**Discussion**

Education about natural hazards starts in early childhood through familiarization with the environment in which the child lives and that natural processes characteristic of it. It continues throughout life, corresponding to each person’s age, risks, duties, and responsibilities. It should cover not only the prevention of professional risks, but should be extended to all areas of activity, child or adult, that are related to the risks posed by natural hazards, particularly through the inclusion of training for various situations.

Proper means to address and reach all relevant individuals and communities should be defined, depending on the characteristics of the society. A major difficulty, however, arises from the fact that people usually sooner or later leave formal teaching institutions. Adults usually might have a prejudice against the idea of returning to school although adult education does not necessarily mean returning to school. Therefore different methods of education, such as meetings or workshops, seem to be more appropriate.

However, also in modern society risk education is impossible without basic scholarly, cultural (including humanitarian), and psychophysical awareness of knowledge mediators, in modern society these being primarily school teachers. The principle objective of education on natural hazards needs to be long-term, although we should also focus on short-term activities to train children to protect themselves, to escape hazards (e.g. the example of the British girl that suitably responded to the natural developments leading to the arrival of the destructive tsunami in Asia in 2004; Education, 2013), and to be ready to administer first aid).

Risk education at school should comply with the specific characteristics of each country or region. According to our textbook analysis the textbooks are currently more global- than local-oriented in presenting examples of natural hazards. Examples such as earthquake in Kobe, Krakatau, drought in Sahel and floods in Bangladesh make people believe that these events occur more or less in distant parts of the World.

Local-oriented education about natural hazards should focus on the establishment of a “culture of risk” or a “culture of resilience and prevention” (Komac et al., 2011, p. 14).

Ideally, risk education is a capacity building strategy of promotion of safety that encourages positive behaviour, leading to modification of societal and individual risk states and behaviours that prevent people from living a safe life. Therefore, risk education should be included in mainstream school curricula and it should aim to assist people in forming positive attitudes and practices and to participate in wider civic processes.

At the moment the topic of natural hazards is present in the majority of examined textbooks but the differences between the countries exist. Some of them have low share of contents dedicated to natural hazards (e.g. Albania, Belarus, Russia, Slovakia) while the others find this subject important (Denmark, England, Romania, Scotland, Turkey, Wales). Large differences are expected and are probably linked to differences in natural and social environment and its perception: countries with frequent large earthquakes like Turkey are more aware of possible consequences of this natural hazard and they put large efforts to train teachers in new knowledge and skills related to natural hazards. Increasing knowledge and skills raises their awareness and changes their perception of risk and personal responsibility, and therefore their impact on behaviour.

But knowledge of potential reactions to a threat does not equal knowledge of actual behaviour in the face of a natural disaster (Riad et al., 1999) or in other words: “perceived responsibility plays an unimportant role in the (flood) preparedness decisions” (Terpstra, 2009, p. 139).

At the level of implementing this topic, there is a need for greater awareness of the special features of risk education, a need for proper materials and other resources, including cooperation with experts, local stakeholders and authorities, which in turn results in the need of sufficient funds available and the need for pan-European efforts in this area. An example is “Memo’Risks” (2012), which was developed and applied in the Loire River catchment (France). It brings together local government and schools in order to survey local disaster risk situations and awareness. The results not only support the knowledge and motivation bases of pupils it also documents the risk perception and local knowledge about hazards. E.g. in Slovenia a step was made in this direction by introducing a special elective primary school subject titled “*Varstvo pred naravnimi in drugimi nesrečami*” (Protection against natural and other disasters) for pupils between twelve and fourteen years old (Andrejek, 2010).

**Conclusions**

Knowing the “times” and “places” is essential to understanding the potential impact of natural hazards especially if the place is personalized, related to person’s everyday life.

In this regard, many European textbooks still need considerable improvement, yet this is by far not to suggest restricting the teaching of natural hazards and disasters to “European” ones. But to develop applicable social capacities, cases from familiar settings will help to motivate the next generations for dealing with and learning about natural hazards.