DEAR READERS,

As the year 2014 draws to a close, I am proud to present to you our first-ever entirely English-language edition of the Bulletin. Due to the global nature of our research and related activities and in response to numerous requests from researchers and cooperation partners around the world, we have switched to this language format with the aim of communicating still more fully and effectively with our international readership and widening access to in-depth information on the work we do here at the Georg Eckert Institute. In this context, a special thank-you goes to our translators Katherine Ebsch-Burton and Nicola Watson, who speedily and expertly translated most of the contributions and proofread those which were originally written in English.

We know from our work here at the GEI that textbooks are much more than just educational materials. Under all kinds of political systems, a wide range of parties and factions, be they nationalists or pacifists, democrats or dictators, have attempted to use textbooks to disseminate the vision of society which they have sought to realise. Ever since the modern school system was created in the nineteenth century, textbooks and history textbooks in particular, have been among governments’ and authorities’ preferred instruments for the promotion of civic learning and for education in national values.

Against this backdrop, this edition of the Bulletin focuses on conflict and interventions in the field of educational media across the globe. Education can drive the exacerbation of conflict, by fuelling stereotypes and antagonism among other things – it is this unhappy fact that prompted Georg Eckert to begin his work on textbook revision. However, education also has the potential to contribute to the transformation of conflict situations and to peace-building. Throughout the twentieth century and to this day, a large number of initiatives have sought to turn history textbooks into vehicles of reconciliation.

As textbooks are eminently political and often act as sites of political controversy, our research frequently revolves around the role of educational media before, during and after conflict and around the potential of textbooks to help promote respect and understanding for other people in the context of conflicts taking place today (see Massouda Jalal’s contribution on p. 32). We hope in this Bulletin to give you some selected insights into the various kinds of political crises and educational interventions past and present, in all areas of the world, that inform our work, into the ways in which people read and understand textbooks (see Barbara Christophe’s article on p. 24) and into the influence of educational media on the development of young people’s emerent worldviews (see the contribution from Andreas Heinemann-Grüder on p. 20).

All that remains for me now is to wish you, on behalf of all my colleagues here at the GEI, a pleasant and relaxing holiday season and a happy, healthy and peaceful new year, which we hope will bring us still more innovative and exciting insights into educational media research!

With the very best wishes from Braunschweig

Simone Lassig