenting the life of Pope Alexander VI – Rodrigo Borgia, and his misuse of the powerful religious position for enrichment and military purposes; and "Citizen Khan" (a playful reference to Orson Welles' famous movie, Citizen Kane) is a BBC 1 comedy series created by actor and comedian Adil Ray (born 1974), a British Pakistani Muslim.

employed in Hungary, Germany, Spain and the UK have been selected, given that these four national contexts offer important contrasting perspectives within different parts of Europe.

- The efforts have been studied that both **faith-based and pluralistic organizations** are making to foster cultural dialogue as a means of countering violent religious extremism, while broadening their perspective to include various kinds of organizations that promote interreligious and interconvictional dialogue. In particular, Religions for Peace, United Religions Initiative – Europe, Coexister, Axcent, Orbit and Expertisepunt IDB have been included in the analysis.
- The attitude towards religion among the **members of new spirituality groups** in the Estonian historical and sociocultural context, has been examined, focusing particularly on the issues of diversity, pluralism and tolerance.
- A more conceptual analysis concerned ho religious pluralism was dealt with in the **Islamic tradition in late al-Andalus and in contemporary Islamic transnationalism**.

Perceptions of religion and religious diversity among young people throughout Europe

Of course, as RETOPEA's primary focus was on youth, young people were also included in the study. How do they perceive how religion and religious diversity (in the past and present) are represented in the media? What are sources for the extent of their knowledge of religious diversity in the past? What is their perception of religious diversity in the past and in contemporary society? How do young people's knowledge and views of religious diversity in the past and present inform each other? And can differences and similarities be discerned between young people's views on these issues in different national contexts?

To answer these questions, we organized focus group interviews with young people all over Europe. In particular, the research was conducted with gender-balanced small groups of teenagers, with a maximum of sixteen participants (though most groups were smaller) per group. Some groups included a mix of young people of different ages; others consisted of students of the same age, though all participants were between thirteen and eighteen years old. Given that we were aiming to gain indicative, but relatively in-depth, snapshots, rather than a comprehensive, large-scale or representative overview of young people's views on these issues, we worked with a relatively small sample of young people who were invited via their schoolteachers to take part in this research project. We approached and included a diverse mix of religious and non-religious schools, ranging from schools with very ethnically/religiously diverse to relatively homogeneous student populations, as well as schools from a range of urban and rural sociocultural settings. A total of 132 students participated from twelve schools in eight countries. Participating schools included four schools in the UK (England), three schools in Belgium (Flanders), two schools in Germany and one school in Finland, Estonia, Poland, North Macedonia and Spain respectively. Participation was

voluntary, and all participants (and their parents, for students younger than sixteen years old) gave informed consent.

We began by asking each individual participant to quietly spend five–ten minutes to complete a short, anonymized questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the following three multiple-choice questions:

- How important (if at all) is religion to your life? Please circle a score between 1 (not important at all) and 5 (of great importance).
- Have you ever observed prejudice or bias against religion in the area where you live? Please circle one of the following answers: Yes – No – Not sure.
- Have you ever experienced bias against your religious or non-religious beliefs? Please circle one of the following answers: Yes frequently – Yes sometimes – No, but hardly ever – No – Not sure.

In addition to the provision of a selection of multiple-choice answers, participants were given the option of adding open comments or explanations, and many of them chose to do so. The questionnaires primarily served as a 'warm up' to the semistructured focus group interviews, which focused on four themes: that is, young people's perceptions of

- representations of religion and religious diversity in the media (including questions, such as 'How accurate or inaccurate, fair or unfair, do you think different types of media are when they discuss different religious groups?')
- religious diversity in the past (e.g. 'Historically, how religiously diverse do you think your city/town/ country/ Europe has been? Are there any particular 'turning points' when your city/town/ country/ Europe became more or less religiously diverse?')
- religious diversity in present-day society (e.g. 'In the present day, to what extent do you think religious diversity offers benefits or challenges to society?') and
- potential connections between approaches to religious diversity in the past and present (e.g. 'Are there ways in which we can learn from history?').

The interview questions were designed with the aim to trigger conversation, and facilitators were instructed to give as much agency as possible to participants to share and respond to views about their experiences and perceptions of religion and religious diversity.

Historical documents managing religious tolerance and peace (among which peace treaties)

Learning *from* the past is something that in principle cannot be done. The past never repeats itself. The past, therefore, never offers a ready-made recipe book for the present and for the future. Historical contexts differ too much for that, and human behavior is contingent. What we can do, to a certain extent, is learn *with* the past. The past can then serve as a source of inspiration, showing that challenges can be dealt with in different ways, that different answers can be given. Precisely in this sense it provides material for reflection (what were intended

and unintended consequences of certain actions in dealing with challenges for instance) and inspiration about forming one's own opinion about how to deal with challenges today.

RETOPEA wanted to take this idea of learning with (not: from) the past seriously, and therefore started to study that past itself. After all, one cannot learn with the past if superficial or sometimes downright erroneous representations of that past circulate. In order to examine how has been dealt with religious diversity, tolerance and peace, the RETOPEA team analyzed 21 historical documents managing religious tolerance and peace (among which peace treaties). It was examined what the challenge connected to religious diversity precisely constituted, the actors involved in the search for a solution, what that solution looked like, how it was or was not put into practice, and (for a number of documents) how it resonated in collective memories within societies at large. An overview of these 21 documents:

Cluster	Treaties, pacts, informal settlements	Thematic range	Geographical range
1	Peace of Augsburg (1555), the Warsaw Confederation (1573), the Edict of Saint-Germain (1562), the ”Religiousvrede” in the Low Countries (1578), the Edict of Nantes (1598), the Peace treaties of Westphalia (1648)	Confessionalisation, territorial segregation, religious toleration and the secularization of international relations.	Western and Central Europe
2	The Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen (1789)	Domestic secularism and religious freedom.	Europe, with an impact on Muslim lands
3	The Constitutions of Medina (622), the Stipulations of Umar (mid-seventh century), Toleration towards Jews (and other minorities) in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th c. and beyond (the Tanzimat reforms, 19th c.)	Toleration and inequality in Muslim lands with diverse population.	Southern Europe, El Andalus/Iberian peninsula
4	The Charter of Rhode Island (1663), the US First Amendment (drafted 1789, adopted 1791)	Freedom of religion as a combination of divine imperative / Enlightened pragmatism.	Colonial North America, USA
5	The Ashoka’s edicts (third century B.C.E.), Akbar the Great’s settlement (1560s)	Freedom of religion ”beyond tolerance”/non-exlusive views on religion and spirituality.	India
6	Vienna Congress (1815), the Paris Peace Treaties (1919–1920), the League of Nations Minority Pretection (1920)	Religion in International Law; Assimilation; Minority protection and deportations.	Central and Eastern Europe

7	The European Convention of Human rights (1950), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2009), the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (1998), the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001)	Human Rights, Freedom of religion; ”privatization” of religion.	Western Europe, EU

2. What did RETOPEA find[8]?

Representations of religious diversity, tolerance and peace in past and present, in historical culture within society at large

In **history textbooks** across Europe, RETOPEA came to the following conclusions. The first conclusion was that the accounts are actually quite similar across the range of textbooks from different countries, especially in terms of the people, events, developments and agents they choose to focus on when describing these interreligious contacts. This seems to indicate the existence of an implicit European historical canon, although at the same time a national emphasis could be observed in the textbook accounts from various countries (especially England). A second main conclusion was that all the textbooks embed interreligious contacts within a broad historical and societal (political, socio-economic and cultural) context. The religious context itself is also described. Third, above all powerful individuals and groups, and other non-human agents, are attributed agency in history textbooks. Ordinary individuals are almost never mentioned; neither are women. Another aspect worth noting is that, even if agency is not always attributed in a balanced way, the various parties involved in the interreligious contacts are all assigned some degree of agency. This suggests that the textbook authors wanted (to some extent) to explain these events from a range of perspectives. Fourth, we found that a great deal of homogenization took place in the textbook accounts of interreligious contacts. ‘The’ Christians, ‘the Muslims, ‘the’ Jews are often used in very homogenizing terms. Fifth, the textbooks are mainly past-oriented, in the sense that the past is treated completely independently of the present. We found very few examples of authors relating the past with the present. It seems as if the textbook authors wanted above all to report on the past itself. A sixth conclusion is that most of these authors offered a one-sided, negative representation of interreligious contact in the past, as a source of conflict, violence and even war. Although many of these contacts did indeed result in conflict, this was not always the case, which means that other stories could also be told. These contacts also led to peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. Historians have also shown, for example, that secularism (treated positively by the textbook authors) has profound religious roots in Christianity. This side of the coin, however, is largely ignored in the history textbooks. The message young people are thus receiving is that interreligious contacts generally have

[8] This section is based on the different chapters from the book of Pasture, P, Altnurme, R., Arigita, E. (Eds.) (2021). *Religious Diversity in Europe: Mediating the Past to the Young*. London: Bloomsbury.

negative outcomes. Another result is that young people's view of interreligious contacts in the present can be tarred by the social representation of such contacts in the past. Some textbook authors seem to be aware of this possibility when they make clear that 'Islam' (again: homogenised) cannot be equated with Islamist religious extremists, and that not all Muslims (again, 'Muslims' are homogenized) are extremists. However, they do not extend this awareness of the need to present a nuanced picture of the past to correct their own one-sided approaches to interreligious contacts, thereby giving students the impression that these contacts are bad by definition because they are a source of conflict and violence. This does not help young people to think about and deal with their own religious beliefs and those of others, nor about (their position in) society today.

As to **textbooks for religious education**, they often compare rituals, symbols, and feasts in different (major) religions. Interreligious interactions are addressed in these textbooks which mostly deal with contemporary times; they only rarely refer to religion and religious interactions in a historical perspective in greater detail. Very little attention is given to what can be viewed as 'secular spaces' and the actual role of religion(s) in contemporary society. Accounts of events in which religious tolerance is discussed are often somewhat simplified and superficial.

As regards **museums**, it was first striking to see how contemporary museums are not so much curated to be observed, but to be engaged with. Visitors experience the museum by thinking through its content in relation to their existing knowledge and experiences. Museums are hence not only spaces for representation but also for education, critique and discussion. This is clearly reflected in the museums under examination. Regarding the representation of Muslim communities, art and heritage, museums aim to create an apolitical space for further discussion of issues that are highly political and sensitive. The Jewish museums also offer a wide platform for reflection: for rethinking national narratives and for discussion on tolerance, diversity and inclusions versus exclusions. At the same time, however, it was also noted that museum practices vary greatly depending on the fabric of the society in which they are established and operate. Particularly in young nation-states, the museum representations are influenced by nation- and state-building processes; they often leave little space for instance for multilayered identities.

TV series influencing contemporary popular culture, often try to convey a positive message, as can be seen from selected frames from the Balkan TV series, which paint a generally optimistic picture in their representation of religious toleration and peace in the region. Social and new media show a more divergent picture: they can foster positive as well as negative stances, and do not always offer (or encourage to take) nuanced perspectives. As these (new and social) media have an enormous influence on young people, it seems necessary that young people are empowered and equipped with tools enabling them to critically deal with these media.

The analysis of **political discourses** in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis shows that they often mobilize particular national and transnational memories when presenting issues related to religious diversity and migration in contemporary society. References to collective memory have played an important role in discourses employed in these debates, for example, by creating links between national or European identities, to address or avert tensions between humanitarian principles, domestic pressures and expectations of the international community. Notions of race, ethnicity, culture and religion are often implicated, conflated and intertwined in these discourses, as are references to an alleged Judeo-Christian heritage and secular Enlightenment values. Transnational memories employed within political discourses in these debates have often been embedded in national contexts and narratives. Notions of religious history and heritage have to different degrees been instrumentalized in these discourses in very different ways and for different, contrasting purposes: both to foster toleration and compassion, and to stoke fears of cultural, ethnic and religious difference, including the perceived threat of the 'Islamization of Europe'. Particularly in right-wing political discourses, there is little acknowledgement of the internal diversity of refugees (who are predominantly presented as young 'Muslim' men – in very homogenizing terms, thus) or of 'Islam' (again, homogenized) as well as a tendency to conflate 'refugees' and 'migrants', but to distinguish between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' migrants (who allegedly have a hidden agenda, such as the Islamization of Europe).

When examining **religious pluralism in the Islamic tradition** in late al-Andalus, it was found that violence and war were certainly not inevitable outcomes of interreligious contacts. By contrast, this offers a great example for assessing the adaptability of Islam, as a religion in general, to changes in interreligious relations.

Faith-based and pluralistic networks promoting toleration and religious diversity recognize that for many people religion remains an important source of identity, and therefore must be taken seriously. They show that faith can offer solutions instead of seemingly only causing problems, and that 'secular' and 'religious' are not necessarily opposites. These networks sometimes work through small self-organized groups that contain members from at least three religions, spiritual expressions, or indigenous traditions, including atheists and agnostics. Concentration on interreligious bridge-building and local community-based actions, and investing in dialogue, solidarity and raising awareness are strategies through which those networks teach (young) people to see religious diversity as richness, and not as a source of problems.

The members of **new spirituality groups** have a generally tolerant attitude towards religion in several respects. If tolerance is understood as tolerating or putting up with something in return for some benefit, then they are ultimately prepared to tolerate even institutional religion, because there are people who choose to belong to a church as something important and necessary for them. The free choices of individuals are respected. If tolerance is

understood as acceptance of difference, then the new spirituality subculture is open to borrowing from a wide spectrum of religions. Its members are also characterized by openness and amenability. Many of them believe that all religions have the same core and, that ultimately, they all express the same thing. While members of new spirituality groups are generally tolerant of religion, and particularly of religious individuals, they also look down on them to some extent. They contrast free spiritual development presented as a personal choice with opting for dogmatic, restricted faith as members of institutional religion in their view do. When they compare the two, it is obvious that they do not regard them as equally worthy choices. The first option is high up in their hierarchy of values, while the second has a relatively low position.

Views of young people on religion and religious diversity

The focus group interview with young people across Europe yielded most interesting and important insights. First and foremost, the focus groups made very clear that the young people participating were longing to attribute meaning to – and were constructing an opinion about – religious diversity. At the same time, they indicated the need to be taught more about religious diversity in the past, for instance via more attention to local history and family history.

A second, related finding concerned the narrow range of historical knowledge the participants testified to. When asked for concrete examples of religious diversity in the past for instance, students could only name few major events or turning points, particularly stemming from the history of their own national or regional context. Not only factual historical knowledge, yet conceptual knowledge was also in short supply. Throughout the conversations, a conceptual confusion arose between religious and ethno-cultural diversity, in the sense that students did not differentiate between them. Either students mixed up both or they reduced experiences of religious diversity to ethnic-cultural diversity. Experiences of prejudice or bias, for example, against 'Muslims' (used in homogenizing way) were seen in ethnic-cultural terms rather than in purely religious ones.

As regards the sources of knowledge young people mention about religious diversity, it became clear that both school history and popular historical culture (audiovisual and internet sources next to conversations with family and friends) feed young people's knowledge and social representations of religious diversity in the past. This points at the necessity to build bridges between school history and family/community history as sources of historical knowledge, to make knowledge meaningful for young people and to enable young people to deal critically with all representations of religious diversity they encounter, both in and outside school, and both in and outside their family and community circles.

In this respect, our study made clear that young people participating in the research were well capable of deconstructing present-day representations of current religious diversity. They almost all understood the negative framing news media testified to in portraying religion, and were able to deconstruct the bias, generalization and even stereotypes that media often displayed with regards to religion and religious diversity. At the same time, however, they were far less able to approach religious diversity in the past in a critical and nuanced way. Young people built very biased, one-sided and simplistic representations of religion and religious diversity in the past, based on a presentist approach. This clearly shows that young people had difficulties to think historically, to understand the past in its own logic and to consider past events in their historical context.

Lastly, the focus group interviews revealed that young people were very eager, and at the same time capable of discussing a sensitive issue such as religious diversity in a very respectful, sensitive and constructive manner. This is an important finding, for in both formal and in- and non-formal educational settings, teachers and educators are sometimes afraid to raise sensitive issues among young people. They fear this might cause turmoil and conflict. The focus groups we organized showed the opposite.

What strategies did historical documents reveal about managing religious tolerance and peace?

After the analysis of 21 historical documents managing religious tolerance and peace, it became clear that those documents could be categorized in seven thematic clusters[9]:

1) The Peace of Augsburg, the Warsaw Confederation, the Religionsvrede in the Low Countries, the French Edicts of Saint Germain and Nantes as well as the Peace of Westphalia (Western and Central Europe); thematic range: Confessionalisation, territorial segregation, religious toleration and the secularization of international relations
2) The Pacts of Toleration and the regulations of the French Revolution (Europe, with an impact on Muslim lands); thematic range: domestic secularism and religious freedom
3) The Constitution of Medina, the Stipulations of Umar, Toleration towards Jews (and other minorities) in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th c. and beyond (the Tanzimat reforms, 19th c.) (Southeastern Europe; Al-Andalus/Iberian peninsula); thematic range: toleration and inequality in Muslim lands with a diverse population
4) The Charter of Rhode Island and the US First Amendment; thematic range: Freedom of religion as a combination of divine imperative / Enlightened pragmatism (Colonial North America; USA)
5) The Ashoka's Edicts; Akbar the Great's Settlements (India); thematic range: Freedom of religion "beyond tolerance"/ non-exclusive views on religion and spirituality

[9] See: Henning P. Jürgens, Bram De Ridder, Christophe Schellekens, Naum Trajanvoski (2020), *Deliverable 2.3 RETOPEA Project: A series of reports on historical peace treaties and agreements.*

6) The treaty of the Vienna Congress; the Paris Peace Treaties; the League of Nations Minority Protection (Central and Eastern Europe); thematic range: Religion in International Law; Assimilation; Minority protection and deportations
7) The European Convention of Human Rights; The European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights (Western Europe; EU); thematic range: Human Rights, Freedom of religion; 'privatization' of religion [KUL/UKIM], including the settlement of the conflicts in Northern Ireland [OU] and in the states of former Yugoslavia

Their analysis yielded important findings concerning for instance their aspiration: some documents on the one end contained arrangements that had universal claims and aspirations, while documents on the other end were treaties that primarily aimed at solving a conflict that took place in a specifically circumscribed place. The documents also offer a very various and differentiated picture of the strategies used to establish religious toleration and peace, and who had agency in those strategies – who are the main characters in a historical development or event? Who has the ability to generate change? Who can co-determine the course of the past? While some documents testified to a top-down development and implementation, others rather did to a bottom-up genesis and execution of the agreement. This fosters reflection on the agency of common people. The role of women also differed in processes mediating religion toleration and peace throughout the past.

Overall, it is very clear that the thorough analysis of the whole of those 21 documents managing religious tolerance and peace has yielded most important insights about how was dealt with religious diversity in the past. They show how throughout the past different approaches have led to various forms of conflict solutions or more fundamental regulations regarding religious coexistence. This allows not for a simple progress story until today, but presents a nuanced picture of different approaches depending from the respective historical context. Those insights are certainly of great value in the ambition to learn with the past.

2. What are the aims of RETOPEA, building further on its findings? What does it want to foster, what does it want to tackle?

Based on the abovementioned research findings, RETOPEA set, in terms of formal and non-formal educational settings for young people, the following aims: it aims to foster young people's

1) content knowledge of religious diversity in past and present
2) procedural knowledge (skills) of how representations of religious diversity are constructed (connected to digital literacy)
3) critical knowledge on the complex relationship between past and present: how are representations of religious diversity in the past (mis)used for present aims and to stir us-them-thinking, to foster stereotypes etc.? It aims to empower young people to critically deconstruct historical representations of religious diversity.

4) critical citizenship, and adherence to an open and democratic society: it aims to foster an inclusive sense of belonging, dialogue between diverse people, build a multilayered identity, overcome us-them-thinking etc.
5) creative and reflective engagement with the past, as an attitude as such, yet also in order to inspire/affect societal attitudes in the present.

RETOPEA aims to do so via novel and innovative didactics that appeal to young people and offer practical tools especially for educational use, to be applied in:

- formal educational contexts, in which it targets young people (students), teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, publishing houses and textbook authors;
- informal educational contexts, in which it targets young people, educators, youth workers etc.

In developing these didactics, RETOPEA has been taking into account suggestions and recommendations and addressed the concerns made for example by the following:

- Paris Declaration (European Union Education Ministers, 2015):
  Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination.
- Recommendation on Religious and Non-Religious Convictions within Intercultural Education (Council of Europe, 2008):
  An interpretative approach which encourages a flexible understanding of religions and non-religious convictions and avoids placing them in a rigid pre-defined framework.
- the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching About Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (OSCE/ODIHR, 2007):
  Assess the process that leads to the development of curricula on teaching about religions and beliefs to make sure that this process is sensitive to the needs of various religious and belief communities and that all relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to have their voices heard.
  - The *Council of Europe* has since 2002 paid attention to education of religions in public schools and encourages intercultural learning, which would promote "dialogue, mutual understanding and living together". It emphasizes that "the learning approaches, methods and experiences" they promote are based on three principles:
    - religion is an important cultural fact (similar to other identity sources such as languages, history or cultural heritage);
    - beliefs about the world and values must be developed gradually, based on real personal and social learning experiences;
    - an integrated approach to spiritual, religious, moral and civic values must be encouraged.[10]

[10] https://www.coe.int/en/web/education-and-religious-diversity/home#3344968434003356True

- In 2015, the Committee of Ministers agreed on *Action Plan* concerning *The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism.*[11] In 2020, in order to implement the goals of the action plan, it is evident in today's Europe, that the work has to continue.
- *Education for Diversity and Democracy: Teaching History in Contemporary Europe* is a project funded by the European Council 2016–2019.[12] Many of its objectives are close to those of RETOPEA, yet on more general level, e.g., history education's contribution to building diverse, inclusive societies; developing critical historical thinking in the digital age; and dealing with sensitive issues: the affective engagement of young people in the teaching and learning of history.
- In 2019, Euroclio, an European-wide organization for history educators and history teacher trainers, issued its fifteen principles for high quality history, heritage and citizenship education.[13]
- The Council of Europe finances and Enlarged Partial Agreement, *The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe* (OHTE) since 2020 with 17 founding states. The mission of OHTE is to "promote quality education in order to enhance the understanding of democratic culture" and to "strengthen common European values". OHTE sees that history education has an important role in advancing students develop critical thinking skills. It stresses as did the UNESCO (2020), the importance of media and information literacy (multiliteracy) for example in fighting against hate speech. OHTE sees that a multi-perspective and fact-based approach will provide necessary tools to think critically about the past and historical narratives. In this respect in May 2022 a Joint Project "Transnational History Education and Co-operation Laboratory – HISTOLAB" was created between the European Commission and the Council of Europe with the aim of facilitating the co-operation between different stakeholders in the field of history education.
- In the context of COST Action IS1205, the focus was among other things in the social psychology and the study of intergroup relations. The findings and recommendations support strongly also RETOPEA's work.[14]
- *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* of UNESCO has 5 key objectives, which are 1) **people** – to end poverty and hunger; 2) **planet –** to protect the planet from degradation 3) **prosperity –** to insure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives 4) **peace** – to foster a peaceful, just and inclusive societies and 5) **partnership** – to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised global partnership for sustainable development. The Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) is "Quality Education" and Goal 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". RETOPEA

[11] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c3576

[12] https://www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching/educating-for-diversity-and-democracy-teaching-history-in-contemporary-europe

[13] https://euroclio.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/EuroClio-Manifesto-on-high-quality-history-heritage-and-citizenship-education.pdf

[14] https://12da66e1-4d38-e1a8-5e2e-a90ee8931e30.filesusr.com/ugd/89ca3b_a592bbe79ece4d218cbf9858928b5d10.pdf

objectives are closely linked to these and it seeks to provide concrete and high quality educational means for promoting peace and justice in societies.

- *Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)* introduces the idea of a dialogue between European institutions and churches, religious associations or communities as well as philosophical and non-confessional organizations:
  - The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.
  - The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organizations.
  - Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations.[15]
- *The Council European Union's Recommendation on key competences of lifelong learning* "identifies eight key competences essential to citizens for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion."[16] RETOPEA's recommendations connect closely to the eight competences, which are: literacy competence, multilingual competence, mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, digital competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, citizenship competence, entrepreneurship competence, and cultural awareness and expression competence.

3. What did RETOPEA realize throughout the project?

In order to meet the aims having been set, RETOPEA accomplished a series of realizations:

1) The research findings of the first phase of the project have been brought together in an **academic book, entitled *Religious Diversity in Europe: Mediating the Past to the Young***. In so doing, the book served as a scientific basis that informed the next steps in the project, and is also of great use for the scientific and educational communities throughout Europe, beyond the project team.

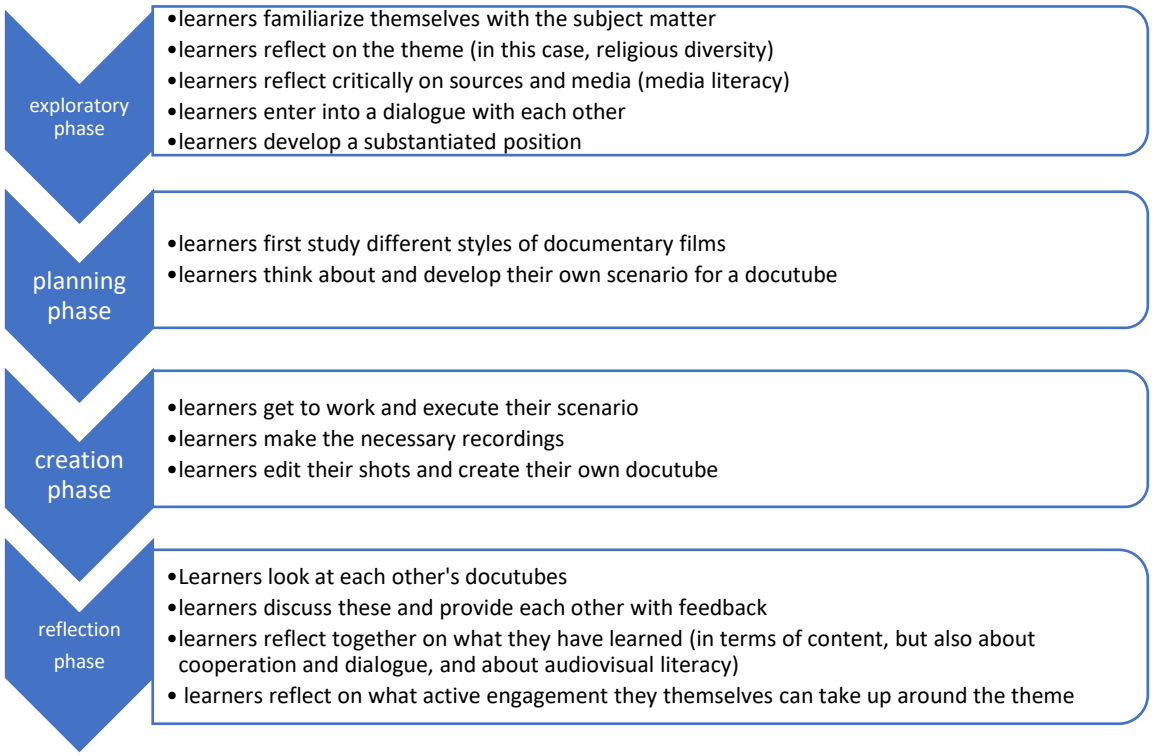
2) On the basis of the (historical and contemporary) sources analyzed throughout the research, the project team designed so-called clippings: historical and contemporary (written, visual and audiovisual) source excerpts taken from the documents managing religious toleration and peace and from the analyzed materials that include representations of religious diversity in the past and present; together they include multiple perspectives on religious diversity, and present different visions of and paths to

[15] Concerning recent activities see, https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=50189

[16] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Key competences for lifelong learning*, Publications Office, 2019, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/569540

religious tolerance and peace. In total, no fewer than **400 clippings** have been developed and are offered on the Retopea website (https://retopea.eu). They cover a wide range of religions, regional contexts and societies. They are grouped according to twelve themes: gender and sexuality; migration, trade and travel; propaganda, stereotyping and communication; discrimination and otherness; ideas about tolerance; peace and conflict management; memory and heritage; law, police and public order; places and buildings; religious practice; clothing; family life.
Each clipping is provided with contextual information and with one or a few stimulating questions to trigger reflection among students. They are specifically selected and designed to broaden and deepen young people's knowledge of religious diversity, and to expand and challenge young people's reflection on it.
The clippings are designed and offered in such a way that they can be used in both formal and non-formal educational contexts.

3) The clippings serve as a basis for the innovative didactics of making docutubes, which RETOPEA developed. Docutubes are maximum length 3-minute films made by young people. This didactic consists of four phases.



Exploratory phase

In the creation of docutubes, the focus is less on pure filmmaking and more on the content of the themes of religious diversity, toleration and peace. Insight and reflection prevail

over film direction. In other words, it is important to immerse young people in the content in a first phase. RETOPEA starts from a short, numerical and geographical sketch of religious diversity in Europe today. From there, the educator conducts an exploratory introductory conversation with young people about the extent to which they can relate this to historical phenomena (events, figures, places and developments). In this way, pupils' prior knowledge is probed and activated and any preconceptions can be detected, such as presentist views of the past. These consist in imposing one's own, contemporary frames of thinking and values on the past, instead of approaching and understanding the past in its own logic. A presentistic understanding thus stands in the way of a proper understanding of the past.
From this introduction we then proceed to a structured group discussion about religious diversity. Depending on the size of the group, in combination with the available coaching capacity, the conversation takes place in large group or in distinct subgroups. Questions probe:

- What representations of religious diversity are young people confronted with today, in films, documentaries, television programs, the news, social media? How are religion and religious diversity predominantly portrayed and framed?
- How religiously diverse was the region in which one lives today, in the past? What major turning points do young people see? How did people deal with religious diversity in the past?
- How do young people perceive and look at religious diversity today? How do they view it?
- How is religious diversity dealt with in their living environment? For example, did they already experience prejudice? Can school influence attitudes among young people? What attitude do they adopt?

It is important for the educator to agree on clear rules of conversation with the students prior to the group debate so that a safe environment is created. Such a conversation also takes some time. Speaking up yourself, listening to each other and trying to understand other perspectives simply takes time. In the conversation, the teacher/lecturer takes on the role of moderator. He or she tries to involve all students, asks questions when there are ambiguities in the arguments of participants, summarizes discussions and/or arguments used, brings new aspects into the conversation through questions and guards the agreed rules. The latter is particularly important in case the conversation addresses sensitive issues. This is why rules must be agreed upon by the participants in the conversation.

After this, the "clippings" are introduced to the students. These are short historical or topical source fragments, provided with context information and with one or more stimulating questions to trigger reflection among students. They are specifically selected

and designed to broaden and challenge the thinking of young people. They are always accompanied by contextual information in order to help explaining the content of the clipping, to bring about nuance etc. For example, they offer a nuanced look at agency. This refers to a concept that asks who or what played a role in certain past events or changes. The clippings show that not only great white men or non-human actors (e.g., capitalism) had agency, but equally ordinary people and groups. Thus, it challenges learners that today they too need not be limited to a merely passive role in society.

Planning phase

Armed with a deeper understanding of content and a substantiated opinion, this phase moves on to the concrete preparation of the creation of a docutube. In a first step, students are introduced to audiovisual (film) grammar. They watch and analyze a number of carefully selected vlogs (from well-known and popular vloggers, for example). After all, vlogs (video weblogs) closely match what docutubes are and do. Their analysis immediately contributes to an important educational goal, that of promoting digital literacy. Under the guidance of the educator, learners will analyze three aspects of vlogs:

- They explore how vlogs are structured. Often they have the same structure, through the four E's: explain, experience, explore and evaluate. First, what the vlog will be about is indicated (explain). This is followed by a personal story or experience of the vlogger or someone else (experience). This is followed by various perspectives on the theme (explore). The evaluation concludes with the most convincing perspective.
- They ask what makes a vlog a good vlog, in terms of 'worth watching'. This is where aspects of film grammar come into play, with both visual and audio (combined) aspects, such as the variety of shots, camera movements, immersive and involved presentation, participatory nature, use of hand-drawn and hand-written elements as well as on-screen text, use of sources (graphics, photos, props, symbols, etc.) and voice-over commentary to go with it, montage of immersive sound, etc.
- They analyze what makes a single shot a good shot. This includes analysis of composition, lighting, camera movement, camera angle, and sound (also in combination with the image).

In a second step, the educator gives young people the concrete assignment to make their own docutube, preferably in a group of three, in which they present their argued vision. Points of attention that students should take into account are:

- What exactly do they want to tell? What is the central message? For whom is it intended?
- How do they pour what they want to tell into a story? What story are they telling? It is important that they guard the link with the clippings sufficiently and connect past and present in a nuanced and substantiated way.

- Specifically, how will learners audio-visualize their story? They learn how to divide their story into sequences (in shots) in which image and audio must fit together well and preferably support and strengthen each other. There should also be sufficient variation. This concerns, for example, variety between telling a story via a voice-over, an interview, re-enactment, filming the public space, etc.
- For each shot, learners are encouraged to think about who, what and where they are going to film, in what style (close-up or not, moving camera or not, what camera angle, etc.), what sound accompanies it and what attributes they may or may not need. In so doing , they also take into account the target audience they have in mind.

Basically, here young people write a scenario for their docutube, which ideally lasts a maximum of three minutes. In so doing, they also agree on who does what, what division of labor they use. Students are supported at this stage through additional information on story grammar and on the filmmaker's perspective. Concerning story grammar, it is indicated, for example, that the docutube should be straightforward, with a beginning, middle and end, should present arguments rather than just an opinion, etc. With regard to the filmmaker's perspective, reflection is encouraged on what each shot is used for, on the importance of variation in shots, on the interaction between image and sound, etc. The students are given feedback by the teacher/lecturer and by fellow students. This happens for example when they have to give a half minute pitch to the whole group about how they see their docutube.

Creation phase

Once the scenario is written, the implementation can begin. It is a good idea for learners to first learn how to film, for example with a GoPro camera. The quality of the docutube will benefit if the learners practice shooting moving images, close-ups, etc. under the teacher's supervision beforehand, and check the quality of the audio at the same time. It is also good to practice with learning to look into, and speak to the camera. Before learners actually start filming, interviewing, etc., they are given guidelines about ethical considerations and privacy. After all, it is not the intention that they film or interview anyone or anything (often about sensitive matters) and then make all this publicly accessible. Learners must ask informed consent from everyone they film. Once they are aware of this and have practiced it, they can start working effectively.
In small groups, they set off on their own. Starting from the scenario they wrote, they make the necessary recordings: close-up, wide, establishing and moving shots with or without voice-over, shots of sources, of hand-drawn and -written elements, of the street scene, of interviewed people etc. They also record the necessary audio elements (for example, church bells or a call to prayer). The educator makes clear agreements with the

learners beforehand about which locations will be filmed and how much time they will have for this.
Once all the necessary recordings have been made, the process of editing can begin. This takes time. It is important that young people recognize this and do not rush. It is best to concentrate first on the image and sound that form the basis of their story and only then to add captions, music and other audio. There is a lot of freely accessible and user-friendly editing software available online. Within the Retopea project, young people used OpenShot software (https://www.openshot.org/). The editing is done per group. The educator supports where necessary.

Reflection phase

Once the docutubes are finalized, young people view each other's docutubes: first of all, those of other young people within their own class or youth group. They will also be able to watch docutubes made by other groups from other regions in Europe, which will be made available via the Retopea website. These give a good insight into how young people from other contexts relate to the theme. This is followed by a first structured discussion, guided by the educator: how do other groups (from your own class/group, but also from other countries) deal with religious diversity in past and present? To what extent do the docutubes reflect the place of origin and experiences of young people? From there, one then reflects on the creation of one's own docutube and the central message it conveys. The reflection can focus on these elements (which are related to the goals of the process of making docutubes):

1. What was your initial position on religious diversity?
2. How did you deal with the in-depth information from the clippings? To what extent and why did this cause you to critically re-examine and adjust your position? What led to this?
3. What three things stay with you the most from the whole process of making the docutube?
4. What did you learn about the critical use of (audiovisual) media? What are you going to pay more attention to (e.g. use of image, sound or combination) when you watch news items, or (historical) films, documentaries, vlogs etc. (digital literacy)?
5. What ideas did you gain from the past (as a source of inspiration) to help shape the society of today and tomorrow? What attitudes will you (possibly) adopt more yourself?

The educator moderates the conversation. Based on this reflection, some group decisions are formulated by the young people as a conclusion.

Pilot workshops with young people making docutubes were organized in eight European countries: Belgium (Flanders/Brussels), Germany, Estonia, Finland, North Macedonia,

Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. They were rolled out in formal (school) and informal/non-formal (museum and youth work) educational contexts. Young people responded enthusiastically. They indicated in evaluations afterwards that making docutubes had helped them to engage in informed and in-depth reflection and reasoned dialogue. The alternation between theoretical and practical, multimedia, creative, collaborative and active learning appealed to them greatly. That they could learn about different perspectives and listen to the ideas of others was considered particularly valuable. Being able to create their own film motivated them greatly.
A series of docutubes developed in the pilot workshops are made available on the RETOPEA website (https://retopea.eu).

4) In order to support educators in learning about and applying these innovative didactics, a course was developed by RETOPEA, which is available (in various languages) via the Open University website (Young people and religion: creative learning with history - OpenLearn - Open University). The Open University offers a Badged Open Course: it is thus available free of charge, freely accessible and upon completion leads to the award of a badge. In the course, educators are taken step by step through the relevance and urgency of the theme (religious diversity) and the didactics, are given background information, and are taught step by step how to apply the didactics of making docutubes in their practice.

5) The work on clippings and docutubes has been and continues to be widely disseminated by the RETOPEA team, through conference contributions, articles in academic journals, but equally in professionally oriented journals and via webinars and professionalization initiatives for educators, teacher trainers, etc. We have in particular established links with on the one hand professional teachers organizations (in particular Euroclio, European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education, Thomas) and associations for interconvictional dialogue (esp. United Religions International, Religions for Peace), among others. These will especially important to promote the results in the coming months.

6) Finally, a new book is in preparation, about religious diversity, tolerance and peace-making in the past, particularly aimed at a general audience interested in the theme of religious diversity and religious toleration, at secondary school teachers in many different school subjects, at higher education teachers / teaching staff in history, civics, religious and philosophy/ethics studies, and at educators in informal educational settings (museums, heritage, youth work, interfaith organizations, adult education etc.).
For these audiences, RETOPEA aims to
   - Provide an understanding of the different ways in which has been dealt with religious diversity, tolerance as an idea and particularly toleration in practice and peace-making in the past, by different agents, from different religions, in different areas; in general and in particular, via addressing particular documents managing religious tolerance

and peace (among which, and hence not solely, peace treaties); we also seize the opportunity to elaborate on the concepts of 'diversity', 'toleration' and 'peace'
In so doing, RETOPEA aims to provide a richer and more nuanced representation on religious diversity, toleration and peace (practiced in society by common people and groups) than is present in history textbooks, popular media, societal discourses etc.

- Make meaningful connections between past and present with regard to religious diversity and toleration (analogies, similarities, differences), thereby avoiding naïve ideas such as direct learning from the past, and presentist pitfalls, via asking questions, drawing analogies etc.
  In so doing, it fosters reflection on dealing 'in practice' with religious diversity, toleration and peace in past and present
- Provide a methodology of how to deal with historical sources, in terms of contextualization, critical analysis, attributing significance and historical thinking about them (past-present relationship; contextual thinking); and in terms of engaging with them in constructing historical narratives, via making docutubes.
  In so doing: it fosters critical reasoning with/about sources and digital literacy.

4. What are RETOPEA policy recommendations, stemming from the experiences of the four-year-project?

Formulating policy recommendations towards education, concerning religious diversity, in combination with digital and critical literacy, is not an easy task. After all, education is present in and is co-directed and monitored by very different policy levels, from local to supranational levels. In addition, historical research into education as well as research into educational reform (among many other studies) shows that bringing about change in education can never be a sole matter of top-down measures alone; equally important are bottom-up initiatives, for which room must be left. Education itself is also a house with many rooms, not to say that it actually even consists of several houses. For example, there is formal education (at school) but there are equally all kinds of informal or non-formal educational settings (museums, youth work etc.). Just because each has its own finality, approach, regulatory framework, etc., policies that want to be successful often cannot have a 'one size fits all' view. Moreover, because of this diversity, there is often little contact between formal and informal educational actors and contexts. Education is a context-specific issue, which is also strongly embedded in a number of legal frames. One of these is, in many European countries, the freedom of education, in several cases even anchored in the constitution. Policy recommendations should - obviously - also take this into account. RETOPA makes a number of these recommendations below, in ten areas, and within these it focuses on both top-down and bottom-up strategies, on formal and non-formal education contexts, with a focus alternating between the issue of 'religious diversity' and that of 'critical digital literacy' - themes that came together in the entire process of making docutubes.

Monitoring of representations of religious diversity, toleration and peace in formal and non-formal educational settings.

During the research it was found that (historical) representations of religious diversity, tolerance and peace in past and present are in a number of cases very one-sided, stereotypical, homogenizing, strongly simplifying and not very nuanced. This was found to be the case in history textbooks, among others. RETOPEA therefore recommends the development of a tool that allows textbooks to be screened for how they represent religious diversity, tolerance and peace. Such a tool does not impose on educational publishers and its author teams what exactly they should write, but creates awareness on what they write and holds up a mirror (and stirs reflection). To the user it allows to assess the quality of the representation. RETOPEA recommends to establish a body similar to the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, within the Council of Europe. According to the OHTE website, its mission is "to promote quality education in order to enhance the understanding of democratic culture. The Observatory provides a clear picture of the state of history teaching in its member states, based on reliable data and facts on how history is taught, through regular and thematic reports." A similar observatory, though broader than just history education, and including all EU member states, could certainly play an important role.

In addition, as the research conducted shows, it is also necessary to critically monitor the representations of religious diversity in media and in the popular historical culture within society at large. It is important that those who actually come into contact with exclusive and hateful representations have the opportunity to report this. It is advisable to set up a special contact point (a complaints office) in this respect, that is given much visibility. Such a contact point would also make it possible to address the issue of and take a critical look at algorithms, such as those used by major players in the Internet (think of YouTube). To what extent do they lead users directly to more extreme (and therefore often one-sided, unsubtle and exclusive) content? Such a contact point can examine, on the basis of concrete cases, how these algorithms can be adjusted.

Supporting educators as well as learners to deepen their knowledge of religious diversity

The research clearly showed that at least some young people’s knowledge of religious diversity in the past is rather to very limited. Also, in textbooks for secondary education, the representations of religious diversity in the past are rather limited, poor, and often one-sided. It is therefore best to remedy this. In light of the (in many European countries constitutional) freedom of education, RETOPEA does not suggest compelling curriculum changes. RETOPEA does recommend that a new textbook (series) on religious diversity, toleration and peace in the past be established, that sketches out a more nuanced picture of religious diversity in the past, and takes into account and offers multiple perspectives. This means that this new

textbook (series) would go beyond the too often one-sided, negative representations of interreligious contact in the past, as a source of conflict, violence and even war. This would also mean that it offers a less Eurocentric approach, and pays attention to a more balanced attribution of agency. Making such a textbook (series) concerns a collective undertaking in which many people are involved: historians, but also practitioners, a resonance group of critical readers, etc. Such a textbook can then offer inspiration to educators, to teacher trainers, and to textbook authors in the various (sub)states of the EU, in various disciplines and school subjects such as religious education, history, civic education etc. It can be linked to a training and professionalization program that also includes encounters between people of different religions and non-denominational views. The textbook can appear in different shapes: a paper version and/or an online version. The paper version would perhaps facilitate reading in-depth about religious diversity (as deep reading on paper and online differs); the latter would allow more flexibility in uses, among others to practically facilitate making connections between historical and topical issues. This recommendation contains an analogy with the bilateral textbook initiatives (in the leap of the Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research) taken after World War II, to bring together historians from formerly hostile countries (such as Germany and France, or Poland and Germany), in order to develop together a scientifically sound, nuanced and open historical narrative, contributing to better mutual understanding.

Ensuring society at large to be offered a sufficiently nuanced representation of religious diversity in past and present, via algorithm changes

RETOPEA has shown that representations of religious diversity in past and present are not always entirely nuanced. This is not only the case for educational media, yet also applies to information on the internet. When one types for instance 'christian muslim co' on google, one first encounters ‘conflict’, and only then ‘cooperation’ or ‘coexistence’. This is only one example of the very biased and one-sided, negative representations of religious diversity that are passed on via the internet. This is why RETOPEA recommends that a conversation should be held with ‘big tech’ players, such as google, to critically analyze and review their own algorithms they use. For a change in those algorithms seems needed.

Supporting educators as well as learners to deepen their knowledge of critical digital literacy.

In the same vein, the research conducted also demonstrates the need to continue to focus on critical digital literacy. Young people are confronted with many different representations of religious diversity inside and outside of school and they need to learn how to deal with this critically. In the process of making docutubes, structural attention is paid to this, but additional efforts are needed. RETOPEA therefore recommends that the new textbook (series) not only pays attention to content and conceptual knowledge, but also to procedural knowledge, and

thus puts forward clear strategies for learning to deal critically with (historical and contemporary) sources and information.
In addition, RETOPEA is convinced that the audiovisual sector itself should also be invited to be more transparent regarding the methods and techniques it uses to disseminate information. Our research showed that (audiovisual and social) media have an enormous influence on young people. It is therefore of crucial importance that young people learn to use these media critically and gain insight into how they work. Concretely, RETOPEA recommends that public broadcasters in the EU member states develop programs or web pages intended for young people and the general public, in which, with the help of concrete examples, an insight is given into the processes of audiovisual news selection and the creation of (the representation of) news. This can empower young people to adopt a more critical attitude towards all kinds of representations encountered on the Internet, for example.

Supporting educators as well as learners to foster their capacity of addressing sensitive issues in a respectful and constructive manner

Sensitive issues will always exist, both in society at large and in education. Also, young people will always encounter them, and have to deal with them. The same applies to educators. Therefore, a strong commitment to dealing with sensitive issues is needed. Diverse research on this already exists, and implications and suggestions for practice have already been made. However, a systematic and exhaustive analysis, combined with a practical set of tools that have been tested and validated, in formal, informal and non-formal educational contexts and among diverse educators and young people, of types of sensitive topics, what makes a topic a sensitive topic, for whom, and what (case- and context-dependent and fine-grained) strategies are best deployed when and in what ways, is absent to date. The development, implementation and dissemination of this would be of great value to educators and to young people.

Curriculum change

As stated above, because of the freedom of education, it is neither easy nor appropriate to recommend all kinds of binding content-related changes. RETOPEA does not consider it advisable that very concrete and specific contents be imposed by authorities on education. In line with the recommendation above regarding textbooks, RETOPEA does recommend that instruments be developed that allow for self-assessment of the curriculum regarding attention to and approach of religious diversity. This will hold up a mirror to curriculum developers and inspire them to make changes to the curricula they are responsible for.
The self-assessment should not be limited to a purely content-related check, but should preferably also include a critical analysis of the time and space that the curriculum provides for knowledge building, for reflection, and for dialogue. Our research showed that young

people attach great importance to each of the three and are open to them. But then the necessary time and space to realize all three must also be made available in educational contexts.
RETOPEA also recommends that curricula provide sufficient room for critical digital literacy. In this respect, this recommendation is in line with the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning that the EU recently formulated, more specifically the competences 'digital' and 'literacy'. RETOPEA encourages curriculum developers to screen the curricula for which they are responsible with regard to this, and to find out where this literacy can be embedded more effectively. In particular, RETOPEA refers to the didactics of docutubes, which curricula can integrate.

Broad view on education and its major goals

RETOPEA proved the importance of working with young people on the development of their critical thinking and their sense of values (open worldview, respect for the democratic principles of the rule of law, acceptance of diversity, readiness for dialogue and cooperation, etc.). In the utilitarian view of education as it increasingly manifests itself in societal debates - in the sense that the emphasis when discussing educational reforms seems to be increasingly on preparing for the labor market and finding one's place in a constantly evolving economic system - the importance of paying attention to the development of critical-reflective thinking sometimes gets sidelined. Yet this is crucial for the proper functioning of the democratic rule of law, as Martha Nussbaum argued in 2010 in her work *Not for Profit: why democracy needs the humanities*. RETOPEA therefore recommends that the importance of the formation of informed and critical young people for the survival of democracy is constantly highlighted, emphasized and is always included in educational debates and reforms.

Particular focus on primary education

Throughout the research, the impression sometimes arose that many opinions, attitudes, perceptions and representations that young people have about e.g. religious diversity, but also about the relationship between past and history and between past and present, have already been formed at a young age (6-12 years old), among others in primary education, and are therefore not so easy to change at a (slightly) later age (13 to 18). Other research also shows that opinions are often formed at an early age. Therefore, it is advisable that future research programs (with societal interest and output) pay explicit and specific attention to working with and for young children (6-12 years) in primary education and beyond, around societally important, relevant and urgent themes.

Encouraging and facilitating encounter and collaboration

Young people learn about past and present everywhere: not only in school but almost outside of it. Our research shows that their knowledge and views of religious diversity stem from and are influenced by various contexts. Previous research has already indicated the need to engage these contexts, to make learning meaningful, and to bring young people to a critical understanding of things. It is hence necessary that encounters between young people and educators are encouraged and facilitated.

In that context, it is also necessary to bring educators from these different contexts closer together, so that the efforts made by each can be strengthened. RETOPEA therefore recommends building bridges between formal and non-formal educational contexts. Educators in non-formal contexts and teachers need to know from each other what they are doing, what they aim for, what they are teaching about, what representations circulate among young people, in order to be able to deal with them adequately each in their own contexts, thus strengthening their own practice. RETOPEA therefore recommends that authorities should aim at and facilitate bringing together educators from different educational contexts, with the intention of dialoguing and learning from each other. This can be done concretely by facilitating a network of summer schools. It can also be done by appointing 'ambassadors', who have proven to have knowledge and are open to dialogue. They can go out into the field, actively build bridges, and inspire new bridge builders.

In the same vein, RETOPEA also recommends that bridges be built between academia, and secondary school education and popular culture. Academics and educators can learn from each other: on content, on how historical and social representations are built and (mis)used; in so doing they can enrich each other's work, thus making the encounter fruitful, and leading to change.

Providing sufficient digital infrastructure and easy access to it

Critical digital literacy is best learned by doing. This means that the necessary digital infrastructure must be present in the educational context in which this is being worked on. There must also be sufficient - literally - space available that allows for collaborative forms of work and dialogue. RETOPEA therefore recommends that an investment program be put in place, which will help to shoulder the burden of providing sufficient digital and physical spatial infrastructure to enable interactive, collaborative and numeral/digital learning such as this. This applies to formal educational contexts, such as schools, but equally to non-formal contexts such as public spaces or museums.

Of course, when that infrastructure is in place, it is then also necessary to facilitate access to it for young people. RETOPEA therefore recommends that authorities pursue a target group policy, and facilitate and encourage low-threshold access for young people, particularly towards non-formal educational contexts.